The Spatial Materialism of Public Screens:

Discipline, Redevelopment, and the Conservation of Lights

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ABSTRACT

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With the notion of public screens serving as analogies of lubrication, aiding the flow of corporate capital exchange, Times Square is said to be serving as a symbolic nucleus for today's globalized financial economy. Surprisingly, however, it was not very long ago when corporate bodies set out to make Times Square – the very center of the global digital financial system – void of digital screens. The following thesis will illustrate how a particular group of public screens, perhaps the most widely known, were at one point threatened to be removed from Times Square, only to be, less than a decade later, permanently cemented in the city's legal policies and planning regulations. Through a series of negotiations with political as well as corporate bodies, culturally oriented organizations helped reshape the way Times Square's screens were re-conceptualized as objects worthy of conservation, and as tools that can aid formulate and facilitate a particular type of self-governing citizens. Although public screens may seem to belong to an emerging cultural landscape, it would be a mistake to understand them solely as such. The aim of this thesis is to offer a history that sees public screens as products of residual, emergent, as well as dominant social and cultural formations, and to help clarify how ideas about screens as symbols of the digital economy first began formulating.

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To my father Zvi and my daughter Aubree,
for their serene pursuit for knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

Public Screens as Modern Paradigms

Six midtown streets, two avenues, and one boulevard lead approximately half a million pedestrians through New York City's Times Square each day. Arguably, there are just as many ways the square is experienced daily. Having navigated through the gridded maze of the city, I have entered this site of sights from each of these different gateways. This time, though, I chose to begin my visit from Herald Square, located five blocks South-east of Forty-second Street. I chose this route because I wanted to comparatively experience two very similar spatial designs that share few other visual characteristics with one another. Although both Herald and Times Square have the same amount of streets and avenues that intersect with them, there is one very visible difference – the amount of façade surface reserved for the display of screens. Nearly every inch of building surface in Times Square is covered with LED screens, billboards, reflective glass, and other visual media. Standing in Herald Square, on the other hand, I notice only two LED screens. The rest of this square's façades are traditional urban designs made of metal and brick. With a small garden and a promenade of tables and chairs located right in the middle of the square, it is clear Herald Square is designed to facilitate leisurely conversations amongst members of a liberally civilized society. Except for the two LED screens and ambience of Billie Holiday's voice coming out of a Macy's department store, the area is a nearly perfect transposition of an ideal Habermasian public space where private minds can gather and share their personal ideas in a collective manner. Looking at

Times Square out in the distance north on Broadway, I can't help but sense a very different type of public space. One that, in comparison with Herald Square's calm, is louder and incredibly disruptive.

I am drawn to Times Square's lights with an astonishment that is perhaps likened to the ways the site may have been experienced many times over the past century. From the 1900s when the name of the area was changed from Longacre Square to Times Square, and when paper billboards occupied large portions of building façades, to the 2000s when the size and light density of incredibly large LED screens are regulated by the city, every incarnation made the space a perfect modern apparatus developed to astonish and control the city's crowd more greatly than the last. In this apparatus each screen is screaming for attention, yet each is positioned so close to, and stands as a distraction from, the next. As Jonathan Crary shows, modern cultures on the one hand developed technologies that emphasized distractions and changed traditional conceptions of space and time, while on the other hand, and at the same time, also developed systems for shaping the uses of these technologies in ways that were instrumental to the development of an attentive subject.[1] With its cacophony of screens, each more distracting than the last, yet with a seemingly well-disciplined crowd of million passing daily, Times Square can be perceived as one such apparatus, customized and perfected by modernity's preoccupations with the twin notions of attention and distraction.

This is not to suggest that the comparatively more mundane Herald Square is not also constructed by the very same discursive paradigms and preoccupations with attention and distraction. Rather, this lack of resemblance between the two squares

merely highlights the variety of ways such preoccupations have shaped modern spaces. To clarify, Habermas's ideal public sphere can also be likened to an apparatus by understanding it as an ideological construct governed by rules and regulations identifiable to all of its members. As Nancy Fraser observes, Habermas's public sphere is a "conceptual resource" that can be likened to a "theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk … [A]n institutionalized arena of discursive interaction … [that is] conceptually distinct from the state."[2] In other words, to participate in the public sphere is to enact through such learned conceptions of citizenship. The obvious difference between the two spaces being that, in place of screens, Herald Square's version of public space uses bodies, faces, and gestures as its dominant denominators.[3] Hence, it is no coincidence that recent city decisions to make a long stretch on Broadway more pedestrian friendly, led to the placement of the exact same mass-produced tables and chairs in Herald Square and Times Square alike. The purpose of this furnishing is similar in both squares, to serve as conduits for theatrical participation.[4]

Seating in these chairs, scattered across Times Square, are about thirty individuals trying to sketch a piece of the sight and work through one of modernity's many dilemmas – trying to capture an instant of vision from a site, or a material state, that is always in motion.[5] Conversely, not only is it a wonderment that these material objects are always in motion, but the fact that sketchers are trying to arrest these very motions paradoxically aligns them with yet another type of motion – migration. In other words, the sketchers' attempts to mobilize the motions of the site to other locations through sketches, further

complicate an already complicated relation with this constantly materially fluctuating modern environment.

The sketchers are there in the morning. There is hardly anyone else around and it is, aside from the cacophony of lights, strangely tranquil. Even with the visual racket I can still be clearly attentive to my own thoughts. The ambiance is very similar to a lucid dream. This of course may be because it is either very early in the morning and I may still be half-asleep, or because I am surrounded by mesmerizing lights and colors, or both. Yet attempts to capture the state of the square do not only happen in the morning. They also happen in the afternoon, evening, and night. Every day photographers attempt to capture the motion of the visuals. Some simply point and shoot using normal exposure. Others try to use long exposures, with the final results being a play of abstract colours of the already abstract visuals found on the screens, transformed and combined yet again in ways that only long-exposure photographs can. There are others who come to the square with video cameras, each trying to capture the endless maze and enormity of the site's visuals. Yet there are others, like me, who try to capture the experience by writing about it. However, not one of us documentarians can capture the event as well as the pedestrian. The experience cannot be substituted for another. It is unique and cannot be recreated anywhere else simply because it is perpetually in the process of being created. Just as Michel de Certeau pointed out that "unlike Rome, New York City's present never solidifies long enough to formulate a coherent past,"[6] Times Square – largely perceived as the geographical and metaphorical center of the city – never solidifies long enough to formulate a coherent present.

This is not to suggest that this characteristic of perpetual motion is apparent only in this most recent incarnation of New York City's midtown area. Nor is it a notion that is apparent only in "electrified" cityscapes. Back in 1848, nearly half a century before electricity, let alone screen technologies, became a standard policy of city planning, Marx and Engels provided an indirect response to de Certeau's claim. In a famous passage[7] from the *Communist Manifesto*, they wrote:

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered forms, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away; all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.[8]

Following Marx and Engels, although humans are "at last" free from any sense of constraints from nature or from religion ("holy"), they nevertheless are caught in the conditions of relating to other human beings. The reason why New York cannot mature with its past is not because of the electronic screens of Times Square. It is rather because

of the constantly revolutionizing social relations at the core of capitalist constructs. In order to maintain a social structure dominated by bourgeois ideals, modern capitalist logics develop systems that are always in flux, always prepared to change, always dependent on and susceptible to input from other sources. The result is a system that develops and redevelops relations to production and consumption, thereby constantly prepared to host revolutionary relations. Conclusively, the screens in Times Square are a result of ongoing and fundamental social relations that are essential to capitalist structures. They embody the aims to produce structures that are always open for destruction yet always ready for reconstructions and redevelopments.[9]

Additionally, following Foucault's critique of Marx, we need not necessarily argue that this is a social relation determined solely through economical means.[10] Rather, perpetual change in the society's class structures is a characteristic that is found in all modern liberal democratic societies where the practice of social discourse is perceived to be one of that society's highest principles. In analyzing liberal societies, Foucault argued that instead of asserting how social conditions and struggles are based on subjects' material relations to production and consumption, what we need is an understanding of how privileged comprehensions of these material relations play formative roles in organizing and legitimizing that society's forms of social coercion.[11] In other words, Foucault argued that social conditions and struggles always take some form or another, even in the supposedly freest and most liberal of societies. Yet in no way do such forms determine the reality of that society's conditions, nor does the identification of these conditions make us become better attentive to ways that do away with social coercions.

That is, Foucault argues, even the humanitarian rationales of Marx and Engels inevitably lead to other structures of legitimization of certain ideas over others, and therefore for new systemizations of discipline, control and ultimately to new forms of coercion.

To sum thus far, as much as Times Square's characteristic of constant change is a product of economically meshed social relations, it is also a product of institutionally fabricated discourses accompanying and legitimizing the processes that satisfy the desires for constant revolution. I want to suggest that this characteristic of modern liberal societies is reflected upon, and is negotiated through, screens found in public spaces. My argument, in short, is that the multiplicity of forms and ideas surrounding screens in public spaces is endemic to and characteristic of fundamental and inseparable epistemological concerns and paradoxes found in modern liberal capitalist societies. These concerns do not only grow out of such societies, they are also, more crucially, the very epistemological structures supporting these societies.

Why "Public Screens"?

At this point it is appropriate to note that the identification of a proper and useful terminology about these screens – a fundamental and elementary aspect needed to develop a proper study of any media technology – is nevertheless, at least in the Anglo-centric world, vitally missing. The reason is not because there is a shortage of terms being used about public screens. On the contrary, the vocabulary is incredibly extensive and grows out of four varied kinds of epistemological focuses, circulating marketing, architecture, urban and media studies.[12] Just a list of marketing terms illustrates how

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diverse the vocabulary is: "large-screen video displays" (LSVD),[13] "digital out-of-home" (DOOH or OOH), "digital place-based advertising," "retail media," "digital outdoor advertising," "electronic billboard," "electronic signage," "digital billboard," and "digital signage."[14]

Apprehensiveness with this mixed collection of terms has been reflected in industry trade publications such as, for example, when Peter Miles, Chief executive of SUBtb – a UK marketing agency using television screens strategically placed at various locations around university campuses – wrote that OOH screen media cannot be "lumped together" or "analyzed as a generality."[15] For Miles, each use of OOH screen attempts to satisfy what he calls a "consensus" between the audience, the environment (i.e. the bar, the street, the hospital waiting room, etc.), the "social occasion" (i.e. celebration, transit, time-wasting, etc.) – and the screen. The combination of each of these aspects varies in different ways. Moreover, as Miles's concerns illustrate, every use of OOH media, even the ones using the exact same technology, aims to be uniquely and noticeably different from the rest.

If marketing interests have concentrated on grouping these screens into categories of newly developing advertising strategies, architecture theories sought to identify them as recent developments in the field of architecture. The terminology that has grown out of this domain of knowledge is equally as diverse as that from marketing. A brief list of terms used in architecture theory includes: 'media architecture' (or 'mediatecture'),[16] 'media-façades,'[17] 'immaterial architecture,'[18] 'hypersurface architecture,'[19] 'superflat-architecture,'[20] and 'symbolic architecture.'[21] Similarly, the vocabularies formulated out

of urban and media studies have sought for ways to describe these screens as developments in the social fabrics of modern societies. To be sure, 'development' here is not necessarily regarded as a sign of progress but rather as a result of a set of social, economical, and cultural circumstances and challenges facing modern environments today. A limited list growing out of this domain of research about public screens includes the 'urban screen'[22] and the 'networked screen.'[23]

There are at least two reasons why an overall consensus for such a vast pool of terms exists. The first reason is the fact that screens have been around for centuries, and have appeared in many different forms.[24] Conversely, in the past two decades or so, there has been an eruption in the multiplicity of forms these screens have been taking. This is true for both profit-oriented as well as community-conscious screens. That is, both the screens that have commercial aims as well as those that aim to enhance the social and cultural realities of the contexts in which they are found, try to attract audiences in ways that are unique both from their surrounding environments as well as from other screens. Thus, the development of each screen is also the development of distinctions between screens and other screens, as well as between screens and other constructed spaces.

A second reason may be found in an ethical sensibility and responsibility, in academia and modernity at large, to enable a multiplicity of relations – discourses and their communicative forms – to co-exist parallel to one another, without the demarcation or the assimilation of these cultural forms through constructed terminologies. For example, current debates about the future of Film Studies have resulted in a refocusing of the field on finding ways to define the cultural forms of cinema through assessments of

its material and historical specificity.[25] Certain advocates of Film Studies, fearing a swallowing up of the discipline through its placement in the broader contexts of Media and Communication Studies, seek to maintain and further solidify the study of film by defining its boundaries as autonomously and materially unique from other media. On the other hand, advocates supporting an expansion of the discipline, fearing its alienation from other academic disciplines, seek ways to illustrate how cinema has always been diverse both historically and contemporaneously. Putting their differences aside, both camps are equally invested in perpetuating an epistemological framework recognizing a multiplicity of discursive and communicative forms. However different their outcomes may seem, both sides are preoccupied with the existence of a multiplicity of communicative forms.

For these two reasons it has become very challenging to identify clearly and succinctly what it is I am looking at. To use Raymond Williams's terminology, a historical analysis of public screens consists of both "archaic", "residual", as well as, "emergent" cultural forms, and as such demand very systematic analytical approaches that can at once focus on specific, broad, as well as, dominant characteristics.

What I want to say is I am looking at public screens. My immediate reason for choosing this term is simply because it suits a description of screens found in public spaces – streets, transit stations, malls, airports, schools, hospitals, libraries. Unlike television, computer, or cinema screens, which are typically found in the private spaces of the home or the privately owned, enter with purchase only, movie theatres, the screens I am interested in are largely situated in places where neither of these two constraints

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typically exist. However, the conditions and realities of modernity are not as simple as this. Television, computer, and cinema screens are not strictly found solely in private spaces. Nor do the spaces where they are found are strictly defined as private.

The term public screen is limiting for many reasons and is thus admittedly very problematic. Simply put, there are rarely, if ever, instances where a screen is completely public. In most cases, public screens are owned and run by commercially based enterprises that aim to produce monetary profits from the technology. Even a publically funded project such as BBC's Big Screens – currently made up of 18 large screens situated in various public city centers around the UK and predominantly displays BBC content[26] – has demonstrated an ability to increase commercial revenues in the locations where these screens are found.[27] Conversely, and this viewpoint is especially prominent in conservative US politics, the ownership and the maintenance of such screens by non-profit organizations such as government agencies, also intrude, though very contrastingly, on the ways such screens can be in the possession of a public.

The term 'public screen' is an ideal. Its meanings are different in different contexts. Therefore, it is because of the idiosyncrasies of this term I have chosen to use it. Not because this term defines the subject matter any better than other terms, but rather because this term emphasizes, and places itself within, the debate about the ideal version of a public. It is in these kinds of debates about the construction of ideal public spaces, where much of this media type has always been found.[28] Although it could be argued that the term may seem to be truncating the debate about an ideal public space, I believe it actually serves more as a conduit for this debate to exist and prolong itself longer.

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Perhaps terms such as 'common,' 'communal,' or even 'collective,' screens would equally enforce a similar sensibility towards this ideal versioning of the public. However, I think such terms would hinder our understanding of the ways private individuals – who make up institutions, organizations, as well as companies – are involved in the essential material and discursive processes of development and sustainment of these screens. Not only do the textual content, the geographical placement, or the technological development of these screens are always managed (on some level) by private individuals, eliminating the concept of the private entity – as either a collective subject or as an autonomous being – will also eliminate a crucially important component of the formation of the public. After all, a public is the formation and assimilation of private entities.

In short, I chose the term 'public screen' in agreement with Stuart Hall's proposition that "the only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency."[29] I believe that by using this term we can continue situating the study of such screens firmly within the theoretically challenging concepts of privacy and publicity, not because they are clearly understood but because they are always in the process of being defined.

Outline of the Work

This thesis concentrates on a particular historical instance (approximately 1978 to 1988) of a particular site (Times Square), where the very material characteristics of public screens were being discussed as legitimate public concerns, both regionally, nationally as well as internationally. To be sure, this instance and the issues I highlight

are selected particularly because of the influence they have had on public debate about public screens both nationally and internationally. However, they are by no means isolated issues. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that all sites with public screens have been directly informed by these events. It is to stress, however, that ideas circulating about these screens do have historical precedence that cannot be ignored.

This thesis is broken down into three chapters. Chapter one, "From Cultural Materialism to Spatial Materialism: The Materialisms of Public Screens and their Historical Analyses," begins with a more detailed discussion of how public screens have been academically analyzed dominantly as emergent media. Using the analytical framework of cultural materialism I argue that such approaches have been unable to situate public screens within a dynamic set of historical causes. I therefore bring into focus a particular set of questions that concentrate on understanding public screens within the configuration of social order. How are screens utilized, shaped, and defined as technologies that support social order and discipline within the historical and geographical context in which they are found? Remaining within the framework of cultural materialism, I emphasize the spatial materialism approach which sets to respond to those exact questions.[30] To clarify, if cultural materialism looks at communication practices as fields of struggle, spatial materialism concentrates on understanding how these communication practices are organized and ordered as technologies of discipline.

I emphasize these two materialist approaches for three reasons. The first and most obvious reason is because my research sought to find an instance when the physical properties of public screens in Times Square were being discussed and debated. Such an

instance, I believe, best reveals how technologies are made to fit into social and cultural struggles. When I came across the notion that many of the screens were planned to be removed, this was not only a clear navigational source for further research, it also meant that much of the theoretical discussion would need to concentrate on ideas about space. What would the space of Times Square look like without public screens? Thus, in my field research I have concentrated on analyzing the material properties of Times Square in ways that would bring to the fore the textual properties of this space. On the other hand, I have also concentrated on finding how during the 1980s this space was being analyzed, appropriated, and discussed by political, corporate, and cultural bodies. My aim in undertaking these two contrasting routes was to combine an understanding of spaces not only as extensions of social bodies, or as texts in themselves, but also as objects that are in motion within a constellation of social struggles.

It is important to note that throughout this thesis the two concepts – spatiality and materiality – rarely solidify long enough to be defined as causal factors that can have any impact on the place of screens in Times Square. In fact, one of the dominant aims of this thesis is to illustrate how the meanings of these two concepts can easily be evaporated from them. This is why I began this introduction by situating the reader in Herald Square, a location that physically obtains the exact same spatial design as Times Square, yet is located just a short walk away from it. How is it that these two places differ from one another in so many ways? To briefly respond, in analyzing spaces as material objects, we need not only identify how social struggles shape and inhabit spaces, we also need to

recognize that very similar spatial designs are shaped differently and in accordance with particular sets of social circumstances.

In chapter two, "A Cultured Space for the Flaneur's Governmentality: Disciplining Modernity's Crowd," I describe in greater detail Michel Foucault's influence on spatial materialism and the relations between materiality, space, and discipline. Bringing attention to Foucault's analysis of panopticism and the ordering of modern liberal societies, as well as his concept of "governmentality," I argue that the spatial design of Times Square fits with already established objectives, set out by modern social systems, aiming to regulate liberal social practices. I propose that efforts to redevelop Times Square were coherent with using the space as a facilitator of the figure of *flaneur* – the aimlessly strolling urban pedestrian. However, I argue, such efforts also facilitated a public discussion where competing ideas about what the particular type of flaneur for this space was going to be like. Was it going to be a convention hall visitor, a businessman, a tourist? Was this person going to want the space to look like a work place or a place for leisure activities? In other words, although the aim was always to develop a space that was coherent with making the population civilly ordered and economically, as well as, culturally productive, the redevelopment was a process of negotiation about what the perfect type of disciplined subject for Times Square was going to be.

It is important to note that my conception of a disciplined subject in modern societies understands the notion of discipline as an imagined and transformative construct that is formulated differently in accordance with the contexts in which it is found. That is, definitions of ideal types of discipline are particular both to historical as well as

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geographical dynamics. For example, just as a conception of a civil individual is different

between two eras, so does it differ between two geographical locations. Clearly discipline

in Canada is not the same as it is even somewhere as close as the US. But we must think

of these differences in even more specific geographical terms. For example, a disciplined

behaviour does not look the same in a Jazz bar as it does in a pub. One simply does not

behave in the same manner in these two different places. Discipline is an ongoing process

that is never the same. Thus, in this thesis I emphasize that one of the very objects that

were being negotiated between the different competing bodies was the type of

disciplinary subject that the space was being redeveloped for.

The third chapter, "Between Screens of Limestone and a Bowl of Light: The

Special Times Square Signage Requirements and the Issues of Scale," illustrates in detail

how the space of Times Square was conceived, by a variety of competing political,

corporate, and cultural forces, as a facilitator of a particular type of civil society. In it I

trace out how competing ideas about civility and culture, filtered through political and

economic processes, were ultimately responsible to the cementing of public screens as

objects worthy of legal and cultural conservation. I argue that the discursive framework

surrounding the Times Square redevelopment resulted in the establishment and

enforcement of a set of specific "special signage requirements" for the Times Square

area, thereby cementing Times Square's public screens as objects of legal protection.

In order to illustrate how public screens are emblematic of challenges that are

characteristic to modern liberal societies, I argue what is needed are more historically

informed grasps at the rationales given during particularly revealing instances when the

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actual instrumentalizations of public screens for social and cultural purposes can be measured. The past decade has been witness to a growing interest in screens in public spaces. Even though some of this research has provided a historical framework,[31] I argue what is need is further historical inquiry about this media type. This will help establish the groundwork for such theories as network society, immaterial architecture, and the urban screen. In the very least, this will aid in explaining what were the forces that helped shape such notions.

CHAPTER 1

From Cultural Materialism to Spatial Materialism: The Materialisms of Public Screens and their Historical Analyses

> At the very centre of a major area of modern thought and practice, which it is habitually used to describe, is a concept, 'culture', which in itself, through variation and complication, embodies not only the issues but the contradictions through which it has developed. The concept at once fuses and confuses the radically different experiences and tendencies of its formation. It is then impossible to carry through any serious cultural analysis without reaching towards a consciousness of the concept itself: a consciousness that must be … historical.
>
> – Raymond William, *Marxism and Literature*[1]

> A whole history remains to be written of *spaces* – which would at the same time be the history of *powers*.
>
> – Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power"[2]

Media intersects with space at nearly every crossroad. Not only in Times Square but in every process of every media and in every location. Not only do media alter our relationships to space, as Henri Lefebvre and Harold Innis both differently point out, space itself is a human construct that never is abstractly found in nature and therefore always belongs to a human system of thought situated within communicated social

practices.[3] As such, following Lefebvre, space should be properly understood as a socially produced and organized entity. However, the intersections between media and culture are also equally numerous, since every medium both reworks and is reworked by, facilitates and is facilitated by, defines and is defined by, the cultural contexts in which it is found and which are created through it. Thus, understanding the intersections between media, space, and culture are notable not only because they intersect with one another but also because, as Williams and Foucault argued in the quotes above, each of these concepts have been of central, and therefore of formative, concerns to issues of power in modern societies.

Although questions about space have been a central point of investigation to analyses dealing with public screens, questions about culture have been largely missing. Much of the work looking at public screens has sought to define not the discourses circulating about specific screens, but has rather attempted to formulate ideas about how the material presence of public screens (as an abstract whole) mediate the environment and, as such, determine social relations. Little work has looked into the ways specific public screens have been historically formulated as cultural objects, or how they have been shaped by specific social discourses.

In the following two chapters I will argue that there exist parallels between two convoluted concepts – space and culture – both of which have been important, in different ways, to the study and the shaping of modernity. Through the work of Michel Foucault I will illustrate how both concepts have been equally complex, equally convoluted, and equally important to maintaining discipline and social process (as

opposed to progress) in modernity. My argument, in short, is that both space and culture serve disciplinary functions in modern liberal societies, but that in order to understand how spatial designs materialize we need to understand them as belonging to cultural discourses – or more properly, discourses about culture. Correlatively in order for culture to materialize it needs be realized in space. This correlation between space, culture, and discipline is especially notable in Times Square where many media types – particularly public screens, but also a variety of other media including: television networks, publishing houses, plays, musicals, movies, restaurants, hotels, museums, and transportation systems, to name a few – and where ideas about culture (understood here as a civilized and modernized social environment) played important roles in transforming and defining the physical characteristics of Times Square.

In this chapter I will describe the ways by which the study of public screens has on the one hand benefitted from an analysis of space, but has on the other hand fallen short of fully comprehending the ways with which screens and space have been historically shaped into apparatuses of cultural discipline in modern liberal societies. I will begin by discussing the cultural materialism framework out of which this thesis grows, but will argue that although this approach has proven to be beneficial in a number of ways – namely to understand that media are objects shaped by ongoing social practices and multiple agencies – it does have the potentiality of leading analyses in erroneous ways. Thus, I will turn attention to a second complementary approach – spatial materialism – which threads from the same theoretical framework but offers solutions to some of cultural materialism's shortcomings.

Cultural Materialism, Relational Spaces, and Digital Globalized Culture – What is missing?

This thesis grows out of a framework designated by cultural studies, particularly following the cultural materialist approaches of James Carey and Raymond Williams.[4] Cultural studies approaches the study of media by emphasizing the contexts in which media are found as well as the contexts they create. As Carey argued, the study of media need not conceptualize communication solely "as a process of transmitting messages at a distance for the purpose of control" stemming out of, what he called, the "transmission or transportation view" of communication. Media studies must also conceptualize communication "as a process through which a shared culture is created, modified, and transformed" (or, what Carey called the "ritual model").[5] Communication and media forms are not entities separated from their social contexts dictating how social relations are formed. Rather, as Raymond Williams showed with television broadcasting, communication and media forms are entities that grow out of already established, and (crucially) establishing, social relations. In other words, communication is both found in social contexts and it is where and how social relations make themselves apparent.

A particular approach that both Williams and Carey follow is that of cultural materialism, in which media texts are analyzed in relation to the socio-historical contexts out of which they grow. Instead of floating in a realm, cultural materialism insists that media texts grow out of, as responses to, ongoing social struggles. Importantly, the theory driving cultural materialism is not of a technological determinism such as the one presented by Marshall McLuhan where technologies are thought to dictate, guide, or

control social structures. Both Williams and Carey identify McLuhan's theories, in the very least, as problematically ideological. Cultural materialism maintains that cultural and social agencies are the guiding forces behind technological use, and that technologies do not materialize only "new" kinds of environments. As Jonathan Sterne argues, following the cultural materialist approach, "a technology is a repeatable social, cultural and material process (which is to say that it is all three at once) crystallized into a mechanism or set of related mechanisms."[6] Making use of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, Sterne argues that technologies are material articulations of *habitus* – roughly, embodied mental dispositions, social knowledge, and personal habits that structure the field of culture – and therefore, like habitus, are "always, at any given moment, socially located … always implicated in social struggle."[7] Sterne's mobilization of *habitus* is important because, as Williams similarly argued, technologies must be understood as environments in which social relations are enacted, not in ways that necessarily determine those relations, but in ways that are necessarily determined by social relations.[8]

Yet to suggest that social relations are deterministic is also a misleading notion that both Williams and Carey do not agree with. Williams and Carey do not think of society or culture as consistently solid entities that are economically determined or controlled by given and unchanging social relations such as class, gender, or race. Both argue that conceptualizing society as rigidly unchanging, concentrates on understanding only a certain type of social agency and does not account for a multiplicity of other agents in the social field who come in a variety of kinds, and who are proportionately (if not equally) involved in generating culture and the social environment. Moreover, no

person can be said to belong to only one type of agency. For example, the sheer diversity of occupations making up the workforce is enough to suggest that the "working class" cannot be minimized to only one description. Working persons can usually also be described as fathers/mothers, brothers/sisters, immigrants/born citizens, young/middle-aged/senior, etc. That is, they are rarely only working persons. Society is made up of a variety of agents – even the simplest social model of ruler/ruled consists of at least two agencies (the ruler and the ruled) – who themselves rarely stay the same, and can never be defined as a constant or always unified. Given that society and culture cannot be understood as strictly unchanging, social and cultural relations cannot therefore be said to be led by, or to be leading, singularly determining structures.

I stress the cultural materialism approach because in the past two decades public screen studies have also wrestled with similar notions of materiality, describing how the material presence of screens have been shaping and transforming the spaces around them, and using these observations as signifiers of manifested social relations. For example, in her work Lynn Spigel illustrates how television screens were situated within already established notions and discourses about private and public spaces, altering but not effacing gender and class structures within domestic spaces and society at large.[9] As Anna McCarthy summarizes, "when the TV set becomes part of the family living room, it not only adapts to the conventional spatial or sensorial arrangement of its location, but it also enters into, and takes up a position within, the immaterial networks of power that characterize family life."[10] The fact that early television sets were designed to look like furniture is indicative of how television screens were materially designed to fit within

cultural norms of ideal bourgeois domestic spaces, in order to minimize the technology's

visual presence and the potential disruption of gendered structures.

Amongst Spigel, McCarthy, David Morley, and a number of other writers who

adapt the cultural materialist approach,[11] there is an effort to understand the physical

characteristics of the world not as determining factors but rather as constructs belonging,

and contributing to, ongoing discourses about society, culture, space and ultimately the

organization of power. However, in comparison, public screen studies scholars have

regarded materiality in strictly determining ways, and to a certain extent have followed

the path of technological as well as economic determinism. For example, Scott McQuire

argues that the placement of screens and the display of moving images on urban surfaces

create, what he calls, "relational spaces."

> The modern city has become a media-architecture complex in which the
>
> mediatised production of urban space has become a constitutive frame for
>
> a new mode of social experience. It's an experience characterized by what
>
> I call relational space: space which has been stripped of inherent qualities,
>
> such as stable dimensions and appearances (and of course stable social
>
> meanings), but is increasingly experienced as shifting, variable and
>
> contingent. Relational space can only be defined by the temporary position
>
> occupied by each subject in relation to numerous others, which suggests
>
> that relational space is not easily unified since every subject belongs to
>
> multiple matrices or networks that overlap and interpenetrate. The
>
> heterogeneity of relational space is a key experience of contemporary

globalization, and demands new ways of thinking about how we might

share space to constitute collective experience.[12]

McQuire's point that not only are the physical properties of the environments always

changing, the users are themselves always changing, is an observation that arguably is

key to the study of any media, not only public screens. However, there is an important

factor missing from McQuire's equation and that is a *specificity* of relations. Or as

McCarthy argues, lacking from such analysis is the factoring of the specificity of site –

both physical and social location – of the media technology in question.[13] Where and how

media technologies fit into the social and material environments, is arguably more

informative than the development of a theoretical conception of how this media alters

conceptions of space. McQuire needs to better identify the social processes by which

public screens can lead to the creation of "relational space." Public screens do not exist in

a timeless and placeless tube, enacting their roles within the metaphor of relational space,

nor do they simply appear anywhere in the world under any circumstances, nor do they

produce an indecisive or undesired set of relational outcomes. Public screens are

constructed and integrated into very site-specific locations within urban environments, as

well as within social discourses.

McQuire's concern comes as a response to Manuel Castells's argument that

traditional organization of space, guided and defined by the physical properties of places

– what Castells calls "the logic of the space of places"[14] – have been replaced due to the

disappearance of the domination of physical traits within the structures of social relations.

Castells's argument suggests that the physical characteristics of urban environments,

which to a certain extent guide the structures of power and developments of a given

society, have recently given way to a new type of guiding principle. This new principle,

according to Castells, has come about due to the abilities of electronic technologies to

eliminate the laws of physical relations between places, and to better direct the logics of

information flows through networked economic systems, or what he calls "the space of

flows." Although Castells's "space of flows" is in some ways similar to McQuire's

"relational spaces," the two can be distinguished. Whereas Castells's formula depends on

a relation between two structured logics, McQuire's only concentrates on one. For

Castells, the electronic infrastructure of the space of flows is closely tied to the

networking of economic forces in modern capitalist economic relations across the globe,

in much the same way that, for example, colonial powers followed the logic of space of

places which they enforced through naval infrastructures. Moreover, in Castells's

formula, the space of flows does not diminish but rather displaces the logics of the space

of places: "The space of flows does not permeate down to the whole realm of human

experience in the network society. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of people, in

advanced and traditional societies alike, live in places, and so they perceive their space as

place-based."[15] According to Castells, the space of places does not cease to exist, it only

becomes a less dominant structural mode of development. McQuire, on the other hand,

opts to categorize all urban experiences as being (to a certain extent) mediated, adding

that "it is important to recognize a longer and more diverse history of the *mediated*

production of urban space than the tight concentration on ICTs by those such as

Castells."[16] In other words, for McQuire, places have always been relational spaces or

spaces of flows.

Although theoretically McQuire's argument may be true – as Doreen Massey correctly argued, places are "always in process of formation: [they are] in a sense forever unachieved"[17] – the analysis he proposes makes it highly problematic to map out exactly how the mediated city actually becomes mediated. McQuire risks essentializing definitions of public screens as being producers of only a specific type of social logic, even though it is that of a changing relationship between always changing social subjects. As Massey added, "the identity of places is very much bound up with the histories which are told of them, how those histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant."[18] The source of McQuire's misconstruction is his concentration, and separation, of cultural logics based on technological eras. Questions about the kinds of decision processes involved in the making of mediated cities, and about the kinds of institutions enforcing such decisions (which existed long before the digital culture actually materialized), are simply left out of McQuire's equation. In other words, the "mediated city" should be understood as such not only because it contains screens that facilitate "relational spaces," but also because there are social processes that encourage it to do so, both historically as well as contemporaneously. Social forces that encouraged the construction of the mediated city, at least in the case of Times Square, legitimized their stance not only by presenting rationale about the present or future changes that could have been made to improve the social situation hosted in the space, but also by presenting rationale about the space's past, defining it as heritage worthy of preservation. However constructed this position may also have been, it simply cannot be discounted

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from our understanding of the mediated city.

In her study of the global economy, urban and social theorist Saskia Sassen offers a slightly different approach to analyzing the mediated city, arguing that public screens work as products as well as signifiers of the kinds of efforts cities need to showcase in order to compete within an international property market. According to Sassen, the inclusions of screens within new urban developments are a result of a competitive global economy. At the same time, for Sassen, screens in public spaces also work in a way that helps cities project an image of themselves as economically competitive centers in the global economy. She states, "the central areas of a growing number of cities have become a part of an international property market […] They become the arena for major architectural projects […] This, in turn, emerges as a formula for signaling that a city is ready to enter the global system and assume global city functions."[19] Secondly, because there is a flow of capital between cities around the globe, there is therefore more capital being poured into urban environments. As a result, according to Sassen, it becomes essential for cities to reinvest some of the in-flowing capital into their urban infrastructures. In order to compete within the global economy, and to signify that a city has a competitively healthy edge, urban centers need to find ways to increase the value of their real estate properties, and therefore do so through the facilitation of urban renewal projects. To clarify, Sassen does aim to illustrate how power in globalized digital economies manifests in "new types of spatialisations of power."[20] Unlike McQuire or Castells, Sassen aims to analyze global societies not as place-less or immaterial locales, but rather as a newly developing systemization of "spatial, economic, and cultural

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elements that are part of the urban global economy."[21] She thus calls for the

"spatialisations of global and digital dynamics and formations" in ways that emphasize

the "connectivity" between competing actors – such as dominating corporate entities

versus social activists, as well as, rich versus poor urban sectors.[22]

Sassen therefore aims to challenge McQuire's and Castells's conception of the

mediatised globalized economy as an immaterial entity. Concepts such as software,

hardware, applications, open source, megabytes, terabytes, kilobytes per second, torrents,

forums, threads, blogs, wikis, tweets, email, USB, GPS, 3G, 4G, 3GS, flat screen, router,

wireless, interactive, pixel, HD, 1080p, 1080i, touch-screen, mp3, etc., have all entered

the public vocabulary of the capitalist society within just merely a decade. In the digital

culture, Sassen argues, these are not concepts or ideas that are simply floating in an

imaginary discourse. These are notions that stem from very material habits streaming into

collective social experiences. It is not hard to imagine how, accompanying this type of

cultural formulation, architects have begun converging digital technologies into their

designs. In fact, it would be perplexing not to see these technologies being adapted into,

or have any influence on, the material characteristics of public environments. Conversely,

it seems the opposite is more precise; architecture needs to adapt itself into the newly

dominating technological realities in order to maintain a cohesive relationship with other

surrounding material formations. The convergence of traditional architectural structures

along with an array of digital technologies – such as Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs),

Liquid Crystal Displays (LCDs), digital projectors, surveillance cameras, and numerous

other technologies – can be regarded as prevailing forms of architectural expression in

much the same way that skyscrapers did during the last century when the logics of building higher meant the presentation of powerful and secure business, industrial, cultural, as well as social strategies. The only difference being that instead of signifying security, stability, and progress through the construction of tall structures, today the aim is to build stronger and faster networks of communication. However, this is only one line of reasoning that aims to explain the place of public screens in modern urban landscapes. At best, this reasoning can be described as simply descriptive. Simply put, explaining the place of public screens in the urban landscape as a development that is in correspondence with other technological developments does not explain how public screens are regulated as objects belonging to other dynamics of power that can be broadly identified as political, economic, as well as, cultural.

Countering this approach, Mike Crang and Stephen Graham argue that the networking of public spaces has increasingly become informed by a number of different areas of knowledge, growing out of a number of institutional as well as commercial interests in capitalist societies, each involved with the shaping of urban environments.[23] Crang and Graham point out that the material properties of computers are increasingly becoming an integral component of the ways public spaces are being imagined, as well as, physically and visually experienced. They categorize three ways computers are used to create ubiquitous, ambient, and immersive environments. Firstly, commercial-oriented enterprises trace and record consumer behavioral patterns. Second, the military develops ways to better locate terrorist activity in urban environments. And lastly, the art and cultural communities keep the public aware of the kinds of developments occurring

within the other two categories through the production of art objects that are also put on display in the urban environment. Through their study Crang and Graham present a dialectical analysis between different technologies – screens, computers, surveillance cameras – and their different uses concluding that there are at least three strands of thought surrounding ubiquitous computer approaches. Each one of these strands defines space in related yet distinct ways: (1) augmenting space (adding to the experience of the world); (2) enacting space (making the world responsive to itself); and (3) transducting space (remapping relations between users and computers based on gathered data).

However, here we can again detect a concentration on immediate practices, and therefore a lack of historical contextualization. Like McQuire and Castells, Crang and Graham also illustrate how developments of digital technologies are intricately connected to ideas about space as well as powerful institutions within capitalist societies. However, much like McQuire and Castells, Crang's and Graham's argument attempts to articulate an understanding of public screens solely as emerging platforms, belonging to "new" economies, social experiences, or political systems. In talking about mediatised environments, and public screens in particular, we need to stress the importance of the places in which they are found – their contemporary as well as historical conditions – and not to simply concentrate on the ways they contribute to a futurological versioning of reality. The analyses presented by such authors risk losing sight of how public screens belong to ongoing tractions of modern social and cultural systems, and how these tractions have been adhesive to liberal societies for centuries. After all, public screens have been a part of the urban landscape long before the digital globalized economy has

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been a part of modern societies. What is needed, to use Sassen's terms, is an understanding of different types of "spatialisations of power" that would enable the construction of a "narrative about economic globalization … that includes rather than excludes all the spatial, economic, and cultural elements that are part of the urban global economy as it is constituted in cities and the increasingly structured networks of which they are a part."[24]

Clearly each of these studies has undoubtedly contributed to the development and understanding of public screens. My aim is not to discount or do away with these analyses. Rather, I want to help clarify how public spaces such as Times Square have developed into epicenters of the digital, networked, and globalized economies, politics, and cultures. While much of the work discussed has been constructive, it nevertheless still needs further development in order to respond to the questions: why and how did interests in transforming the material and spatial constructs of the spaces around public screens come about long before the digital global economy was a reality? And, why did the forces interested in this change choose the form of public screens as opposed to any other material forms? That is, the "flow" of the digital global economy needs not necessarily be represented, or function, through screens. More importantly, the presence of public screens in the urban environment existed long before the digital globalized economy. What are needed, therefore, are more historically comprehensive analyses describing how screens were legitimized as material aspects of the urban landscape, not analyses concentrating solely on identifying screen technologies as analogies for economic systems. In order to understand how screens are situated within modern social

systems we need to identify how screens have been validated as legitimate material

objects in urban environments.

From Cultural to Spatial Materialism

Cultural materialism looks at the physical make-up of social practices in order to

trace out how social relations are formulated into objects at a particular place and time.

Thus cultural materialism argues that analyses of media can uncover broader social and

cultural terrains. However, cultural materialism does not simply look at the materiality of

these practices as conclusive evidence. For cultural materialism the materiality of objects

is merely a starting point for understanding the degree by which social agencies have

been involved in the direct construction of the media environment. In cultural materialist

analyses, texts are understood as articles where political, economic, gendered, racial, and

other social relations become cultural objects. To be clear, they are cultured not only in

the sense of a civilized or developed society that is intellectually capable to appreciate art

objects or use a system of meanings and values. They are also cultured in the definition

of culture as an intricate, yet mundane, aspect of everyday life. For example, screens in

public space can stand in as art objects when they display art or are displayed on museum

façades as art, but they are also frequently found in bars displaying sports games, in

corner-stores displaying closed circuit security camera images, and on highways

displaying traffic information. Or to make an observation that is more pointedly related to

this thesis, some of the screens in Times Square – such as the Coca-Cola screen, the ABC

screen, the NASDAQ screen, the Reuters screens, and the American Eagle screen,

displaying advertisements as well as information – are sculptured to look like art objects by themselves regardless of the content they display. Each of these examples illustrates a different intricate aspect of public screen technologies that is correspondingly placed in different dimensions of everyday practices, and ultimately culture.

But we are already here, within the conditions set out by cultural materialism, treading in a mingled set of ideas. What is it that cultural materialism analyzes? Is it the text or the form of media? Clearly the response can be both. However, as was illustrated by McQuire, Castells, Sassen and Crang and Graham, the shift from text to media form is not always consistent – definitely not historically speaking – and can, therefore, lead to a multiplicity of incomplete analyses.

Recognizing these deficiencies in cultural materialism is the complementary methodology of spatial materialism. Spatial materialism grows out of cultural materialism's recognition that culture is a result of a host of agencies and that it is, furthermore, practiced in multiple ways. However, it is also a response to the analytical shortcomings that arise as a result of the cultural materialist approach. As James Hay argues,

> [while cultural materialism] emphasize[d] that culture is the cumulative effect of multiple practices/rituals in the daily lives of particular populations and classes, the binarism [of ritual/transmission models of communication] has little to say about how power is exercised as/through ritual in daily life, and how these rituals are not only governmentalized through institutions but instrumental to the way that individuals and populations control themselves.[25]

To clarify, Hay's point specifically discusses James Carey's binary between transmission and ritual models of communication. According to Hay, Carey's binary grew out of his polemical attempts to transform American media and communication studies by emphasizing how their focus has largely been about shaping and defining media only in terms of "spatial-biases" and not in terms of "temporal-biases" (two terms Carey borrowed from Harold Innis). In analyzing communication solely as transmission/transportation models, Carey argued, American media studies heavily concentrated on perfecting the spatial-biases of media, thereby continuing the traditions of colonialism and the geographical expansion of empire, all while leaving aside their temporal biases and thus interrupting the developments of community building. Carey's point was that media do not obtain any biases in particularly, but rather obtain such biases through existing social processes. Spatial materialism agrees with this, however it is also here where the two approaches (at least in the way Carey conducts cultural materialism) part ways. As Hay argues, Carey's emphasis on the ritual model promotes a temporal bias of communication, through the assertion that this will help eliminate structures of power and strategies of control. While the promotion of the ritual model may be useful and constructive to media studies at the moment, Hay argues, it ultimately hinders analyzing the ways that power also manifests in and through it. Power in media does not simply disappear once its temporal biases are emphasized, but rather takes on a different form. As Foucault argues, "power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere."[26]

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Spatial materialism resolves the problems arising through Carey's cultural materialism by focusing on the place of "media within an arrangement of social/activity spaces."[27] This is particularly important to the study of moving images where, as Charles Acland worded the simple yet crucial verity, "no two screenings are absolutely identical."[28] This truth, recognized by cultural studies and established through audience studies, correctly suggests that any notion of a stabilized audience, uniformly experiencing moving images, has never been a completely true assumption. This simple observation has thus led moving image theorists to look for other ways in which screens are situated within the social field as rectifiers of social order. As Hay argues,

> A spatial materialism of screen media not only begins with the question of locating media – of discovering where media matter – but, in doing so, it de-centers the screen as the primary or only locus of attention for media studies … focusing on the screen as part of a built environment rather than discussing screen practices purely as matters of form, representation, meaning, and ideology, and of culture understood in those terms.[29]

Although cultural materialism such as Carey's has been responsible for the elaboration of media analysis, by making the case against determinism (technological, economic, political, as well as cultural), it nevertheless has maintained a type of centrism of its own. In refocusing the attention of literary studies, away from canonical analysis and towards the analysis of cultural and historical specificity, such cultural materialism nevertheless still emphasized the use of the same analytical tools of traditional literary criticism. Questions of aesthetics, although became more socially critical and politically aware,

nevertheless still highlighted a particular set of media analyses – namely, those densely concerned with close textual analysis. Thus, cultural materialism has faulted in bringing attention to another dynamic present in media practices, and that is the assimilation of media within, and as, social practices that cannot be understood in strictly textual terms.

Analyses, such as the ones discussed in this chapter, although have each presented a deterministic view of public screens, have been able to constructively illustrate, at least partially, how public screens are situated within a particular set of social dynamics. However, what is needed is a more elaborated understanding of why and how public screens are made to fit into this aesthetic layer of the social environment. In other words, what are the processes by which the aesthetics of public screens are selected to represent the nexus of social forces? More importantly, though, it is important to understand not only what are the processes that give shape to public screens as preferred objects of display, but why are these processes so impactful to begin with? In other words, it is not enough to recognize a set of dominant agencies responsible for the construction of the social landscape, it is also important to understand why such agencies become dominant, and why do they have such an impact on decisions regarding public screens in the first place.

In the next chapter I will elaborate, in greater detail, on the spatial materialist approach, and will present one possible historical explanation to these questions. Through the work of Michel Foucault, the next chapter will illustrate how conceptions of space and culture have been equally formative of the place of public screens in modern environments. Using Foucault's concept of *governmentality* I will describe how the

spatial dynamics of Times Square need be conceptualized as a place for facilitating a

particular set of social practices, one in which public screens fit as only one layer within a

dynamic of social nexuses.

CHAPTER 2

A Cultured Space for the Flaneur's Governmentality: Disciplining Modernity's Crowd

> A whole history remains to be written of spaces – which at the same time would be the history of powers – from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat, institutional architecture from the classroom to the design of hospitals, passing via economic and political installations. It is surprising how long the problem of space took to emerge as a historico-political problem. Space used to be either dismissed as belonging to 'nature' […] or else it was conceived as the residential site or field of expansion of peoples, of a culture, a language, or a State. […] The development must be extended, by no longer just saying that space predetermines a history which in turn reworks and sediments itself in it. Anchorage in a space is an economico-political form which needs to be studied in detail.
>
> – Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power"[1]

Moving image theorists following the cultural materialism tradition, such as Charles Acland, Jonathan Crary, Anne Friedberg, Alison Griffiths, Eric Smoodin, Lynn Spigel and Haidee Wasson (to name a few), although have not directly referenced spatial materialism, have undoubtedly recognized the need to analyze an intricately complex

version of power, and have done so through the use of Michel Foucault's writings.[2] Each have adopted the spatial materialist method to analyze how media are infused into, and through, institutional processes in modern societies, while at the same time emphasized how power is not centralized but is instead spread out and diversified throughout a heterogeneous structure that is made up of institutions subdivided into knowledge groupings that share common interests. I emphasize Foucault's influence for a number of reasons. His work encompasses ideas about materiality, the place of institutions in modern societies, the nature of heterogeneous power structures, and undetermined or non-determining economic, spatial, political, and cultural, social relations. Every one of these aspects has been of central concerns to the study of media and modernity. However, the most important reason Foucault's work is of significance to this thesis is its attentiveness to the study of space as a disciplining mechanism, and to the significance it raises as an institutionally produced field of knowledge within the context of modern liberal civilizations. Therefore, although James Hay "ascribes" the term spatial materialism to Henri Lefebvre's perspective,[3] it is arguable to suggest that Foucault's writing has been as equally influential and supportive of the development of spatial materialism, as was Lefebvre's.

Foucualt's history of liberal societies defines modernity as a context of constant negotiation between liberty and authority. As Acland writes, Foucault "insisted that attention to hierarchical organizations of power alone was insufficient to explain the intricacies of modern society."[4] With the removal of monarchical structures of dominance, modern liberal societies were not vacuumed out of social relations, but were

rather forced to rethink how society can still exist as a structured and productive entity. Foucault's aim was to show that even though post-monarchical societies' ideologies were those of liberalism, such societies nevertheless still developed techniques of power that privileged certain kinds of identities while limiting many other types of liberties.[5] Instead of providing absolute freedom for all constituents, liberal societies invoked (and still invoke) sets of micro-forms of control, that are practiced not by physical force but by discursive disciplinary means, on "unwanted" types of behaviors and logics that do not correspond with the structures of ideal social discipline. Instead of torture and public executions (such as hangings and decapitations) modern liberal societies developed means of coercion that are (in the words used to justify such means of control) more "humane." Such means, Foucault argued, are expressed through and practiced within the spaces of "total institutions" such as the asylum,[6] the hospital,[7] and the prison,[8] where scientific knowledge, such as psychiatry and medicine, is believed to be a guiding pathway towards the development of a social utopia. Through these spaces, thoughts and behaviours not aligned with dominant conceptions of civilization are put through social apparatuses whose aims are to transform, discipline, correct, or in the terms of social reformers of the 17th and 18th centuries (but that can found in many instances of modern social practices through today), to "cure" those individuals suffering from improper social participation. Crucially, Foucault argued that improper social participations do not exist in nature but rather are manufactured by institutions that define certain subjectivities as abnormal or criminal, thereby legitimizing both the perpetuation of scientific knowledge as a modern realm of practice, as well as, legitimizing the disciplining of

society as a necessary and just social practice. In short, Foucault's history shows how in order for liberal societies to exist liberally, they nevertheless develop institutions and techniques that enforce constraints on many forms and modes of being not aligned with the society's social goals. It is important to note, however, that these constraints are in no way absolute and are always subject to change. Nevertheless, this does not mean that liberal societies are not constrained from rules and regulations but rather are always ready to adopt new kinds of rules and regulations. As such, liberal societies face a paradox where they could never be fully defined as liberal.

Yet, Foucault's history of discipline in modern liberal societies did not only concentrate on the so-called "total" institutional spaces of confinement through the prison, clinic, or asylum. Although many scholars have concentrated on Foucault's analysis of the Panopticon prison system, developed by 18th century theorist Jeremy Bentham, as an example of how modern societies develop techniques of constant surveillance by disseminating and integrating them into every aspect of modern societies, Foucault himself argued that it is not the material characteristics of the Panopticon that are of interest but how ideas about surveillance and control are worked through this apparatus's development.[9] As Tony Bennett argues, Foucault was in fact concerned less with the history of confined spaces, and more with the history of exhibitionary space such as the museum and other spaces of display. As Bennett argues, the Panopticon prison system is only one technique "not itself a disciplinary regime or essentially a part of one."[10]

The Panopticon grew out of a mode of thinking that aimed to discipline society by maneuvering it through objects – commercial, scientific, as well as artistic – that are displayed as knowledge in exhibitionary, museum, or shopping spaces. This mode of thinking is what Foucault referred to as *governmentality*. With this concept, the name of which is borrowed from Barthes,[11] Foucault aimed to explain how liberal societies produce social order and discipline by creating a self-governing public that circulates within, and creates, spaces that help support the processes of governance. As Bennett argues, Foucault's is not "a history of confinement but one of the opening up of objects to more public contexts of inspection and visibility: this is the direction of movement embodied in the formation of the exhibitionary complex. A movement which simultaneously helped to form a new public and inscribe it in new relations of sight and vision."[12] Even though the Panopticon confined the subject within one type of spatial design, the materiality of this design itself did not determine the social and cultural relations where the social subject was found, but rather situated and organized this subject within a constellation of institutional ideas about control and discipline through spatial and visual means.

Because modern liberal societies are made up of a variety of agents that have shaped, and have been shaped by, ideas about urban planning and other materializations of modern societies, looking at how screens in public spaces were being discussed and utilized by institutions, as tools for social and cultural developments, helps clarify the threading of public screens into the fabrics of social discourse and modern liberal societies at large. As Lee Grieveson writes, making the case for analyzing screens within

the framework of governmentality, "engagement with governmental rationalities can lead to a more thorough and precise reckoning with the place screens cultures have played in the government of self and others, in the formation of self-regulating liberal subjects and populations capable of civic and productive conduct."[13] Importantly, understanding where and how screen technologies are situated within a social field is especially useful when looking at the debates that shaped the process of Times Square's redevelopment where ideas about culture – both as art, science, and as the everyday – played crucial roles in formulating the very materialization of the screens in this space. Like the exhibitionary complex, Times Square was also shaped by the very same framework of ideas about social guidance and disciplining through spatial design.

In the next two section of this chapter I will provide a cultural materialist textual analysis of Times Square. The first will look at the spatial design of Times Square as a text. The second will begin with a textual analysis of the film *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorcese, 1976). To clarify, by thinking about the space of Times Square as a text and by contrasting this analysis with a textual analysis of a film, I aim to illustrate the kinds of analytical shortcomings that arise from textual analysis. However, on the other hand, I use these two analyses in order to underline the need for the spatial materialism approach, as well as, to clarify how Foucault understands modern liberal societies' use of space.

Times² ≠ Square

Times Square is not a square. Even though it is referred to as such, its design is not similar to the traditional city square – such as Paris's Place de la Concorde, Mexico

City's Constitution Square, Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Moscow's Red Square, or Montreal's Dorchester Square – where the geometrical definitions of a square are still represented through ninety degreed corners and perfectly equaled parameters.[14] Traditional public squares are designed in a way that does not hide any of their contents. They are made up of an open space where every part of the square is always visible from anywhere in the square. The design of Times Square, on the other hand, does not follow the same principles. Descriptions of this space regularly liken it to figures made up of two triangles: an hourglass, a funnel, or a bowtie. Unlike traditional squares, the center of Times Square is narrowed. Thus each corner is only visible through movement within the Square. In order to imagine the properties of a square one has to approach Times Square like one approaches a cubist painting, by assembling mixed perspectives into an ambivalently cohesive structure.

Although immensely different, Times Square wields a spatial design embraced more by Paris's Eiffel Tower than by any of the public squares mentioned in the previous paragraph. Incorporating two kinds of perspectives – the visions of the Tower from the city grounds, and the visions of the city from atop the Tower – as Roland Barthes points out, the Eiffel Tower is a monument about vision made up of two polarizing perspectives. It serves both as a sight to be looked at and a site to be looked from.

> Like man himself, who is the only one not to know his own glance, the Tower is
> the only blind point of the total optical system of which it is the center and Paris
> the circumference. But in this movement which seems to limit it, the Tower
> acquires a new power: an object when we look at it, it becomes a lookout in its

turn when we visit it, and now constitutes as an object, simultaneously extended

and collected beneath it, that Paris which just now was looking at it.[15]

Conversely, in this passage Barthes positions the figure of *man* in much the same way

that Marx and Engels did when they considered how "man [was] at last compelled to face

with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind." Barthes here

reconstructs the same figure of man that Marx and Engels presented a century before

him. It is again of a subject that is limited to abide to the very realities of the systems

constructed around it.

Although the Eiffel Tower was originally constructed as part of a World's Fair,

what Bennett argues is a perfect example of modernity's exhibitionary complexes, the

Tower is not like a museum space where the modern subject enters a building in order to

see objects on display. If the object of display is the Tower itself, then it cannot be seen

from inside it. The moment one enters the Tower one seizes to look at it, and is now only

able to look from it. Simultaneously, there is no sight in Paris where the tower cannot be

seen, except for when seeing Paris from within the Tower.[16] To paraphrase Barthes, the

city encompasses the Tower in its interiority simultaneously as the Tower encompasses

the city in its exteriority. The function of the Tower, aside from radio broadcasting, is to

highlight and facilitate the differences between the two kinds of perspectives it makes

available. It is equally a modern spectacular and an art object. It simultaneously

symbolizes, grows out of, and facilitates fascinations with modernity's urban

environments, architecture, technology, and everyday life.

The spatial design of Times Square facilitates a similar type of relationship between vision, the subject, and modernity. This design is both concaved and convexed – every protrusion of the Square's parameters is equally balanced by its immediate recessions on either side of each bulge. The concaving of the Square's parameters causes each corner to be pocketed from the rest of Square.[17] Yet none of the corners are completely isolated or separated. Each corner, although is surrounded by its own four parameters (each of which is covered with screens and other visual spectacles), also serves as a passageway to other parts of the Square, as well as other spectacularly masked parameters and isolated viewing positions. Therefore as much as the Square is made up of pocketed spaces for spectatorship, it is also made up of routes and transitory spaces leading to other positions of spectatorial participation. As such, it emulates both modes of *flanerie* – movement and staticity – that are so central to this subject of modernity, as identified by Walter Benjamin, by organizing both as techniques of display.[18] Simply put, Times Square is designed in such a way that enforces individuals to enter and leave each corner of the Square, thereby continuously encountering and reencountering the Square, always bringing attention, through distraction, to the act of seeing and the act of consuming modern environments. In other words, such a design caters to the sensibilities, movements, and practices of the flaneur.

Both Times Square and the Eiffel Tower articulate public space in ways that bring to the fore the difference in perspectives made available to and through the flaneur in modern environments. However, they do so through two very different material forms. The vision of the Eiffel Tower disappears the moment the flaneur enters it. Times Square,

on the other hand, doesn't visually disappear upon the flaneur's entrance. Instead what is lost here is the flaneur's orientation in the space, since movement within the Square only leads to the reorientation of looking at other parts of the Square. Yet, to repeat, both the Square and the Tower facilitate the act of seeing by simply highlighting it. Common between these two, now international tourist landmarks, is their attentiveness to spatial constructions that enable a facilitation of different sets and ways of seeing. However, because they produce similar outcomes through very different means, it is not sufficient to simply identify or analyze how Times Square and the Eiffel Tower organize space and vision in modern societies. To repeat the argument made in the previous chapter, lacking from this approach is the situating of each spatial design within the social structures and cultural discourses of, in these two cases, France's and the US's distinct contexts. Clearly space is designed differently in Times Square and the Eiffel Tower. What were the forces that helped shape each material construct, and the spatial relationships to modernity, in such disparate ways?

This thesis does not clarify how the Eiffel Tower fits into the social and cultural fabrics of Paris, but only concentrates on analyzing how Times Square was shaped by ideas that were principal to New York's political, economic, and cultural discursive domains. Nevertheless, in comparing the two constructs, it is constructive to argue that both the Eiffel Tower and Times Square grew out of modern liberal societies' efforts to systematically expand the logics of flanerie, and with them the disciplining of society through spatio-visual means, in ways that are similar to what Foucault identified as the logics of panopticism.[19] Yet, as was discussed earlier and will be expanded upon in this

chapter, Foucault did not think that the material properties of the Panopticon determined that subjects would participate in social practices as passive and powerfully inconsequential bodies void of agency. He rather saw the Panopticon as a product of concerns with issues of governance in modern liberal societies, which sought to quantify the possibilities of active agency. Furthermore, as is evident from the two different examples of the Eiffel Tower and Times Square, although panopticism can appear in very different ways, this nevertheless does not mean that panoptic techniques do not grow out of similar concerns found in two distinctly different modern liberal societies. In other words, the Tower and the Square are not completely incongruent with one another because they are both products of liberal concerns with governance. As Bennett argues about the comparison between the Panopticon and the exhibitionary complex,

> It is misleading to view the architectural problematics of the exhibitionary complex as simply reversing the principles of panopticism … The peculiarity of the exhibitionary complex is not to be found in its reversal of the principles of the Panopticon. Rather it consists in its incorporation of aspects of those principles together with those of the panorama, forming a technology of vision, which served not to atomize and disperse the crowd but to regulate it, and to do so by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle.[20]

Just as the Eiffel Tower does not invert the Panopticon, Times Square does not invert the Eiffel Tower. Each is a construct where concerns with governance, discipline, vision, and space intersect with one another, and manifest in different ways. Yet, even though the Eiffel Tower, Times Square, and the Panopticon have different material characteristics,

we can still find commonalities between them in that each of these constructs is equally invested in "making the crowd the ultimate spectacle." A question worth asking, though, is why is the making of the crowd into a spectacle such an important undertaking? And, why do crowds and spectacles play such instructive roles in the construction of a disciplinary society? One way of beginning to respond to this question is by turning our attention to Foucault's concept of *governmentality*.[21]

The Flaneur's Governmentality

> I don't believe that one should devote his life to morbid self-attention. I believe that someone should become a person like other people.
>
> – Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* (1976)

This motto, spoken by Travis Bickle, the anti-hero in the film *Taxi Driver*, although at first may seemingly make sense, when looked at more carefully is revealed to be an unattainable virtue. How does an individual become a person like other people, and therefore attentive to the ways other people carry themselves, without always being attentive to the ways he or she carries him or her self? In order to become like other people Travis must compare and work through himself different kinds of personalities. In other words, what Travis's thoughts are proposing is an ongoing process of self-development, where the becoming of a person could never be achieved since one ultimately will always try to become like other people. Like Barthes's man who is the only one not to know his glance, Travis is the tower and the only blindspot within a total

optical system. This motto perfectly exemplifies the irrational logic of a character caught within the system of governmentality seeking to define his life by "becoming a person like other people" and not by 'devoting his life to morbid self-attention'.[1]

Taxi Driver begins with a screen of smoke out of which slowly emerges a yellow cab. This is followed by an extreme close-up of Travis, who's eyes carefully, intuitively, judgmentally, and suspiciously inspect the passing urban scenery. Shades of yellow, blue, and red neon lights (probably originating from Times Square) are glowing and reflecting off of Travis's face. This portrait of the modern subject as a city observer is intercut with three more shots: a view of the rainy city seen through a car's windshield, a seemingly hallucinatory blurred vision of the city's neon lights at night, and a shot in which street crossers direct their attention towards the camera as if mutually responding to Travis's concerned gaze. Travis is motionless, confined to the seat of the vehicle, like a prisoner in a panopticon forced to look in only one direction. On the other hand, Travis's immobility does not necessarily mean he is a prisoner but rather a surveillance officer located in the panopticon's tower. Since it is a close-up, Travis's exact location is not clear. One thing that is for certain, Travis is in a space where he can act as a voyeur, intensely looking at his surroundings. Moreover, although it is a space that is conceivably separated, located behind the glass of a vehicle, it is also an object in motion, enabling Travis to be in a state of movement, always leaving and always entering another space. Just like in Times Square, Travis is formulated as the modern flaneur – a subject who aimlessly strolls the streets, is produced by the cityscape, and in turn helps reproduce its urbanity.

Formally speaking, this is also the space of the opening credits – a space that is separated from the rest of the film's text by virtue of it being inconsequential to, and perhaps out of synch with, the rest of the narrative. For example, in this opening sequence Travis is possibly driving a Taxi. However, if he is indeed the driver, then this opening sequence does not fit with the temporal progression of the rest of the film, since the next scene features Travis being interviewed by a manager of a taxi company for a driver position, thus making the previously seen opening sequence out of temporal synch.

The film begins by situating Travis in a space that is separated in two senses. First as a moving observer who continuously repositions his place within the realms of perception, and second as a character in a text that is floating over the film's narrative. This is a transitory space where Travis, as well as the spectators of the film, are both firmly positioned within social relations as subjects of surveillance, of observation, as participants in the Panopticon, and as voyeurs of culture. It is the kind of space Foucault argued was bred during the 20th century. In his essay "The Language of Space" Foucault argued that although traditionally language has been "coordinated with time", taking the form of narrative storytelling, "the 20th century is perhaps the era when such kinships were undone."[1] Foucault pointed to modernist writers such as James Joyce, who by bending the conventions of storytelling revealed that language must not necessarily obtain static forms of narrative. As the example in *Taxi Driver*'s opening sequence shows, Joyce's modernist style has found its way into other instances of modern (popular) culture. For Foucault, this technique of using language in ways that do not only involve the telling of synchronized narratives, signifies that instead of being coordinated

with time, in modernity language is also coordinated with space. How it is coordinated with space is never the same. Just as every story is different, every space is also different.

I use *Taxi Driver* as an example not only because it speaks to the notions of language being coordinating with space, and space being coordinated with text, but also because it has historical relevance to the issues involved with the redevelopment of Times Square in two more ways. The first is the way the film has a direct relation to the physical location of Times Square. Not only was this film produced just as the discourse about Times Square's redevelopment was taking hold in the public mind – both locally, nationally, as well as internationally – a majority of the film itself was set in and around the Times Square area. In fact, Travis's malaise with modernity is represented as being partially due to his inability to grasp how the seediness of Times Square was firmly placed within the city's landscape. He says, in panned and descriptive cynicism: "All the animals come out at night - whores, skunk pussies, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies, sick, venal." These are the kinds of personalities that were, in the late 1970s, regular staples of Times Square. "Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets," Travis adds. Not only was the city unable, or unwilling, to improve the social wellbeing of the area, the citizens of New York were regarding this as an issue that can only be solved through means of biblical proportions. What seemed to have been needed was a pervasive tactic that would systematically remove all undesired subjects from the city, beginning with Times Square.

Travis, of course, is not a perfect example of a moral compass. At one point of the film he takes a woman to a pornographic theater, at another point he ploys to assassinate

a political candidate, and at the end of the film he deliberately initiates a shooting spree

that results in the killing of two men. However, this only advances our understanding of

this text, and the moral logics of the city at the time, as dynamic systems ready to be

adapted and transformed into something else. Systems that enable a schizophrenic

character, who thought he was saving a teenage prostitute by putting her in the line of

fire, to also be celebrated as a savior of all that is good in society. The moral character of

the city was thought to be in such bad shape that even a character such as Travis, who

does not display any signs of moral goodness, could have been believed to have had

enough moral justification validating his society's celebration of his gruesome act as

conducts of heroic proportions. This was a tale of a man taking the law into his own

hands, issuing his own sense of governance, in a situation where no other sense of such

agency was being adapted by anyone else.

In short, this is a text in which we can find traces of concerns with the themes of

urban decay, criminality, prostitution and alienation, closely tied to issues of male

dominance, violence, schizophrenic mentalities, and an overall sense of loss of historical

continuity or prospective directionality; themes and issues closely related to the ideas

circulating about the redevelopment of Times Square, its spatial design and its physical

characteristics. Moreover, this is also a text in which we can detect ways by which

Foucault's concept of *governmentality* was formulated as a popular and viable approach

articulating the problems facing redevelopment.

Although a concept developed during the end of his career, governmentality can

arguably be found throughout Foucault's immense project on the history of modernity,

beginning with *Madness and Civilization* through to *The History of Sexuality*. With this concept Foucault attempted to describe, as Lee Grieveson writes, "a system of thinking about the nature and goals of government, where government itself is defined in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour."[22]

A simple way to understanding governmentality is by thinking about it as a portmanteau combining "government" with "mentality". Govern*mentality* is a thought process concerned with the management and regulation of individuals that grew out of post-monarchical social liberties seeking to rationalize the governing of ideally free subjects while at the same time maintaining these subjects' social liberties. As Foucault pointed out (along with Marx and Engels), the removal of monarchical forms of government did not liberate society out of power relations, it simply replaced them with other types of power relations – some already established, others establishing. Unlike monarchical forms of government where individuals are subject to the rule of the monarch, liberal forms of government seek to define individuals as citizens of the state who can ideally self-govern and regulate their own individually developed realities. However, it is important to note that within liberal societies the citizen is nevertheless constructed by, and therefore treated as, a subject of the state. That is, although individuals obtain degrees of freedom, they nevertheless are understood as belonging to, and formulated as, parts of a social body, and therefore are regulated under such terms. This, in turn, contributes to a rationale that is seeded within social discourses and practices that aims to continuously separate the individual from the state, not by removing governmental tendencies from society but by placing such logics within the

hands of a dispersed population, and away from the hands of a centralized government.

As Bennett writes, liberal societies aim to make their populations self-regulating by "creating frameworks in which individuals will voluntarily regulate their own behaviour to achieve specific social ends rather than needing to be subjected to forced direction."[23] This is what Foucault referred to when he wrote about the process of "governing at a distance" where systems of control are not directly enforced by a centralized authority but are rather self-managed by individual citizens and private entities. A system, thus, not structured upon the Orwellian or Judeo-Christian all seeing central eye of the Government or God, but rather a construct that systematizes and codifies an assortment of scattered sets of eyes, each participating within a network of perceived surveillance.

The "need to make the crowd into the ultimate spectacle" is thus another way of situating the practice of governmentality within the social everyday, by making the crowd not only into an object on display but also by making it into a subject that participates in the act of display. Here, the crowd is implemented in the logics of governmentality because it is one way by which the dispersion of power can be represented as a unified body, and therefore perpetuate order through the perceived notion of a unitary source of surveillance. Yet, it is also how power can be imagined as being distributed and divided amongst each member of the crowd thereby enabling each individual to participate, or at least imagine him or herself, as a particle within a larger governing body. To clarify, making the crowd into a spectacle comes as an alternative to making objects on display the spectacle and ultimately the representation of power. As Bennett argues, reworking the logics of governmentality into the social environment means the design of

exhibitionary spaces, such as museums, where art is no longer "envisaged as a means of representing or staging power…Instead, its circulation [is] conceived in accordance with a governmental logic in which art, rather than representing power, *is* a power – a power susceptible to multiple subdivisions in a programme which has as its end not the exertion of a specular dominance over the populace but the development of its capacities."[24]

Again, although the material properties of exhibitionary complexes do not determine social processes, they are nevertheless still shaped by different kinds of ideas about culture, and therefore materialize different types of organizations of the modern free subject. It is therefore useful to think about the Eiffel Tower and Times Square as apparatuses of discipline in modern liberal societies, however this only explains a fairly broad aspect of these as social constructs. Missing is the situating of these constructs within institutional discourses about culture.

The circulation of ideas about the social disciplining of the modern subject are equally formative as well as supportive of modern social structures, as do ideas about cultural civility. That is, they are one and the same. Spatial design is not only subject to being shaped by discourses and epistemologies from the social sciences, or what Foucault refers to as "regimes of truth" – such as criminality, economics, politics, civil engineering or psychology. They are also correlatively subject to analyses from other regimes that are more directly focused with issues about culture. In the case of Times Square, ideas about eliminating criminal activity in the area were coupled not only with ideas about helping the poor and homeless, making the area feel safe for women to walk through, or the raising of real-estate values by reoccupying vacated commercial properties with

successful and "trustworthy" businesses. They were also coupled with ideas about the importance of preserving certain architectural buildings – some for their aesthetic significances, others for their importance as places where historically significant theatrical performances occurred – as well as objections to the aesthetics of proposed new constructions, the maintenance of an entertainment atmosphere, the enforcement of the presence of signs and light density emitting from the buildings' façades, and an overall concern with manufacturing and maintaining a type of mood emitting from the place. Concerns directly involved with, and perhaps only concerned with, the development and maintenance of a specific type of cultural sensibility.

If, as Bennett argues, the exhibitionary space is designed to make the crowd itself a spectacle, the cultural objects on display (in this case, public screens) are correspondingly arranged as re-enforcers of the patterns of governmentality, and are therefore designed in ways that equate the exhibitionary space with those of properly cultured social participation. Times Square is one such example in which public screens can be understood as belonging to the disciplinary processes involved in modern liberal societies, contributing to the 'management of the public by making the public manage itself', and the formation of what Toby Miller calls the "well-tempered self".[25] Or, to put it in Foucauldian terms, public screens are formulated as "technologies of power" which, as Miller writes, "form subjects as a means of dominating individuals and bringing them to define themselves in particular ways."[26]

This is not to suggest that each object on display in the exhibitionary complex enforces the same kinds of disciplinary associations, nor to suggest that the design of the

exhibitionary complex itself automatically produces a disciplined society. Discipline, like culture, is a process. And culture is never a stable entity, made up of perfectly coherent components. This is why the crowd is able to witness someone like Paul Reubens – who in 1991 was arrested for masturbating in a public adult movie theater in Sarasota Florida thereby temporarily ending his performances as Pee-wee Herman – be able to bring back the children's character into the public environment two decades later by putting on a children's stage production in the recently rebuilt and recently renamed, Stephen Sondheim Theatre, located in the now family friendly Times Square. Was the cultural landscape of Times Square to remain the same as it was in the 1970s, Reubens may have still had an interest in performing there, though it probably would have been a far different performance in front of a far different audience. That is, the placing of Reubens's Pee-wee Herman character within the context of the rejuvenated and family friendly Times Square – and not the male-dominant, sex and drug trade centric version of Times Square from previous decades – does not mean that Reubens and his character have reached a finalized, virtuous and upright version of disciplinary citizenship. It rather means that Reubens and Pee-wee have been strategically displayed as objects that correspond with a slightly different type of social order and definitions of respectable citizenship.

Understanding space as a disciplinary medium is only one way to think about how spatial design functions in modernity. The design of space also has another function – to facilitate cultural politics, cultural discourses, or simply discourses about culture. Of course, as Foucault and Williams both argue, the facilitation of cultural discourse is a

way by which modern liberal societies shape, navigate, and control their populations (and power), by reinforcing "mannered" participation in the social environment. Therefore, space has a number of ways by which it contributes to the maintenance and development of liberal forms of governance, both as a disciplinary technique and as a facilitator of culture. To clarify, this is also another way of saying that culture can also function as a technique of discipline. Particularly important in the case of Times Square's 1980s redevelopment, the construction of space itself was located within a discourse about the cultural values – both aesthetically and civically – of an already constructed space. Therefore, not only was space developed as an environment to facilitate a modern liberal public – where the population was "configured through statistical surveys" and categorized into separate categories of criminality, financial deterrents/attractors, legitimate/illegitimate social practices, etc. – space was also placed within a discursive landscape that negotiated and reconstructed spatial design using cultural terms (as in, traditional textual analysis) where buildings, signs, street lighting, sidewalks, subway entrances, and just about every object found in the area, were analyzed and selected according to a set of guidelines put forth by groups interested in the designing of the urban environment. In other words, through the process of redesigning a space for the facilitation of culture and the improvement of the social wealth, the spatial design of Times Square was itself caught within a debate about how its own physical characteristics should properly facilitate culture. This is what Bennett called the "multiplication of culture" evident during the end of the 19th century when the establishment of public spaces such as museums, art galleries, and libraries, each aiming

"to make the resources of culture available to the whole population", were "accompanied by an equally meticulous attention to organizing an environment in which the museum or gallery visitor, or the library user, might derive as much benefit as possible from the experience."[27]

When spaces are filtered through processes of redevelopment, questions of social civility are coupled with ideas about culture. Following Bennett's understanding of liberal societies' development of exhibitionary complex, this should not come as a surprise. Spatial design obtains varying kinds of social functions – such as to facilitate social interactions and to organize social movement – but it also obtains other social functions such as making social interactions and movements into cultural objects. That is, space is a cultural object that also hosts, facilitates, and organizes other cultural objects. As John Ackerman argues, "sites are both technically and conceptually constructed; they operate as both contexts for discourse and signs within discourses; and they are the material product of representational practices that may be redirected and reformed."[28] Space is at once a cultural object, a site where culture is displayed, and a site where culture is practiced. If, as de Certeau proclaims, "space is a practiced place," then the investigation of the discussions, ideas, and negotiations that shaped and defined the planning of spatial designs can help reveal how *practices* fit into the social discourse and are established as desired social outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

Between Screens of Limestone and a Bowl of Light: The Special Times Square

Signage Requirements and the Issues of Scale

In the previous chapter I discussed how redevelopments of social spaces are brought about through objectives set by political, economic, and cultural forces, each aiming to refine the ways social practices are exercised by reestablishing the boundaries of "proper" or "acceptable" cultural behaviors that liberal societies allow to occur in public spaces. That is, how different organizational bodies – be they aligned with economical, political, or cultural goals – contribute to ongoing social discourses that shape the physical as well as symbolic attributes of public spaces, while at the same time use physical structures as instruments for disciplining and *civilizing* the population. In her essay "The Networked Screen: Moving Images, Materiality, and the Aesthetics of Size", Haidee Wasson offers an approach to understanding the proliferation of moving images found in the landscapes of modern liberal capitalist societies. She writes,

> Screens are not blank frames but active forces [that] take on fuller meaning when understood alongside the material and institutional conditions that surround and embolden them. Screens are implicated in identifiable institutional formations and also inextricably linked to multiple systems. Screens, in other words, are not autonomous sites but windows connected to complex and abstract systems: corporate, aesthetic, and political.[1]

As modern objects, screens are on the one hand shaped by ideas that are traceable to discourses, sets of decisions, and institutional processes, while on the other hand, they contribute to a type of metaphysical and abstract arrangement always ready to morph into another convoluted and unfinished entity. Wasson thus brings once more to mind Marx's and Engels's double edged sword of modernity: "all that is solid melts into air." In order to understand this dialect between the identifiable and the incorporeal, the physical and the phenomenological, Wasson suggests we begin by situating our understanding of moving-images within a framework of screen sizes, bringing to the foreground analyses that prioritize questions of scale. She offers, in contrast to Tom Gunning's "cinema of attractions", the term "the cinema of suggestion". This type of cinema, according to Wasson, "calls attention to its materiality and its status as bound to a tightly integrated network."[2] From the very small screen found on cellular phones to the very large IMAX screen, each embodiment of the moving image is shaped by different assemblages, dictated by varied degrees of corporate, aesthetic, and political concerns. Corporate, aesthetic, and political systems bring about and are situated within discursive contexts and processes of negotiation. Thus, screens are shaped through as well as materially pronounce themselves as products that are informed by such negotiated decision processes. Aesthetic assemblages of moving images are results of discourses that are traceable through an analysis of the ways texts are made to fit into the materiality of screen sizes. As Wasson words it, "screens elicit dramas of scale, which play on our sense of proportion, distance, and control (or its loss) in relation to the images we see."[3]

Because each organizational body has different interest in the ways the social landscape contributes to its ideal version of a social formation – each body seeks to organize the society's population in ways that are aligned with that organization's goals and do so by shaping the society's spatial landscapes – cultural landscapes are shaped by negotiating processes between different and competing organizations found in liberal societies. Thus, definitions of a civilized and disciplined society are as numerous as the discourses found between different organizations within that society. Particularly revealing, then, are the ways spaces are used as instruments for the reorganization of the disciplinary order of liberal societies.

The redevelopment of Times Square threatened the very existence of screens within this space. Thus, as Wasson suggested with all screens, the process of negotiation involved in insuring the place of screens in Times Square also incorporated questions of scale. Here, however, ideas about scale appeared in slightly different ways. As will be further discussed in this chapter, matters of scale involved the placement of a multiplicity of screen sizes, the development of which grew out of sets of regulations and guidelines sketching out, in detail, the precise size requirements for screens, billboards and other signage placed within the Times Square area. These size requirements were (and still are) measured by a floor to area ratio (FAR) in which the size of a building defines the size of the signage placed on its façade. On the other hand, a second type of scaling measurement system was also developed, this one concentrating more on the brightness emitting from the screens than from the relations screen sizes have with their surrounding environments. The LUTS meter (Light Unit Times Square) is "an apparatus comprising

an illuminance meter attached to a 35 millimeter single lens reflex camera body and fitted

with a lens of appropriate focal length [that is] set at F-stop 11."[4] As its name suggests,

this meter was developed uniquely for the purpose of measuring the density of brightness

of the screens found in Times Square.

Both of these are measurements of screen scale of a slightly different kind than

what Wasson discusses, however this does not disqualify the notion that such scales are

not also a product of corporate, aesthetic, and political systems attempting to organize the

population through the design of social spaces. In the following chapter I will illustrate

how these scale requirements were largely a result of negotiations between, on the one

hand, culturally minded organizations such as the Municipal Art Society, who desired to

sustain the atmosphere presented by bright and large illuminations in the area, and on the

other hand, economically centric organizations such as Park Realty Towers, who sought

to remove such technologies from Times Square altogether. Of course the vision that

clearly prevailed was the one that aimed to insure that screens remain stapled aspects of

the Times Square experience. However, as will be further discussed in detail, in the early

part of the 1980s, the City and State sponsored a project that aimed to relieve the place

from public screens altogether. This project, which at one point dominated the topic of

redevelopment, would have enabled developer George Klein to remove the Times Tower

and erect four large buildings in its place. Designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee,

the buildings were designed with façades that were free from screens or any other visual

media. This idea's dominance was so prevalent that it was in fact, at one point, thought to

be the only appropriate and viable solution to the problem of "cleaning up" and

"rescuing" Times Square from the crime, and illegitimate businesses that were then so synonymous with the place. However, after a series of protests from different culturally minded organizations, the plan was completely scrapped. Nevertheless, this withdrawn plan did not disappear without leaving a mark on the negotiation process.

The following chapter depicts how political and corporate attempts to remove the screens from Times Square actually became responsible for their cementing in the City's rules and regulations. At the same time, it is also a story of how the screens were filtered through ideas that helped redefine them as legitimate objects that can have positive results on the ways the population conducts itself civilly. Through the process of redevelopment, screens were reused, reshaped, redefined, rethought, and appropriated in ways that fitted with aims that were believed to make the place a facilitator of civil conduct. Times Square was being redeveloped as a spatial complex that could facilitate, produce, and help enforce a particular type of population – one that sought middle class, commercially conductive, business personnel, who did not loiter and did not utilize pornographic, violent, or criminally soiled activities. Screens were caught within efforts to make Times Square into this particular kind of public space, and were thus refitted with notions that aimed to make Times Square a space that facilitated and encouraged commercially as well as morally viable social participation. Because of the political, corporate and cultural climate they were found within – one that on the one hand wanted to renew the area, yet on the other hand wanted to preserve its history – public screens played an identifiable role in polishing, edifying, and refining both the physical characteristics of Times Square as well as the symbolic framing of proper civil conduct.

Furthermore, because screens were threaded within such a discourse, it is reasonable to suggest that screens were mediated by the logics of governmentality, as techniques not only shaped by this notion, but also as means that helped enforce and give shape to it as a viable organizational force of modern liberal social processes.

"A Stalemated Mix of Squalor and Splendor": Times Square as a Corridor

The road leading to the cementing of public screens in Times Square was already, in 1980, nearly a full century old dating back to when large billboards were closely placed on top one another, covering entire street corners and measuring up to nearly sixty feet high.[5] Even before the turn of the 20th century, before the arrival of the Times Zipper or the Times Square subway station, the corner of Seventh and Forty-second Street was already being solidified as a centre where social order can be mediated through visual means. However, although this road was paved for decades, during the 1970s there was a need for its reconstruction. Thus a detour was created, directing this figurative road approximately one kilometer west of the corner of Seventh and Forty-second, at the site of a proposed Convention Center, the result of which finally became the 1986 I. M. Pei designed Jacob Javits Convention Center.[6]

In a 1978 report – initiated during Mayor Abraham Beame's and Planning Director Victor Marrero's administrations but only finalized during Mayor Edward Koch's and Chairman of Planning Commission Robert Wagner's administrations – the Department of City Planning (NYC DCP) presented an analysis of West Forty-second Street that aimed to enable "all who have a hand in planning improvement and

development [of Forty-second Street] – government, private investors and the community" to assess "the impact that major improvements have on one another and on existing uses, thus providing a context in which to deliberate new development."[7] With this report the Mayor's office sought to find the best possible solution by which "illegitimate uses" of Forty-second Street can be replaced by "legitimate" businesses instead. The aim, according the report was to make Forty-second Street into a clean, safe, and respectable "corridor" between the Convention Center, Times Square, and by extension, the rest of the city. The report goes as far as suggesting "the elimination of curb cuts, on at least one side of 42nd Street, as a method of establishing 42nd Street as a major crosstown pedestrian route leading to the Convention Center".[8] Eliminating curbs found on sidewalks, this study suggested, would help define Forty-second Street as a pedestrian mall where individuals can walk comfortably without the interruptive slanting of driveways, and without fear of trucks or cars pulling in and out of parking lots.

Of the obstacles facing the construction of this corridor, none were more visible than the underutilization and deterioration of existing buildings and land, the concentration of pornography, high crime rates, and an overall "aesthetically displeasing street environment".[9] These identified problems were thought to be feeding one another, and worse, were feared to be "responsible for the deterioration of the whole area" adjacent to Forty-second Street, including the New York Public Library, Bryant Park, Times Square, live theaters, hotels, Fifth Avenue shops, the Ninth Avenue markets, and even the Rockefeller Center located nearly two and a half kilometers away from the site of the proposed convention center.[10] Echoing such concerns, *New York Times*

architectural critic, Ada Louise Huxtable added, referring to the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues on Forty-second Street as a "cultural resource":

> The street is now a potpourri of the sordid and the merely crummy, infused with a dull sense of menace … The stretch between Seventh and Eighth, dominated by adult movies and sleazy pornography, is actually a nearly continuous row of some of the world's most beautiful theaters built in the first decades of this century when Broadway was in its finest flower…But this block's concentrated blight is the barrier to healthy development farther west…Right now, 42d Street is a stalemated mix of squalor and splendor. Its assets of centrality, essential services, functional variety and architectural excellence are being ludicrously misused or patently abused. The folly of this waste of resources is equally clear to those who have such disparate interests as the economics or the landmarks of the city.[11]

The reason Huxtable had to point out to the readers of the *New York Times* that the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues "is actually a nearly continuous row of some of the world's most beautiful theaters built in the first decades" of the 20th century, is not only because the interiors were either incredibly neglected or simply vacant, and therefore not seen by the public eye for decades. It was also especially because the exteriors of the buildings were completely hindered by a cacophony of billboards, signs, graffiti, and decades of collected filth. To illustrate this, the DCP's report included a four-page spread showing both the north and south sides of this "seedy" block, emphasizing the critical conditions facing the construction of the culturally civilized and worldly welcoming, end-of-the-century, urban walkway. The illustrations separated the block into four categories:

"Building Façade of Architectural Merit", "Building or Storefront in Poor Physical Condition", "Signage at Unacceptable Location", and "Signage in Poor Physical Condition".[12]

Not only were the signs hiding the beautiful façades of the theaters, were sanitarily neglected, nor were their arrangements incoherent with one another, the signs also displayed textual content that was not pleasant to all types of pedestrians. As was stated in another document presented by the DCP in 1981: "Passersby and tourists face filthy, litter-strewn streets, sleazy advertisements for sex-related businesses, posters advertising action movies, and window displays of knives and blackjacks."[13] Sexual and violent images depicting nude models, violent acts, gang-related graffiti, and ads for stripper jobs, were found under a row of marquees advertising pornographic, or B-list action and horror films.

The solutions proposed in the DCP's 1978 study called for a "total approach" where the assemblage and management of one umbrella organization, made up of "different interests associated with the midtown area," would enable a diversity of political, business, and cultural concerns, to "directly participate in planning and development".[14] This umbrella of organizations was to implement the development plans by assessing how to utilize vacant buildings and land, renovate existing buildings, and finally, to clean the streets by removing pornographic and criminal activities. However, after decades of numerous attempts to make the area safe, clean, civil, and economically productive, the reuse of old buildings was, in the minds of politicians and investors alike, beginning to seem like wishful thinking. Rescuing and renovating theaters may have been

an aesthetic solution, but at the heart of politicians and investors was a concern to maximize the area's financial profitability. Although all the legitimate theaters that were being used at the time were profitable, their sizes could only accommodate a fairly limited amount of spectators. Thus, in order to attract more legitimate businesses, the city began formulating a new set of ideas that would direct the project's guidelines in ways not covered by the DCP's Forty-second Street study.

Reversing Gersham's Law, "Designing the City Without the Buildings in it"

In June 1981, in an effort to revise the 1978 Forty-second Street study, the City and the Department of City Planning issued the *Midtown Development* report in which they proposed the enlargement of square footage allowed in midtown along with tax incentives to developers contributing to this redevelopment. Kept from the 1978 study was first the notion that, in order to remove the existing social problems, what was needed was a "total approach" – one that could uniformly tackle the neighborhood and be designed with a coherent vision for the whole area. The other kept notion was the opinion that in order to develop an aesthetically coherent vision for the Square, what was also needed was the establishment of an umbrella organization encompassing a number of different interest groups. Thus, the new more concentrated goal of the project was to encourage the construction of office buildings and to attract white-collar businesses to the midtown district west of Seventh Avenue, all the while maintaining a diversity of uses within this area. Correlatively, the month following the release of this *Midtown Development* report, the State of New York and the Urban Development Corporation

(UDC) released new design plans formulated by the Cooper Eckstut Associate team. These plans, which included a diversity of tall office buildings, the construction of a merchandise mart, and the preservation and rehabilitation of ten theaters,[15] according to Alexander Cooper of Cooper Eckstut, were modeled upon the Empire State Building and the Rockefeller Center.[16] Important to take note of, since this became an important issue of concern during later stages of redevelopment, the Cooper Eckstut design featured buildings that, although were tall, did have façades that were gradually setback the higher the buildings arose. This was done in the spirit of maintaining the space of Times Square as open as possible. However, and this is partially the reason why building setbacks became a central topic in the redevelopment's future phases, the precise building designs in this model were only used as guidelines in order to make visible the kinds of changes the City was proposing to make. The area itself would be divided up into different blocks, while developers, who were in competition with one another, were invited to present different building designs for each block. Developers' projects were then going to be selected by a chosen board made up of City and State public committees.

This new strategy was thought to be beneficial in a number of ways. First, the construction of taller buildings in midtown would result in higher annual tax returns due to the presence of larger square footage of real estate available. This would also result in the creation of (or at least with the space made available for) more jobs, thus the lowering of the unemployment rate and the instating of jobs with higher-waged personal income tax returns. But perhaps most capturing of all reasons was the plan's ability to strategically colonize the area with "legitimate" social behaviours. In comparison to

strippers, drug lords, prostitutes, gangs, and pimps, office buildings would attract a "higher-class" of business professionals, and thus aid the facilitation of a more economically productive and civilly abiding population. The thinking was that because office-workers obtain economically sound occupations, and therefore strive to contribute to the economical health of their society – in other words, have a rational governmentality that is beneficial to financially concerned interests – planners believed that such citizens would not want to indulge in the criminal activities out on the street. This would, in turn, help drive away the unwanted social activities from Forty-second Street and Times Square, and thus help establish the space as a center where exemplary economical and culturally productive activities occur. As Ralph Blumenthal wrote in an article in the *New York Times Magazine,* "the current plan will rely on legions of office workers, theatergoers and shoppers to challenge the hegemony of drifters, drug sellers and sex entrepreneurs and their customers. The strategy is an attempt to reverse Gresham's Law – to make good uses drive out bad, or at least to dilute the aura of menace."[17]

Although this was a seemingly worthwhile endeavor, which had the backing of nearly every city, state, corporate, and public committees, the plan was not without faults. First, as was stated at the time by Jonathan Barnett, a prominent New York architect and urban designer, the design guidelines were like "designing the city without designing the buildings in it."[18] As *New York Times* architectural critic, Paul Goldberger, suggested the plans did not leave much room for designers and architects to leave their own creative marks on the plan. Responding to his own philosophical question – "Is it fair to invite

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developers to bid on a project that is, in effect, already designed?" – Goldberger wrote, "[one can] reply by resorting to the old saw about ends justifying means. For this design is clearly what ought to be built at 42d Street. It emerges out of a strong understanding of the nature of the existing city, with strong architectural ties to what is best in what is already there."[19]

Yet this line of thought was inconsequential to the other, more immediate, complications facing development. The major obstacle facing the plan could not be easily resolved by answering ones own philosophically spun rhetorical questions. The placement of businesses in Times Square was a very tricky thing to do, and needed much more persuasive pull than what Goldberger was issuing. Because of the seedy atmosphere found on the streets, real-estate developers were not swiftly keen on constructing large-scale projects in the area. They had fears that businesses would not want to place their offices in this part of midtown. As Blumenthal, finishing his thought quoted above wrote, "in this view, peep shows and sex parlors are symptoms, rather than causes, of decay. The real causes are seen as the lack of business confidence in the area's future, a pattern of fragmented property ownership and the shunning of the area by the middle class. Together, these factors have thwarted major redevelopment for half a century."[20] Large investments in office buildings in Times Square had the potentiality of still resulting in huge financial losses, translating into yet another failed, and perhaps final, attempt at improving the social well-being in the area. At this stage, any negative financial outcome caused by redevelopment efforts had the potentiality of resulting in the financial downgrade of the whole city – a city that was already struggling to sustain its foothold

within a growing global economy, and that was increasingly seeing its middle class citizens moving further and further away from its outskirts, spending their capital elsewhere.

Yet, complicating the issue at hand even further, this was not the only concern facing corporate investors and developers at the time. While the plans for making Forty-second Street into a corridor were being formulated, another intricately related project was also being developed. Though instead of originating a kilometer away, this project was to be found at the very heart of Times Square, and was proving to involve a far more complicated issue directly facing developers interested in investing in this area.

"A Battle Between Artists and Technology": The Portman Hotel, Panopticism, and the Morosco 200

Although for the most part it was not difficult to persuade the public that the removal of illegitimate pornographic and criminal activities from the area was a necessary and beneficial undertaking, this task was still, legally speaking, very problematic to say the least. Simply put, without any reasonable doubt of criminal activities, governmental bodies could not obtain the rights to property through the removal of the property's rightful owners. However, such a task was far less complicated when compared with the type of strategies called for in order to resolve criticisms and objections stemming from one faction (the cultural) of the umbrella organization, and the one group of legitimate businesses the plan was supposedly going to aid. To make matters worse, this group of legitimate businesses was made up of theatrical personnel

who were intricately invested in emotional public persuasions. This was, after all, their business.

The Portman Hotel project began development in 1973, but due to series of budgetary and legal constraints was only completed in 1985. Financially backed by the City and State of New York, and developed and designed by famed architect and investor John Portman, the completed 49-story hotel (standing in the middle of Times Square today) features nearly 2,000 rooms, convention halls, restaurants (including a revolving restaurant overlooking Times Square), a fitness center, and a 1600 seat theater. At the time, the project promised "2000 permanent jobs, as well as 1200 off-site construction jobs and another 1900 on-site ones."[21]

With a price tag of $292.5 million, the construction of the hotel had reached nearly double its original estimates, with much of the cost being paid for by public subsidies. The critics of the project – including the Actors' Equity Association, the Save the Theaters Inc., and the Municipal Art Society, to name only some – were not against either one of the beneficiary outcomes stated above.[22] Most believed that the area needed a healthy injection of luxurious lifestyles, and hoped that the presence of the hotel would help encourage more tourism to the area. What they were condemning instead was the precise location the city agreed to designate for the project's construction. The location of the hotel meant the demolition of five theaters that have been around since the early two decades of the 20th century – the Astor, the Bijou, the Gaiety, the Helen Hayes, and the Morosco theaters. All five theaters were functioning, and more importantly, had symbolic intellectual and cultural significance to the history of the theatre district. For example, the

Hayes hosted Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *A Touch of the Poet*, and Tennessee Williams's *Period of Adjustment*, and the Morosco was home to Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, and Williams's *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, to name only very few. Needless to say, each of these plays had an important role in shaping American theatrical, intellectual, and cultural landscape.

As the debate heated about the loss of these historical landmarks, a confrontation between playwright David Mamet and producer and chairman of the Shubert Organization, Gerald Schoenfeld, was widely publicized. According to a *New York Times* report, prior to a performance of *Nicholas Nickleby* at the Plymouth Theater, Mamet approached Schoenfeld and said: "You call yourself a producer, but you don't know how to create anything; all you know how to do is to destroy." To which Schoenfeld reportedly replied that Mamet did not know how to write plays.[23] Mamet was accusing Schoenfeld for backing the Portman plan arguing that Schoenfeld was only doing so because the plan would eliminate his competition. Schoenfeld's stated position, as was the position of all other theater owners and producers at the time, was that even though it meant the loss of some of the most historically significant theaters in the area, a luxury hotel such as Portman's would be economically preferable as well as beneficial to all those involved in the theater industry. In comparison with the 1,600 seat theater proposed in the Portman project, producers and owners argued, theaters such as the Hayes and the Morosco were simply too small to be able to host large audiences, and make mass profits.

Critics of the project responded by arguing that theaters such as the Hayes and Morosco facilitated a level of intimacy between the performers and the audience, the kind

of which will be lost in the size proposed by Portman's design. This was true both for the interior, as well as exteriors, of the theaters. As Joan K. Davidson, President of the J. M. Kaplan Fund – a family foundation invested in developing urban environments through historic preservations – wrote in an opinion letter in the *New York Times*, the Portman Hotel would "foist on an area of low-rise theaters and restaurants an outscaled structure of a hackneyed design with another atrium, revolving bars and outdoor elevators." She continued,

> For this high price [$60 million of public money], what public benefits are we supposed to gain? Jobs! they tell us. (But wouldn't there be as many jobs in a good building project as in a bad one?) Tourists! they tell us. (But will the tourists keep coming to the theater district when the theaters are gone?) Times Square Cleanup! they tell us. (But what happened to the cleanup we were promised last time they replaced a fine old building – the Astor Hotel – with a massive new building?)[24]

It did not help that the design of the hotel was going to dislocate the interior of the building from the events happening on the street. Like all other Portman buildings, this hotel was also going to be hollowed at its core. By removing any material from its center, Portman's typical design consisted of a lobby raised above ground level, thereby being removed from street activities. With ceilings climbing all the way to the very top floors, and the lack of windows allowing natural light to enter, Portman's buildings emphasize unities in themselves, separated from the rest of the world. It is almost impossible not to compare Portman's designs to Bentham's Panopticon. Like the Panopticon, the rooms in

a typical Portman building are located on the exterior circumference of the structure. This makes space for a single tower in the middle of the lobby, enabling glass elevators to carry visitors through the hotel, thereby creating a perspective by which the visitors could survey the grand lobby and the hallways of the passing corridors found on each floor. To repeat the argument made in previous chapters, by enabling its visitors to be both the prisoners in the lobby and corridors, or the guards in the glass towers, Portman's structures facilitate yet another type of panopticism. Yet here, instead of opening the Panopticon up to other locations, like in exhibitionary complexes, Portman's designs emphasize complete isolation.

In place of the five theaters, critics such as Mamet and Davidson argued, the Portman Hotel would create a different kind of environment, one that would infuse an ambiance that is less entertainment, art, and spectacle, with one that was more business and corporate centric. Moreover, it was the scale of the project that was interruptive to the flow of the area. Not only was the hotel too massive in comparison with other buildings in the area, nor its theater too large for intimacy, it was also replacing moderately priced hotels thereby driving away a range of the population that simply could not economically afford to lodge in the area.

However, even with much public disapproval, and with a revised design that would enable the Hayes and Morosco theaters to remain intact,[25] the United States Supreme Court made a decision that demolition of the theaters was perfectly within Portman's legal rights.[26] As the court lifted the temporary stay on demolition, an alliance of organizations seeking to stop the demolition began staging a two-week protest in

which actors performed "marathon readings" of plays presented in the Morosco and Hayes theaters. As demolition of the theaters began, about 170 protestors were arrested including actors Colleen Dewhurst, Tammy Grimes, Treat Williams, Estelle Parsons, Celeste Holm, Susan Sarandon, and Michael Moriarty. Within hours of their arrests, the remaining protestors were seen carrying placards with the statement "Free the Morosco 200" written on them. Actor Christopher Reeves, who was not arrested but was amongst the protesters, was quoted saying: "It's increasingly a battle between artists and technology. We have to band together to insure that New York never becomes another Pittsburgh or Seattle or Houston."[27] The cities Reeves named are to be understood as epitomes of business and corporate controlled cities organized according to privatized interests, and suffer from a lack of public cultural activities.

What the critics of the Portman Hotel wanted was not the destruction of theatres and their replacements with massive constructs that would take away from the history and lively atmosphere of Times Square. They argued that massive buildings such as the Portman Hotel would deemphasize the kinds of conditions needed to revitalize a theater district, and in the long run ruin any chances the theater industry may have in becoming a successful business in its own right. Their vision did not pass unnoticed. Before the dust from the demolition had settled, theater owner Gerald Schoenfeld, who previously was supportive of the Portman Hotel project, was quoted saying "New York needs more theaters. You can't build new ones, so you must fix up old ones. These theaters must be saved; they can never be replaced."[28] Clearly Schoenfeld had changed his mind. Perhaps others had done so also.

The most important outcome to have emerged out of the controversy surrounding the Portman Hotel was the organization of a number of civic groups under one common cause: the magnification of theater preservation. As Allen Churchill wrote in the *New York Times*,

> For the most part, the theaters we attend today are old ones, but they are alright to me. Built to endure at a time when values seemed to be enduring, they are solid and serve their purpose … These theaters are indeed old fashioned and contain so much backstage dust … But the dust is laden with tradition. And for the most part our theaters are better preserved than we are.[29]

Those who fought against the Portman project wanted the city to devise a better plan of preservation rather than for the replacement of buildings. They were bitter that the redevelopment destroyed two jewels of culturally legitimate businesses in the area. But more than this, their efforts became more about the need to emphasize the maintenance of scale of Times Square's buildings and thereby recreate the space as the common lobby of all the theaters in the area. If redevelopment was absolutely necessary, the newly organized opposition was not going to be welcoming just about any other project. More specifically, they were more likely to oppose any projects that proposed large-scale construction. Times Square theaters needed to be preserved, they argued. The destruction of the five theaters was not without its purpose, they vowed. Times Square will remain the home for theatrical entertainment.

But just before their bitterness of defeat dissipated, the opposition was hit with yet two more blows. The first came just less than a month after demolition of the theaters

began, with the city's announcement of four major developers who were chosen to build the new constructions in Times Square. One of the contracts, the largest, was given to Park Tower Realty. Owned by George Klein, Park Tower promised to build four skyscrapers each hosting one million square feet of office space. Enthusiastic about the announcement, George G. Dempster, chairman of the Urban Development Corporation said: "The doubters about Times Square were wrong. They said the city and the UDC would not receive serious bids for this project, but we did. They said we could not put together a serious financial package, but today we have." The second announcement came just a month after, when the city's Planning Commission announced the "Midtown Zoning Resolution," which effectively raised the maximum building height in Times Square by twenty percent.[30] This meant that Park Realty could now build even taller buildings on their newly acquired land. To be precise, new buildings could now be built by the measurement of 21.6 floor to area ratio (FAR). That is, buildings could now have a total floor area 21.6 times the size of the building's site, as opposed to the previous regulations, which were between 15 and 18 FAR.

Yet these two announcements were not as earth shattering as what the city was going announce next. After two years time, the City and State of New York were ready to collaboratively announce what can only be described as outrageously disrespectful, and a slap across the face, for all those who opposed the Portman Hotel project.

A Plaza, Mansard Roofs, Bulky Skyscrapers, No Neon, and 'Screens of Limestone'

Even though preservation was what opposition to large-scale development wanted, Park Tower Realty who in 1981 vowed to construct four large-scale skyscrapers, had a far different conception of historical preservation. To be sure, their plan also involved a historical framework, however their ideas for preservation meant something entirely divergent. In November of 1983, Park Realty offered $10.5 million in order to purchase the 26-story Times Tower building from its then owner, the TSNY Realty Corporation. Park Tower's plan was to demolish the billboard and digital screens-filled building, and in its place create a flattened plaza. The very building that gave Times Square its modern name was now facing a proposition that aimed to completely remove it from the area. Strangely, on the one hand this was in accordance with what opponents of the Portman Hotel wanted. Its removal would enable the opening up of Times Square and thus would help bring it back into scale with its old design. On the other hand, this was an utter clash with the opposition's efforts to preserve the Square's history. To complicate matters further, the building in question was not the premiere Times Tower built in the early 1900s, but was in fact a 1966 reclad model that did not resemble the architectural aesthetics of the original tower at all.[31] As such, this building did not precisely fit the qualities of a building worthy of historical preservation. Nevertheless, its removal would have been incredibly drastic even for an area that has just witnessed tremendously substantial changes. Times Tower, whatever its incarnation, represented an important historical moment to Times Square. Without it, as director of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, George Lewis said, "the space of Times Square would just drain out."[32] Objection to this proposition was so strong that even the

spokesperson for the company that owned the building, George Deren said, "we're not

going to roll over. This building means too much to us and to the city."[33]

As it turned out, this was the right type of issue that opposition to large-scale

redevelopment needed in order to better fuel their cause. And opposition needed as much

fuel as possibly because a month later, just as the Christmas holiday season was nearing

full swing, the front page of the *New York Times* featured a large picture of Mayor Ed

Koch, the wife of New York State's Governor Mario Cuomo, Matilda Cuomo, along with

architects John Burgee and Philip Johnson, standing behind what looked like four very

large holiday presents. This was the official public revelation of the City and State

sponsored, Park Tower Realty development, John Burgee and Philip Johnson designed,

new plan for Times Square.[34] Goldberger's description of the new buildings

accompanying this holiday season photo-op was as follows

> What Mr. Johnson and Mr. Burgee have envisioned is a set of buildings that are
>
> topped by mansard roofs of glass crowned with ornamental iron finials. At their
>
> bases, the buildings would have four-story sections of red granite with tall, formal
>
> entrance arches. Each building's midsection would consist of light-colored
>
> limestone shafts set like screens against a glass background that would be exposed
>
> at the corners. The effect, then, would be of glass towers sitting on stone bases
>
> and partly covered by stone walls.[35]

Nowhere in this description did Goldberger mention any space reserved in the plan for

the use of signs, billboards, or other visual spectacles. He does mention "screens" but

only as a metaphor to describe limestone; hardly the type of digital screens one would

expect to find in Times Square. The reason for this is because the plan did not reserve any such space for signage.

Of course, this decision came under public scrutiny. For example, George Lewis, executive director of the New York chapter of the Institute of Architects, criticized the plan, by saying "Times Square should be defined by large signs and bright lights, as it is now. They create a sort of extravaganza of life and high spirits – there isn't anything like it anywhere else. One has the feeling that what this project will do will be quite different."[36] A much harsher criticism came from Barbara Handman, a member of Community Board 5, a local government unit responsible for Times Square district, who described the plan as looking "like Albert Speer's tribute to the Third Reich."[37] But Klein, of Park Realty, argued that there were legitimate reasons for such decisions. The kinds of tenants that this plan targeted – banks, law firms, advertising agencies – Klein explained, tended "not to favor neon signs blinking outside."[38]

Unlike those who objected to the removal of signage, Goldberger admired the Johnson-Burgee plan for reasons he stated in the following way:

There is one school of though that holds that Times Square is all signs and lights and visual energy, a kind of urban Las Vegas, and nothing is more out of place than "real" architecture. But here again it is worth turning to the past, and recalling the best buildings in Times Square's history were fairly serious works of architecture. [Buildings such as the Astor and Claridge Hotels] may have been built a bit more playful than their contemporaries on Fifth Avenue, but they were not essentially different – and so it is with these proposed towers. The need here,

it would seem, is for architecture that is visually alive, and compatible with a glittery world of theater marquees and neon signs. These buildings do promise to do that; they may be strong and sheathed in stone, but they do not look as though their integrity would be shattered by a neon sign going up across the street.[39]

Although the plan did not include any signage of any kind, Goldberger still welcomed the towers by marking them as "the latest chapter in the return to historical architectural form." These towers, he wrote, "do not precisely echo any buildings of the past – indeed they emphatically mix elements that are historical with others that are more purely modern." Placing mansard roofs on top of glass towers, like the ones found on the Astor Hotel, was one way he interpreted Johnson's and Burgee's design as being a wonderful mix of "Neoclassical Beaux Arts" from the 19th Century along with, what Johnson famously named, the "Modern International Style" of the 20th Century. Likening stones to screens was another way Goldberger interpreted this mixing of elements from Times Square's history.

However commending he was of the plan, Goldberger did have concern with the size of the towers. He wrote, these proposed "quite bulky" buildings were going to be "among the larger buildings in midtown … and thus would dramatically change the present conditions of open space and sunlight in the Times Square area."[40] Goldberger pointed to the fact that the plan violated the guidelines set forth by the Cooper Eckstut design presented two years prior. The new plan's reasoning for this drastic change, according to Klein, were that the old design setbacks would have yielded smaller floor sizes at higher levels. This would in turn have presented difficulty in leasing space to

companies "in search of large amounts of contiguous office space."[41] Usually in real

estate, Klein argued, higher floors means higher rental costs. However, if the top floors

cannot accompany the needs of large enterprises, they would not attract highly profitable

tenants. This would in turn minimize the amount of profit the buildings could generate

from rental income. The calculation should be, the higher the floor, the greater its value,

not the other way around. As such, after months of negotiations, according to Goldberger,

the state's Urban Development Corporation finally gave in, perhaps convinced by Klein's

"successful track record as a developer" assuring them "that he knew what could be

marketed."[42]

Such backroom deals to change the design guidelines – first by removing the

Times Tower, and second by enlarging the density of the buildings and eliminating

signage – although troubled opponents of the project, were also the kinds of issues that

helped make the case against the large-scale demolition of Times Square more easily

palatable to public consent. All that opponents needed to do was show that the new plan

did not follow in accordance with the originally proposed guidelines, and to make this

divergence into a public issue. Luckily, thanks to the Portman Hotel events, there was

already in existence a fairly organized and mobilized public opposition bitterly wary of

redevelopments in the area. This time, however, they were already uniformly assembled,

possibly better organized, and had a clear goal: to "keep Times Square alive."[43]

"Instead of a Bowl of Light, You Have a Canyon of Walls": The Municipal Art Society and the Keeping of Times Square's Pulse Alive

Instead of regarding the new plan as a *pièce de résistance,* opposition began formulating ideas on how to define the four bulky skyscrapers as *causes célèbre.* Thus they began identifying the Johnson-Burgee buildings as objects that emphasized and were shaped by class differences. In a letter to the editor published in the *New York Times*, Brendan Gill, who was both Chairman Emeritus of the New York Landmarks Conservancy as well as Chairman Emeritus of the MAS, wrote:

> What on earth causes these distinguished architects to make design suggestions that a talentless, comic-stripped-besotted schoolchild could devise in the course of a few moments of idle doodling? Is it possible that they unconsciously share the revulsion that so many ordinary laymen feel at this disembowelment of Times Square and for that reason proffer us examples not of their best thinking but of their worst?[44]

By likening Johnson and Burgee to children infatuated with comics, Gill was bringing to the fore the Adornian notion that mass entertainment can be feared to be infantilizing civilization. However, instead of agreeing with Adorno's position, Gill here identified the celebrated geniuses of architecture (Johnson was at the time known as the "dean of American architecture") as members of elite culture who, by presenting such designs, displayed their carelessness towards the popular arts of spectacle, and in extension their indifference to the middle and lower classes. Instead of elevating Times Square's populist cultural history, Johnson and Burgee obliterated upon the city a plan that had no interest in exalting the arts of the common laymen. But worse than this, in Gill's formulation, the

plan was an articulation of how higher-class business elites were invested in eradicating the middle and lower classes from midtown Manhattan altogether.

A second attack, similar in tone to Gill's, came from another member of the board of directors at the MAS. Also in the form of newspaper commentary, Thomas Bender argued that the plan was "contemptuous of the public character of the street" and may be the "only conceivable plan that could make the Times Square and 42d Street area more threatening than it is at present."[45] Bringing greater emphasis to the issue of removing the Times Tower, this MAS member and New York University urban history professor, argued:

> Without the tower, one would have to rename the square and revise the way we think about it: We could acknowledge its privatization and rename it Klein's Square. Why should we resist such a change? Why should we care to keep this physical reminder of a newspaper's association with a central urban public place? Newspapers, unlike ordinary office buildings, are quasi-public institutions. The emergence of the daily press is historically intertwined with the development of our modern sense of what it is to live in a big city – with the emergence of city life mediated and even, in a sense, created by metropolitan journalism.[46]

It did not matter that the Times Tower was not home to the New York Times offices for decades – not since 1913, to be precise. What mattered to Bender, and to other organization members he was writing on behalf of, were the building's – and by extension, the Square's – connections to modern urban civic duties. Putting the fate of the

Square and the Tower in the hands of private investors meant eradicating the civic rights of the common public from their material history.

There were many other such attempts by a host of organizations to make this into a public issue, but perhaps most successful of all were efforts less interested in using erudite persuasions, and more with those invested in visceral tactics. The most successful of these also came from the MAS. In March of 1984 the Society sponsored an international competition for the former Times Tower site. By September of that year, the *New York Times* published an article featuring four pictures of the 1400 designs, registered from forty-seven states and 19 countries. Goldberger's commentary in the *Times* article was as follows,

> While the entries show a wide diversity, they all make clear the deep, almost passionate commitment of architects to Times Square's traditional, somewhat honky-tonk, identity. The entries seem concerned with intensifying the level of energy in the square, not diminishing it. There are numerous suggestions for signs, lighting and other elements to preserve the area's character.[47]

The drawings for many of the designs were put on public display at the Society's Urban Center for several months thereafter. With this simple competition idea, the MAS was able to better focus the public's attention on the immediate drastic changes facing the future of Times Square. The competition "worked," said Kent Barwick, then president of the MAS, "because it was a prolonged public relations device. It got people talking and asking questions."[48]

But these were not the only tactics employed by the MAS. In March and again in November of 1984, a group of protestors organized by the MAS representing eleven other civil groups – including the American Institute of Architects, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, and the Actors' Equity Association, to name a few – gathered in Times Square. At 7:30 of both evenings, as Tama Starr, president of Artkraft Strauss later wrote, the protestors orchestrated a show that "grabbed people's emotions in a way no amount of argument or editorializing could."[49] By shutting off all the electronic lights except for one flashing the message "HEY, MR. MAYOR! IT'S DARK OUT HERE. HELP KEEP THE BRIGHT LIGHTS IN TIMES SQUARE," the protestors were able to demonstrate what Times Square was actually going to look like when large-scale skyscrapers such as Johnson and Burgee's were going to inhabit the space.[50] Executive director of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects, George Lewis, added in the *New York Times*: "This is just a taste of what the Great White Way would be like if Times Square is lined with office buildings."[51] The gesture was purely rhetorical. Its aim was simple: to persuade the city and state officials, the visiting public, and the viewers watching images of the event reported on television and in newspapers, that the Johnson-Burgee plan would destroy the most important characteristic of Times Square – its facilitation of bright lights and electronic spectacles.

Between 1983 and 1988, the MAS were busy coordinating alliances with other civic organizations, staging the two half-hour long blackouts of Times Square, facilitating and exhibiting the Times Tower competition, establishing both the Entertainment District

Committee as well as the Committee to Keep Times Square Alive, in addition to presenting the Certificate of Merit to the Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation. But perhaps most impactful of all tactics were the MAS's enlisting of Peter Bosselman and his Berkley-based Environmental Simulation Laboratory to design three 16-foot models (including signs and billboards) of the Times Square area illustrating, in detail, the kinds of conditions already in existence in Times Square, the kinds of conditions that were being proposed, and lastly the kinds of conditions that the MAS thought were most desirable. Along with a twelve-minute film, narrated by actor Jason Robards, the Times Square Sim Lab illustrated how each potential scenario would appear from the perspective of a pedestrian in Times Square.[52]

The results were clear. As was illustrated in a *New York Times* article by a convinced Goldberger, the proposed Johnson-Burgee buildings were going to "squash" the "character of Times Square and the theater district … as firmly as a shoe might flatten an ant."[53] The article included a picture, taken from the Times Square Sim Lab, positioned close enough to make is seem as though it assimilated actual dimensions of the proposed plan, with extremely tall skyscrapers overshadowing the sedated square. Aside from the accompanying caption, readers would not have thought they were looking at picture of Times Square. Adding to this imagery, Kent Barwick said: "Instead of a bowl of light, you have a canyon of walls."[54]

Such imageries were so influential that even the notion that Times Square was being underutilized and could only be saved by "legions of office workers," the very logic that made the strongest case for redevelopment in the first place, was under attack.

Don't good uses drive out bad? Won't injecting thousands of white-collar workers

and convention-going visitors into this part of town drive away the derelicts and

the prostitutes once and for all? There is now plenty of evidence to show that

things do not work this way - that whatever the sociological composition of Times

Square may be by day, it switches back again by night. The presence of

advertising executives and lawyers at noon does not make this the enticing and

safe entertainment area it once was at night. It merely gives the neighborhood a

somewhat schizophrenic air.[55]

Barwick, on the other hand, had a simpler response: "If everyone in Times Square is

wearing a necktie and coming down the elevator at 5:15, the area is dead."[56]

Not a "Doormat for Skyscrapers"

Yet the problem of economic capital still remained. Although the major legitimate

theaters did prosper economically, the other mostly neglected theaters, still remained

vacant. And no argument, whether intellectual or visceral, was going to be made by any

of the organizations involved, especially not those seeking preservation, to leave these

once cultural jewels in their present stale state. Neglected theaters, stripped bare to their

bones, leaving nothing but hollowed empty hallways in sight, certainly were not the kinds

of cultural preservation the MAS, or any other civic or historical preservation group, was

interested in seeing. However, the cost involved in bringing the physical conditions of

these theaters back to acceptable aesthetic form, were very expensive. Moreover, there

were already a number of investors who displayed interest, as well as financial

capabilities, in obtaining and maintaining properties in Times Square. Not involving these investors would have been forsaking a grave, and perhaps unmatched, opportunity. As Goldberger wrote:

> Virtually everyone, in 1986, believes that the legitimate theaters of Broadway should be saved. But there is no free lunch, and despite the prosperity of the major theater owners, the only fully practical way to save the theaters, unfortunately, will be to permit them to sell off some of the space above some of the theaters for other kinds of development. It will be the city's responsibility to assure that this process, though it is paying the freight, does not become an end in itself – that it is limited and controlled, and that the theaters that are preserved remain the centerpieces of Broadway, and do not become doormats for skyscrapers.[57]

Political, corporate, and cultural organizations had reached a consensus. Every organization was on board, finally going down the same road. Though, no longer was this road becoming a corridor. Instead, the MAS managed to get the whole city talking about Times Square as a bowl of light.

Since it became clear that legitimate theater businesses were not going to be easily removed, and that they were going to fight for their place in Times Square (through the backing of a host of civic organizations), theater preservation was going to remain an important, if not necessarily essential, aspect of civic community building. Moreover, not only were theatrical businesses going to remain a staple part of this area, it was necessary that their presence was also going to impact the area's aesthetic characteristics. However, since many theaters still remained vacant, and would be costly to refurbish, the

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redevelopment could not do without the aid of private capital seeking to invest in this, now highly sought out, real estate market. Yet to ensure that private corporate oriented entities did not squash the area's "honky-tonk and glitzy" atmosphere, it became clear that something else had to be done. Needed was the assurance that visual spectacles, digital screens, neon lights, large billboards, and a cacophony of signs, remained the factor that helped glue all of these efforts together. As a *New York Times* headline suggested, the task now became to developed a mandate that "conserved the glitter" of Times Square.[58] Barwick's notion of Times Square as a "bowl of light" was more than just an image. It now became a vision.

To be sure, this call was for a site for sight of a particular type, one that was heavily indebted to the area's theatrical community and not to its peep-show parlors, burlesques, arcades, gyms, or sleazy restaurants. Preservation of lights and entertainment did not mean the maintenance of the area's entire set of characteristics. It rather meant a selective process that aimed to filter out undesired social practices. It did not mean the suspension of the Square in a timeless historical void. Preservation meant the placement of the Square on a stringent set of guidelines that emphasized and directed the redevelopment's morals to be closely tied with those of the legitimate civic participation. In other words, since there were very little efforts, if any, to preserve pornographic theaters, crime on the street, massage parlors, and other "undesired" social practices, glitter preservation cannot be understood as being the specific, or only, goal that grew out of the Portman Hotel and Johnson-Burgee debates. Clearly the city, investors, as well as glitter conservationists, did not want to preserve everything in Times Square. Rather all

the organizations involved – political, corporate, as well as cultural – wanted to develop a space that facilitated a specific type of disciplinary society. Important to take note of, however, was that the discourse surrounding the redevelopment, although clearly did not want criminals and prostitutes on the streets, also made certain that legions of grey-suit office workers were equally not a desired set of individuals it wanted to see colonizing the square.

The road to cementing public screens in Times Square does not end here, but it does now take a fairly long pause. To reverse that Marx and Engels phrase repeated throughout this thesis: all that melted into air was now starting to solidify. The city now began working on developing rules and regulations regarding building design in Times Square. These rules mandated that all buildings in Times Square must abide to a very specific set of signage requirements: their shapes and sizes, degrees of brightness, their positioning angles, even the kinds of materials they are allowed to be made out of. Moreover, and crucially, the city stressed that electronic light spectacles were above all the most important characteristic of redevelopment.

> Neither temporary certificates of occupancy for floor area of the development or enlargement comprising in aggregate 100 percent of the total floor area of the development or enlargement nor a first permanent certificate of occupancy for the development or enlargement shall be issued by the Department of Buildings *until all of the signs required under this Section have been installed and put in operation* in accordance with all of the requirements and standards as set forth in paragraphs (a) (3) and (a) (7) of this Section.[59] (Italics mine)

Signage became significantly important to assuring that redevelopment would continue, so much so that the continuation of its presence was even more consequential to the future of the plan than the presence of the renters who were going to occupy the proposed building constructions – the very constructs upon which signage was going to be placed.

Post "Postmodern Classism": Ensuring the Screens are Public

Together, ideas about culture, through theater and visual spectacle preservation, had an impact on the redevelopment plans. In 1989, after going back to the drawing boards, Johnson and Burgee came back with a design that included greater use of billboard and electronic signage. And instead of the original plan's "postmodern classism," Johnson and Burgee explained, this new plan promised was conceived as "a new interpretation of modern," what they called "New Modern."[60] However, yet again, Johnson's and Burgee's display of theoretical feat did not aid in persuading the public that their new plan was going to improve the wellbeing of the area. As the headline from the *New York Times* suggested, "Times Square Renewal (Act II), a Farce,"[61] this plan was again unwelcome by various public groups. Ada Louis Huxtable, architecture critic for the *New York Times*, summarized the preservationists' disdain. She wrote, the new designs were mere "cosmetic window dressings" that cannot "obscure [the] monstrous architecture" of the newly proposed center.[62] She even went as far to suggest that the designs were "not architecture at all."[63] And, as Herbert Muschamp also later wrote, Times Square did "not want to be Rockefeller Center with traffic of Lincoln Center with neon."[64] For preservationists, the important issues were still unsolved by the new designs.

The buildings were simply still too large, and their designs still prioritized the expansions of office space rather than the preservation of the neighborhood's characteristics. Thus by 1992, after nearly a decade of negotiations, the Johnson-Burgee plan was scrapped when Park Realty decided to step back from the project, thus making room for what became known as the "Interim Plan" managed by the *42 Street Now!* non-profit organization. This new development had its own objectives, objections, and sets of negotiations that unfortunately will not be covered in this thesis. However, to bracket them, these new sets of negotiations were clearly a result of the rules and regulations established through the aims to preserve the bright lights in Times Square. This was yet another effort to ensure that screens in Times Square belonged to the public.

CONCLUSION

A Modern Cathedral of Light

The *spectacular* outdoor signs are as new in detail as the mechanical

devices which they turn to account….They are employed competitively in

an endeavour to draw on the sympathies and the substance of the

underlying population; they are useful as a means by which those who

make use of them come in for a competitive share in the usufruct of the

underlying population, its services, workmanship, and material output.

– Thorstein Veblen (1923), *Absentee Ownership*[1]

Convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic, fixed-explosive, magic-

circumstantial, or it will not be.

– Andre Breton (1937/1987), *Mad Love*[2]

Advertising in Times Square was not invented in the 1970s or 1980s when much

of the debate about redevelopment took place. Advertising was already intricately a part

of this urban center, as well as nearly any other main street in the US, for nearly a

century.[3] As such, ideas about the screens in Times Square were in development well

before the newly fashioned LED screens of the 1990s and 2000s appeared. That is, as

Erkki Huhtamo has shown, screens being used as advertising manifested in different

forms and with different contents towards the end of the 19th century and through the 20th

century.[4] There is, therefore, a need to focus our understanding not only on how the new

digital screens in Times Square belong to the post-industrial landscape, contributing to the development of financial economies and giving the illusion of representing power by treating stock market trades as monuments, but rather to see these as products of concerns relating to making screens fit into a "legitimate" cultural landscape that would, in turn, help shape a disciplined and civil society.

During the 1970s and 1980s, signs and screens featuring sexual content, and Japanese products, were regular features of Times Square's visuals. Of course, these were not the only signs in Times Square. More importantly, these did not articulate that social power laid in the hands of the Japanese, patriarchy, or homosexuality (most of the sexual images depicted either women as object of male fetishisms, or male models wearing bondage clothing to satisfy the gay male gaze), but rather that the landscape of power were being articulated in slightly different ways. Just because Times Square featured images of Japanese products and male fetishism, this did not mean that New York society's power structures were also organized as such. However, as the debates about the need to redevelop this space progressed, screens featuring sexually explicit and Japanese products were being discussed as epitomes of the period of decay, and as representations of the loss of the US's strongholds of American values.[5] Not only were the Japanese screens advertising non-American businesses, the only signs of American culture came in the form of cheap and dirty sexual entertainment. Such signage uses were defined as illegitimate financial deterrents, contributing to the rise of criminal activities, social poverty, as well as to the deflating and dirtying of American cultural sensibilities. In short, Times Square was imagined not only as a signal that American culture was

horribly exploitive, cheap, and downright unproductive to the well being of society, it was also being colonized by another foreign state. Thus, the city's dominating class began a series of attempts to re-colonize the space, by re-appropriating and rearticulating its social and cultural purposes.

However, because this modern liberal society upheld "freedom" as a given right, individuals within this society, it was believed, could not be forced into practices that constrained or limited their social participation. Social participation, in other words, was not going to be discouraged. However, it was going to be regulated. As Bennett argued, modern liberal societies develop exhibitionary complexes in order to facilitate the mobility of individuals, while at the same time make the crowd into a symbolic reinforcement of a specific type of social organization.[6] This is not to suggest, though, that all complexes are the same. The particular and differing design of each is the result of negotiations between varied economical, political, and cultural organizations. That is, each exhibitionary complex is a representation of the assemblage of dominant bodies of knowledge that exist at a particular place and time. In this sense, the notion that Japanese, patriarchy, and homosexuality did at one point represent the dominant power structures of the area, is correct. However, this was only partially so. Needed is the situating of this representation of power within a larger, more dynamic, context of liberal forms of governance.

In order to make the case that intrusion of personal liberties is necessary for the benefit of all citizens, liberal societies develop organizations that each concentrate on a specific area of social knowledge. To be sure, such organizations produce the very

knowledge they concentrate on. That is, here knowledge about the society is constructed through social discourse. Such a development of knowledge thus legitimizes the "liberal" ordering of society by validating the practice of knowledge gathering about social subjects, and defining this practice as a self-sustaining system of governance that helps structure social development. In this system, dominant bodies of knowledge transform a scattered population into subjects – such as criminal, rich, homeless, etc. – that are then organized as calculable units of information. This is the result of what Foucault called governmentality – a system of government that, on the one hand, does not allow a centralized body to rule the population, while on the other hand develops a network that aims to pervasively control the civility and conduct of the population by creating frameworks of knowledge that aid in analyzing the mobility of individuals. Although this varies in every case, such frameworks are always formulated by networks of organizations each aiming to mobilize the population in ways that contribute to those organization's goals. Because knowledge is socially produced, it is therefore somewhat unlimited. That is, knowledge about the society is as dynamic as the amount of organizations that society produces. The resulting formulation of disciplining techniques is thus a product of a series of concerns presented by varied groups of organizations each competing or negotiating with one another, and each seeking the best solution by which to insure the public conducts itself civilly and productively.

The organizations involved with Times Square's redevelopment sought to redesign the place by re-conceptualizing the "ideal" type of social subject. However, this led to another process of defining what exactly an ideal type of social subject meant in

Times Square. First the city conceived of this individual as a convention hall visitor, using Forty-second Street as a corridor between the convention hall located on the west coast of Manhattan and the rest of the city, with Forty-second Street and Times Square being necessarily inevitable encounters. Thus, in order to make this corridor suitable for this type of user – in other words, to make the space more open to individuals of all types – what was needed was the aesthetic improvement of Forty-second Street through the organization and sanitation of its buildings' façades – with an emphasis on correct signage use – and the conversion of much of the businesses located on the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues into legitimate uses.

However, approximately half a decade later, a new conception of the ideal subject was being articulated. This time the subject was discussed as an office worker. Along with this subject, the plan now became to make Times Square a place that was free from signage. With tall bulky skyscrapers, hosting legal and financial firms, the plan was to make the area into a type of midtown Wall Street, except with wider corridors. It was going to be a place where a grey-suited middle-class sat and had their lunch break in the shadows produced by the urban canyons above them.

Of course, this subject was quickly put under scrutiny and another, yet third subject, was being articulated. This time it was conceived as the Broadway hopping, hotel residing, restaurant dining, and emporium shopping, out of town, or in-town, tourist. This plan insisted that in order for Times Square to preserve its characteristic as a center of entertainment and visual spectacle – as the only unique place like it in the world – what

needed to be emphasized was not only the preservation of old turn of the century theaters, but also the conservation and regulation of electronic signage.

To be sure, each of these visions saw Times Square through the prism of social and cultural improvement. In other words, although each conceived of a different subject, this subject was consistently conceptualized as a disciplined and economically productive, citizen. Through figurine models, photos, films, exhibitions, protests, commentaries in newspapers, award-giving, and even staged black-outs, each version of Times Square was re-conceptualized, negotiated, and finally, made more defined, the ideal social figure that needed to colonize the place. The plan was always going to be to make the place less hospitable to undesired, sleazy cultured, individuals and businesses that were believed to attract and aid facilitate criminal activities.

The preservation of screens in Times Square grew out of discourses about discipline, legitimacy, safety, cleanliness, and an overall sense of cultural improvement, which sought to benefit from an ideal version of modern public space catered to an ideal version of a modern self-governing public. The presence of this self-governing public, primarily defined as tourists, visitors, and modernity's flaneurs, was believed to, in turn, help maintain the processes of economic development, civil obedience, and the perpetuation of the culture by attending theatrical performances and convention events, dining at restaurants, residing in hotels, shopping, and visiting sight seeing locations, to name only the most common tourist activities. Ideas about ideal urban conditions defined through the twin logics of attention and distraction, surveillance and discipline, as well as panopticism and the panorama, were filtered through the logics of tourism, financial and

legal firms, real-estate values, and the development of a self-governing public modeled on (and helped to perpetually redevelop) middle-class family values as well as individualized opinions. This type of public, which finds leisure in popular entertainment and contributes to a system of monetary profit through the many patterns of seeing, was ultimately the subject for which Times Square's public screens were legitimized as objects of important historical preservation. Even though none of the public screens in Times Square have had a history longer than two decades, and therefore have not been "preserved," it was not the exact materiality of the screens that needed preservation but rather Times Square as a cathedral of screens that needed preservation.

Times Square may today seemingly serve as a symbolic nucleus of the globalized financial economy – with screens serving as analogies of lubrication aiding the flow of corporate capital exchange – however it was not very long ago when corporate bodies themselves set out to make Times Square void of digital screens. In other words, the flow of the financial global economy was not always thought, not even by the perpetrators of the global economy, as being ideally represented through digital screens. At least, that is, not until culturally minded civic organizations made their voices apparent in the redevelopment process. Through a series of arguments and negotiations, culturally-centric organizations reshaped the way Times Square's screens were being thought out as objects, not themselves worthy of cultural preservation, but rather as objects that aided in the formulation and facilitation of a particular kind of civic conduct. In other words, screens were used as instruments of morality which helped give shape to a civic conduct that was, on the one hand, not in complete agreement with corporate values, but was on

the other hand, equally apprehensive with ensuring that certain kinds of social behaviors – sleazy, violent, meandering, unsanitary, malevolent, and criminal personalities – did not colonize the space. The aim was to make Times Square hospitable to the facilitation of a particular kind of culturally, as well as, economically productive, self-governing, public. Definitions of screens in Times Square, as products of economic globalization, are therefore simply not entirely accurate. The screens were formulated out of a process of negotiation facilitated by institutionally fabricated discourses that aimed to accompany and legitimize the processes of economic growth, by principally identifying a morally and culturally civil system of governance.

Introduction. Public Screens as Modern Paradigms

[1] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).

[2] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, No. 25/26: 57.

[3] This is not to suggest that Times Square is Habermas's ideal version of public space. Contrarily, Habermas argues that places such as Times Square, using mass mediated communication methods, lack facilitating interpersonal interactions between private individuals, the most important and fundamental aspect needed to construct a just public sphere; see Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984 [1981]). For a critique of Habermas's conception of mass-mediated messages lacking any possibility for interpersonal communication, following a strict version of the transmission model of communication, and lacking the contextualization of the circulation of media messages within existing social structures, see Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

[4] In February of 2009, New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced a trial project for the areas along Broadway between Thirty-third and Thirty-fifth (Herald Square) and Forty-second and Forty-seventh (Times Square) making them pedestrian plazas where no cars could enter. By February of 2010, the Mayor announced these pedestrian plazas

would permanently remain a part of Times Square's and Herald Square's physical make up. William Neuman, "In New York, Broadway as Great Walk Way," *New York Times*, 27 February 2009, A1; Michael M. Grynbaum, "New York Traffic Experiment Gets Permanent Run," *New York Times*, 11 February 2010, A1.

[5] To be sure, this is not a dilemma that is particular only to modernity. It is one that can be found in other eras. However, as Tom Gunning shows, preoccupation with motion has been a dominantly recurring theme in modern culture; Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the [In]Credulous Spectator," in *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, ed. Linda Williams (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1997 [1989]), 114-133.

[6] Originally: "Unlike Rome, New York has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steve Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91.

[7] This passage has been important to many contemporary works on modernity. Most notable is Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982). I am grateful to Vanessa Schwartz for this input.

[8] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (New York: NY Labor News, 1948/1908), 12.

[9] This passage from Marx and Engels is arguably especially significant to Marxian analyses of the last century, dealing with the complex relations between structure and

agency, much of which has been appropriately addressed in the realm of Cultural Studies. For best examples of this kind of work see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) and Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms," in *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*, eds. Richard Collins et al. (London: Sage, 1986), 33-48. For more recent developments in this discussion and the field of Cultural Studies see Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[10] See in particular Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Vintage Books, 1988 [1980]), 78-108.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Of course, some of the terms can be found overlapping into any of the four spheres of knowledge.

[13] For an excellent article on LSVDs in sports arenas see Greg Siegel's (2002) "Double Vision: Large-screen Video Display and Love Sports Spectacle," *Television & New Media*, Vol. 3, Iss. 1, 49-73.

[14] There are many sources for each of these terms in trade journals and magazines, as well as various newspaper articles. Some of the more prominent examples of trade journals and magazines include: *Screen Media Magazine* (formerly *Digital Display for Retail*), *DailyDOOH.com*, *Ooh-tv*, *Digital Signage Today*, *Screenmedia Daily*, *InAVate*, and *LEDs Magazine*. There are also a number of associations growing out of industry interests including: the Screen Forum, the Digital Screen Media Association, the Digital

Place-based Advertising Association, and the Canadian Out-of-Home Digital

Association, to name only very few. In addition to these publications and trade events, in

2010 a "How to?" book about digital out of home screens was published, referring to this

screen type as the "5th screen"; see Keith Kelsen, *Unleashing the Power of Digital*

Signage: Content Strategies for the 5th Screen (Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2010).

[15] Peter Miles, "Screen Media Can't Be Lumped Together," *Media Week*, 14 June 2005.

[16] The term is used in Marc Steinberg, "Building Perceptions: Media Architecture and the

Hypersurface Experience," *Parachute* 113 (2004): 130. Furthermore, the Media

Architecture Institute – an Austrian initiative devoted to researching and organizing

events on issues related to the intersections between media and architecture – has an

online catalogue compiling a large collection of projects featuring moving-image media

in the place of traditional architecture. This initiative has also helped organize the Media

Architecture Conference, the Media Architecture Biennale, and the Media Façades

Festival. Their research can be found here <http://www.mediaarchitecture.org/>.

[17] Aside from the Media Façades Festival mentioned in the previous note, this term is

also referred to in Scott McQuire, "Rethinking Media Events: Large Screens, Public

Space Broadcasting and Beyond," *New Media & Society* 12, no. 4 (2009): 570.

[18] McQuire, "Immaterial Architectures: Urban Space and Electric Light," *Space and*

Culture 8, no. 2 (2005).

[19] Stephen Perella ed. *Hypersurface Architecture* (West Sussex: John Wiley &

Sons, 1998) and *Hypersurface Architecture II* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 1999);

see also Steinberg, "Building Perceptions," 130.

[20] Igarashi Taro, "Superflat Architecture and Japanese Subculture," in *Japan Towards Totalscape: Contemporary Japanese Architecture, Urban Design and Landcape*, eds. Caroline Bos and Ben van Berkel (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2000), 96-101; Steinberg, "Building Perceptions."

[21] This grows out of a thread in Robert Venturi's and Denise Scott Brown's work where it was argued that architecture is better understood as signs rather than spatial designs. Although Venturi's and Brown's writing has for long looked at screen-like media such as the neon signs in Las Vegas – for example see Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977), their most recent publication – Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *Architecture as Signs and Systems: For a Mannerist Time* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004) – deals more closely with the notion of electronic signs as "symbolic architecture."

[22] With a number of "Urban Screen" conferences being hosted in various locations worldwide, and the publication of the *Urban Screens Reader*, eds. Scott McQuire et al. (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2009), the term "urban screen" has perhaps received the most academic attention. The term is largely attributed to Mirjam Struppek, a Berlin based freelance urban planning consultant who is responsible for organizing the Urban Screens Conferences in Amsterdam (2005), Manchester (2007), and Melbourne (2008). She is also the author of an important essay in which the case for potential social benefits that could come about due to screens in public spaces, is made; see Mirjam Struppek, "The Social Potential of Urban Screens," *Visual Communication* 5, no. 2 (2006): 173-188.

[23] Kristy Best, "Interfacing the Environment: Networked Screens and the Ethics of Visual Consumption," *Ethics & the Environment* 9, Iss. 2 (2004): 65-85.

[24] The word screen itself has adopted three very different meanings over the years: (a) as a curtain-like object that hinders what is behind it; (b) as a way to assess data, as in 'this groups was screened as a possible threat'; and lastly (c) as a display for moving images. For a media-archaeological assessment of early uses of screens see Erkki Huhtamo, "Elements of Screenology: Toward an Archaeology of the Screen," *ICONICS: International Studies of the Modern Image* 7 (2004): 31-82. For a more specific discussion about turn of the 20th century ideas surrounding screens located in public streets, including different forms and conceptions of such screens, see Huhtamo's "The Sky is (not) the Limit: Envisioning the Ultimate Public Media Display," *Journal of Visual Culture* 8, no. 3 (2010): 329-348.

[25] Even before the establishment of Film Studies there have been a number of voices making the case for the study of film as a separate and a complex communicative form that is unique from, for example, the study of literature. For a more recent incarnation of this viewpoint see Dudley Andrew, "The Core and the Flow of Film Studies," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 879-915; for a counter perspective see Gertrude Koch "Carnivore or Chameleon: The Fate of Cinema Studies," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 918-928.

[26] According to the BBC Big Screens website there are currently two more screens being proposed. "BBC – Big Screens – Home," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bigscreens/>. Last accessed 23 March 2011.

[27] McQuire, "Rethinking Media Events," 575.

[28] For an excellent recap of early debates surrounding outdoor advertising in the US see Laura E. Baker, "Public Sites Versus Public Sights: The Progressive Response to Outdoor Advertising and the Commercialization of Public Space," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2007): 1187-1213.

[29] Hall, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," in *Cultural Studies*, eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc, 1992), 280.

[30] For work about spatial materialism see: James Hay, "Piecing Together What Remains of the Cinematic City," in *The Cinematic City*, ed. David B. Clarke (London: Routledge, 1997), 209-229; Ibid., "Between Cultural Materialism and Spatial Materialism: James Carey's Writing about Communication," in *Thinking with James Carey: Essays on Communications, Transportation, History*, eds. Jeremy Packer and Craig Robertson (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 29-55; Ibid., "Toward a Spatial Materialism of the "Moving Image:" Locating Screen Media Within Changing Regimes of Transport," *CINEMA & Cie*, no. 5 (Fall 2004): 43-51; Ronald Walter Greene, "Spatial Materialism: Labor, Location, and Transnational Literacy," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27, no. 1 (2010): 105-110; Stephen B. Crofts Wiley, "Spatial Materialism: Grossberg's Deluezian Cultural Studies," *Cultural Studies* 19, no. 1 (2005): 63-99.

[31] The best historical work done about this media type includes: David E Nye, *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990); Anna McCarthy, *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space*

(Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Baker, "Public Sites Versus Public Sights;" Gabrielle Esperdy, *Modernizing Main Street: Architecture and Consumer Culture in the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Huhtamo "The Sky is (not) the Limit."

Chapter One. From Cultural Materialism to Spatial Materialism: The Materialisms of Public Screens and Historical Media Analysis

[1] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 11.

[2] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Vintage Books, 1977/1980), 149.

[3] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1974/1991); Harrold Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951/2008), see especially chapter "The Problem of Space," 92-131.

[4] James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1989); Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schoken, 1975).

[5] Carey, *Communication as Culture*, 42-43.

[6] Jonathan Sterne, "Bourdieu, Technique and Technology," *Cultural Studies* 17, nos. 3/4 (2003): 376.

[7] Ibid., 383.

[8] See especially chapters 1 and 5 in Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*.

[9] Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[10] Anna McCarthy, *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 2. For other work looking at television's placement within domestic spaces see David Morley, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[11] For some recent examples see: Charles Acland, "Curtains, Carts and the Mobile Screen," *Screen* 50, no. 1 (2009): 148-166; Ibid., "Screen Technology, Mobilization and Adult Education in the 1950s," in *Patronizing the Public: American Philanthropy's Transformation of Culture, Communication, and the Humanities*, ed. William Buxton (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 261-279; Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Ibid., *Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006); Alison Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Ibid., *Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Haidee Wasson, "The Networked Screen: Moving Images, Materiality, and the Aesthetics of Size," in *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinema*, eds. Susan Lord and Janine Marchessault (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 74-95; Ibid., "Electronic Homes! Automatic Movies! Efficient Entertainment!: 16mm and Cinema's Domestication in the 1920s," *Cinema Journal* 48, no. 4 (2009): 1-21.

[12] Scott McQuire, "The Politics of Public Space in the Media City," *First Monday* 11, Special Issue #4: "Urban Screens – Discovering the Potential of Outdoor Screens for Urban Society" (February 2006): 5-6.

[13] See especially the introductory chapter "The Public Lives of TV" in McCarthy, *Ambient Television*.

[14] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd edition, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996/2000).

[15] Ibid., 453.

[16] McQuire, "The Politics of Public Space," 5.

[17] Doreen Massey, "Places and Their Pasts," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39 (Spring 1995) 186.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, 2nd Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 192.

[20] Sassen, "Reading the City in a Global Digital Age," in *Urban Screens Reader*, eds. Scott McQuire et al. (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2009), 31.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 29.

[23] Mike Crang and Stephen Graham, "Sentient Cities: Ambient Intelligence and the Politics of Urban Space," *Information, Communication & Society* 10, no. 6 (2007): 789-817.

[24] Sassen, "Reading the City in a Global Digital Age," 31.

[25] James Hay, "Between Cultural Materialism and Spatial Materialism," 44.

[26] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Volume 1, Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 93.

[27] James Hay, "Toward a Spatial Materialism of the "Moving Image:" Locating Screen Media Within Changing Regimes of Transport," *CINEMA & Cie*, no. 5 (Fall 2004), 44.

[28] Charles Acland, *Screen Traffic: Movies, Multiplexes, and Global Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 47.

[29] Hay, "Toward a Spatial Materialism of the "Moving Image,"" 45.

Chapter Two. A Cultured Space for the Flaneur's Governmentality: Disciplining Modernity's Crowd

[1] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 149.

[2] Acland, *Screen Traffic*; Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*; Friedberg, *Virtual Window*; Griffiths, *Shivers Down Your Spine*; Eric Smoodin, *Regarding Frank Capra: Audience, Celebrity, and American Film Studies, 1930-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Spigel, *Make Room for TV*; Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[3] James Hay, "Between Cultural Materialism and Spatial Materialism," 44.

[4] Acland, *Screen Traffic*, 13.

[5] Particularly revealing is a discussion between Foucault and Noam Chomsky in which the two thinkers discussed whether human nature was innate or whether it was produced by external factors. Chomsky made the case that human nature can be innate, however,

there are certain modern political and corporate institutions that limit ideal natural conditions for human development. Foucault, on the other hand, argued that even the most critical of voices against oppression – the voice of justice – is in itself a voice of oppression. "The idea of justice in itself is an idea which in effect has been invented and put to work in different types of societies as an instrument of a certain political and economic power or as a weapon against that power…In any case, the notion of justice itself functions within a society of classes as a claim made by the oppressed class and as justification for it." Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault, "Human Nature: Justice versus Power," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997 [1974]), 138.

[6] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House, Inc., 1988 [1961])

[7] Ibid., *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1973 [1964])

[8] Ibid., *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977 [1975]).

[9] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 71.

[10] Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations*, no. 4 (1988): 81.

[11] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Trans. Annette Lavers (London: Paladin, 1973), 130.

[12] Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 85.

[13] Lee Grieveson, "On Governmentality and Screens," *Screen* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 185.

[14] To be sure, not all public squares are geometrically shaped squares. For example, Paris's Place de la Concorde is actually an octagon, and Vatican City's Saint Peter's Square is actually an ellipse. However, traditionally, public squares are each conceptualized as one large open space without objects that can obstruct any part of the square. This is not how Times Square is designed.

[15] Roland Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: The Noonday Press, 1979), 4.

[16] Guy de Mauppasant paraphrased in ibid., 3.

[17] For example One Times Square – formerly the location of the New York Times building, now a 110 meters tall, largely vacant building, covered with LED screens and giant billboards – is located at southern point of Times Square at the intersections between Broadway, Seventh Avenue, Forty-second and Forty-third Streets. Even though it is situated at the southern point of the square, it is actually located inside the square's parameters. Being unable to walk or look through it, the building closes the square's Southern parameter into the square's center, thereby occupying a space otherwise available to look or move through. Looking at One Times Square from any direction means not being able to see what is located behind it or on any of its other three façades. For example, standing on Broadway and Forty-second Street, one is unable to see the 169 feet tall Reuters sign located on the corner of Seventh and Broadway on the other side of the building. Nor will one be able to see the 120 feet tall cylindrically shaped NASDAQ Tower located on the corner of Broadway and Forty-third Street (one block away), nor any one of the LED screens located on the North side of One Times Square. From this

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location, it is also impossible to see the Morgan Stanley building covered with LED zippers, or the Barclays building (formerly the Lehman Brothers building) with its unique stripped LED façade, located at the square's northwestern and northeastern corners respectively.

[18] See the posthumous publication of Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (New York: Belknap Press, 2002). For a similar Benjaminian analysis of space, screen technologies and flanerie in modernity see Anne Friedberg's excellent *Window Shopping*.

[19] See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, especially 195-228.

[20] Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 81.

[21] Some of Foucault's key writings on governmentality include: Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208-226; ibid., "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49; ibid., "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 87-104; ibid., *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrage Macmillan, 2007).

[22] Foucault did provide a fairly detailed yet expansive definition for this term. However, in this definition Foucault is concerned less with the description of a type of psychology

– a realm which Foucault, in a matter of fact, wanted to stay away from – and more with the description of the systemization of a particular set of social and political movements. "By the word governmentality," he wrote, "I mean"

> (1) The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.

> (2) The tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of *savoirs*.

> (3) The process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becomes 'governmentalized.'

Foucault, "Governmentality", 102-3.

[23] Bennett, "The Multiplication of Culture's Utility," *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 4 (Summer 1995): 865.

[24] Ibid., 873.

[25] Toby Miller, *The Well Tempered Self: Citizenship, Culture, and the Postmodern Subject* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), xiii.

[26] Ibid., xiv.

[27] Bennett, "The Multiplication of Culture's Utility," 877.

[28] John Ackerman, "The Space for Rhetoric in Everyday Life," in *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life: New Directions in Research and Writing, Text, and Discourse*, eds. Martin Nystrand and John Duffy (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2003), 86.

Chapter Three. Between Screens of Limestone and a Bowl of Light: The Special Times Square Signage Requirements and the Issues of Scale

[1] Haidee Wasson, "The Networked Screen," 90.

[2] Ibid., 89.

[3] Ibid., 90.

[4] New York City Planning Commission, *Zoning Resolution* (New York: DCP, 1987) 81-732, paragraph (a) (3) (ii).

[5] See Tama Starr and Edward Hayman, *Signs and Wonders: The Spectacular Marketing of America* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 17-36.

[6] Simultaneously with the redevelopment of Forty-second Street and Times Square, the Jacob Javits Convention Center also belonged to a series of debates and various decision-making processes. The original proposed area designated for the center was actually located a few blocks North-west of its current location.

[7] New York City Dept. of City Planning (NYS DCP), *42ⁿᵈ Street Study* (New York: DCP, 1978), 8.

[8] Ibid., 62

[9] Ibid.,16

[10] Ibid., 26

[11] Ada Louise Huxtable, "The Many Faces of 42nd Street," *New York Times*, 18 March 1979, D31, D33.

[12] NYC DCP, *42nd Street Study*, 108-111.

[13] NYC DCP, *42nd Street Development Project: A Discussion Document* (New York: DCP,1981), 15.

[14] Ibid., 95. The study named six government agencies and a mix of eleven private and public organizations including the City Planning Commission, Department of Housing, Preservation & Development, the Forty-Second Street Redevelopment Corporation, the Mayor's Midtown Citizen's Committee, the Association for a Better New York, the Associated Builders & Owners of New York, the League of New York Theaters and Producers, and the Broadway Association, to name only a few.

[15] Edward A. Gargan, "City and State Offer Plan to Rebuild Times Sq. Area," *New York Times*, 11 February 1981, B4.

[16] Carter B. Horsley, "42d St. Plan Would Add Towers, Theaters and 'Bright Lights'" *New York Times*, 1 July 1981, B8.

[17] Ralph Blumenthal, "A Times Square Revival?" *New York Times*, 27 Dec 1981, SM9.

[18] Quoted in Paul Goldberger, "A Renewal as Lively as Times Square Itself," *New York Times*, 4 July 1981, 24.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ralph Blumenthal, "A Times Square Revival?" SM9.

[21] Michiko Kakutani, "Portman Hotel: Broadway is a House Divided," *New York Times*, 24 Jan 1982, D1.

[22] To be sure, as the *New York Times* reported, the theatre community was divided on this issue, with some of its members supporting the project, others not, and others remaining apathetic; ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Joan K. Davidson, "An Urban-Planning Blunder Called Portman Hotel," *New York Times*, 6 Nov 1980, A34.

[25] Joyce Purnick, "Revised Hotel Design Urges to Save Theaters," *New York Times*, 13 September 1981, 54.

[26] Frank J. Prial, "Court Stay Lifted and Demolition Begins at Two Broadway Theaters," *New York Times*, 23 March 1982, B5.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Frank J. Prial, "Can 42d Street Regain Its Showbiz Glamour?" *New York Times*, 18 April 1982, D19.

[29] Allen Churchill, "Recalling the Heyday of the Great White Way," *New York Times*, 24 Jan 1982, D14.

[30] New York City Planning Commission, *Midtown Zoning* (New York: Department of City Planning, 1982).

[31] Unlike the original Gothic styled building, made out of granite and terracotta, the newly remodeled tower was made out of mostly marble and concrete and done in the style of Art Deco.

[32] Quoted in Carter Wiseman, "Brave New Times Square," *New York Magazine*, 2 April 1984, 33.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Paul Goldberger, "4 New Towers for Times Sq.: An Appraisal of Skyscrapers Likely to Be Striking Additions to City," *New York Times*, 21 December 1983, A1.

[35] Ibid., B1.

[36] Quoted in Martin Gottlieb, "Times Sq. Plan Getting Wary Public Approval," *New York Times*, 19 March 1984, B4.

[37] Quoted in Wiseman, "Brave New Times Square," 34.

[38] Paraphrased in Ibid., 33.

[39] Goldberger, "4 New Towers for Times Sq," B11.

[40] Ibid., B1.

[41] Ibid., B11.

[42] Ibid.

[43] This was in fact the name of one "Broadway-star-studded" committee created in 1984 by the MAS in order to attract awareness during public hearings and protests; Lynne B. Sagalyn, *Times Square Roulette: Remaking the City Icon* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 250.

[44] Brendan Gill, "The 'Heinous Misadventure' Facing Times Square," *New York Times*, 11 July 1984, A24.

[45] Thomas Bender, "Ruining Times Square," *New York Times*, 3 March 1984, 23.

[46] Ibid.

[47] The article was Paul Goldberger, "Picking a Centerpiece for a New Times Sq." *New York Times*, 17 September 1984, B1; the figures for the teams and their origins came from Municipal Art Society, *The Livable City* 10, no. 1 (October 1986), 3.

[48] Quoted in Gregory F. Gilmartin, *Shaping the City: New York and the Municipal Art Society* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1995), 456.

[49] Starr and Hayman, 247.

[50] "Protestors Darken Great White Way," *New York Times*, 8 November 1984, B5. Flashing sign quoted in Gilmartin, *Shaping the City,* 456-457.

[51] "Protestors Darken Great White Way," B5.

[52] Just as they did with their successful Times Tower competition, the MAS displayed the twelve-minute film along with the sixteen-foot models in their Urban Center located on Madison Avenue; Peter Bosselman, "Times Square," *Places* 4, no. 2 (1987): 61.

[53] Paul Goldberger, "Will Times Square Become a Grand Canyon?" *New York Times*, 6 October 1985, H31.

[54] Quoted in James Brooke, "Conserving the Glitter of Times Sq." *New York Times*, 11 May 1986, 35.

[55] Goldberger, "Will Times Square Become a Grand Canyon?" H31.

[56] Quoted in Brooke, "Conserving the Glitter of Times Sq." 35.

[57] Paul Goldberger, "Broadway Need Not Become a Doormat for Skyscrapers," *New York Times*, 13 April 1986, H36.

[58] Brooke, "Conserving the Glitter of Times Sq." 35.

[59] New York City Department of City Planning, *Zoning Resolution*, Section 81-732.

[60] John Burgee and Philip Johnson, "Architect Explains Design of Times Square Project," *Real Estate Weekly*, 13 September 1989, 17A.

[61] Huxtable, "Times Square Renewal (Act II), a Farce," *New York Times*, 14 October 1989, 25.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Herbert Muschamp, "The Alchemy Needed to Rethink Times Square," *New York Times*, 30 August 1992, H24.

Conclusion. A Modern Cathedral of Light

[1] Thorstein Veblen, *Absentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times: The Case of America* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1964 [1923]), 318-319.

[2] Andre Breton, *Mad Love*, translated by Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987 [1937]), 19.

[3] See David E. Nye, *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

[4] Erkki Huhtamo, "The Sky is (not) the Limit."

[5] The fact that Japanese companies were beginning to dominate Times Square's advertising square footage were discussed a number of times in newspapers. See Philip H. Dougherty, "Japanese Light Up Times Sq." *New York Times*, 2 March 1982, D21; and Raymond Goydon, "Ginza on the Hudson: Why Do the Japanese Love to Advertise in

Times Square When American Marketers Avoid It Like the Plague?" *Forbes*, 2 July

1984, 100-101.

[6] Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 81.

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