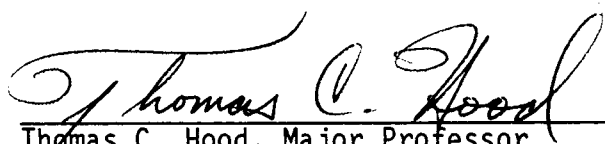
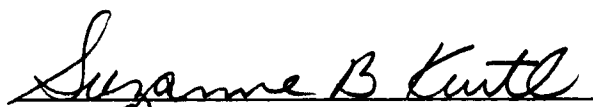


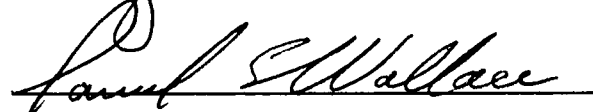
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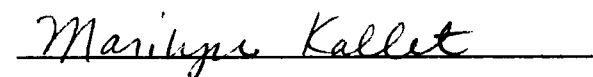
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Anthony DeWayne Miller entitled " The Solitary Witness: An Essay on Privacy, Public Order and the Organization of Experience." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sociology.


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and recommend its acceptance:


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Accepted for the Council:


The Graduate School

11

THE SOLITARY WITNESS: AN ESSAY ON PRIVACY, PUBLIC ORDER AND THE
ORGANIZATION OF EXPERIENCE

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Anthony DeWayne Miller
December 1984

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For Marilyn Kallet

ABSTRACT

This study is an interpretive and descriptive investigation in the sociology of everyday life. Specifically, a frame analysis is developed toward an understanding of how privacy is produced, maintained, and transformed in public spaces. Four planes of order--mythology, affinity, suspension and vulnerability--derive from precedents in current literature. The production, maintenance and transformation of privacy through these planes is demonstrated by observations in a laundromat, bus terminal and lounges, and interpreted by works of Erving Goffman and related studies of space, distance, and privacy. Privacy is distinguished as: (1) a duality, in content, between "continuous identity"--biography--and "suspension in place"; (2) entry into a realm of objects and thus vulnerable to objectification; (3) a realm of play which expands and contracts by gender and biographical investments; and (4) a structure vulnerable along gender and attributed status dimensions. Privacy is also characterized by the subordination of aloneness in contemporary society. This inequality is explained through reference to popular culture and literature. Gender and status differentials allot the most license for individualism where the least departure is feasible: to males and to those of higher status. Individualism and solitude are controlled by morally tinged images limiting their own range and by massification of expression.

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CHAPTER I

THE FRAME: IN MEDIA RES

A common complaint is we spend most of our lives waiting. We wait in lines and lounges, in lobbies and terminals. Time and events seem suspended. We "make do" with whatever passes the time. Or, we prepare ourselves for events about to happen. Whether we are alone or with companions determines the rate of time passing. The time always passes and is usually dismissed as insignificant. We look inward in these places or cautiously when we gaze outward. We are in more or less public territory where we are free to enter and leave, yet upon entry limited in what we can do (Lyman and Scott, 1967:236-249). The place we occupy is justified by the reason we are present, a situational territory, ours because we come to wait, to prepare (Becker, 1973:439-44).

As subjective truth, most of one's life is not spent waiting. Probably, chronology also demurs the complaint. Amid making things to take up time and upon willful forgetting, we may lose sight of how we make configurations or images. Yet these configurations are not entirely our own. We are fleeting players who fill out images. The same images were filled out by others before us and will be again:

Three white males about twenty enter the lounge and proceed to the far right side They carry books and spiral notebooks They wear tennis shoes and

jeans. Two wear jerseys or athletic shirts and sit side-by-side on a sofa, about 18 inches from one another. . . . They talk in low voices, glance out and around the lounge One extends his arm over the back of the couch just above the other's shoulder. . . . The third sits across from them on a sofa, glances at papers in his lap and periodically to them . . . when a sofa to the left is vacated, one rises and proceeds to sit alone in the center of that sofa and places his notebook in the center of the table in front of him. . . . His companion on the right sofa rises, takes another table and sits back on the sofa, the table in front of him and his legs spread over either side of the table. He stares out into the lounge, directly at another young man and does not drop his eyes when their gazes meet. . . . Three other young men, of similar age, in jeans or shorts, jerseys or polo shirts, enter. All six form a circle around the table, some on the floor and others on the sofa. They spread books, pens and paper over the table. Each within six or eight inches of one another, their arms spread so their elbows almost touch. They bend forward from the waist and their lowered heads form another circle. A voice or laughter rises occasionally from them--"Just shut up, David!" Their voices have a rhythm, taken together, a low tone that rises to a certain level, punctuated by

louder individual remarks, and then it returns to the original level. . . . A male in his thirties--wearing dress shirt and tie--about six to eight feet to their right rolls his eyes toward them, raises his arm between them and his face, removes his feet from the table in front of him. . . . A male, in his late twenties, wearing faded jeans and a dress shirt--about five feet behind them--rolls his eyes side to side across them, momentarily raises some reading material to cover his face . . . props it up on his knees and lays his head back on the sofa, his eyes closed . . . (Author's field notes).

Alone in such places, we shield ourselves and put up barriers to avoid and control what communication we have: that is, we enter a realm of privacy. We define our location and ourselves through objects. In a sense we become objects, defer to those who outnumber us, adjust to our circumstances, yet signal that we--unlike furnishings--are more than things to appropriate. Our private objects and appropriated ones deter force to give out more words or adjust our place: we define a claim against interruption. We tell with objects we are not objects: "Human affairs are uncertain and unspeakably painful, but objects represent a stable reality, do not alter with reflexes of fear, love, or hate, and always 'behave' logically" (Milosz, 1983:89).

We are not alone in privacy or totally shielded. We necessarily take others into account. Sounds can break our concentration.

Overtures by others can place all our shielding in jeopardy. The separate configurations of each individual, each group, and pair responding to others present take on a motion of place and images reflecting off one another: ". . . meanwhile we dance in between the walls, / putting on, taking off the body" (Kallet, 1981:3).

An artist might see the mirrored circles of one circle of young men and take its texture of sound and geometry, color and flesh for some new image: poetry, perhaps:

The poet therefore appears . . . in love
with the world, but . . . condemned to eternal insatiability
because he wants his words to penetrate the very core of reality
(Milosz, 1983:74).

As obscure and unexpected to those present would be an effort to specify what they take for granted.* How is some language reproduced fleetingly in the willful interaction of individuals? What does this grammar look like when we produce it? Such an effort at understanding--empathic as the poet's--weaves an alien abstraction, too.

Frame analysis is a description of the organization of personal experience from moment to moment in particular places. Erving Goffman (1974:560) bases frame analysis on ordinary activity and treats it as a means to specify transformations worked on that activity. Privacy--for the purposes of this essay--is the observable way barriers shield people and control communication when people are

*This project was stimulated by the work of Robert Stebbins. I am indebted to Suzanne B. Kurth, of The University of Tennessee Department of Sociology, for bringing it to my attention. Professor Stebbin's precedent will be addressed in Chapter II.

alone in public places. Robert Stebbins (n.d.:3) refers to observable privacy as "objective" dimensions of the concept. These dimensions are described below. This frame analysis of privacy describes and interprets activity built upon external routine ways people behave alone in public. An understanding develops of how people produce variations on the basic structure of privacy.

This essay develops a frame analysis through literature and data applied to a fresh perspective on "departures from the prescribed" (Goffman, 1974:573) base of privacy.

In Chapter II, Georg Simmel's work on forms of sociation provides historical precedent for frame analysis. Formal analysis encompasses more than the present study attempts. A social form is a pattern of interaction. But, form can be generalized to analogous models of dealings between groups and nations. Properly specified, forms are universal (cf. Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979:185-189). Form, as employed below, refers to the structure of privacy prior to transformations.

Frame analysis is further specified in Chapter II as an understanding of the organization of the activity of individuals. Studies of privacy, space and interruption suggest the central archetypes of order through which this study develops an understanding of privacy.

Chapter III addresses methods and interpretive modes employed toward a frame analysis of privacy. Chapters IV to VII apply field data--grounded in precedent from the literature--through the archetypes of pre-existing order: space, distance, biography and transformation.

Chapter VIII presents an interpretation and summary of the frame and activity derived. The frame of privacy is specified through popular culture and literary reference. These references lend experiential and visual depth to the findings. Along the same lines, a semiotic analysis of solitude explores the order which underlies and delimits privacy and individual expression. Ultimately, intentionality is the invention of the observer: an interpretive device. To the extent, interpretations converge with current knowledge and mirror the arts, credibility and heuristic utility is served. Activities built on privacy might be seen differently. The present study is one view with Goffman's work and with themes consistent in literature and popular culture.

Two types of information are organized and enjoined: what is already known about privacy and public order with what can be systematically observed where time and events seem suspended. Their coherent mesh is how a frame analysis renders privacy, abstracts its language and leaves an impression drawn from what we already know.

CHAPTER II

THE POETIC THEME: FORMAL THEORY AND STUDIES OF PRIVACY

We take the observable in events or about people as real (Lipmann, 1922:21-47). The popular expression "It becomes you," speaks for itself. We view and treat one another as metaphors of ourselves. In the same way, patterns in behavior are a metaphor of social life. The resulting abstractions are a distinctively sociological way of seeing (cf. Sorokin, 1964:760). For common sense, individual complexities are subordinated and simplified to relevant and visual evidence. Sociological thought makes a similar reduction in viewing interaction because people--despite individual idiosyncrasy--are predictable (cf. Berger, 1963:150). The fit between patterns in interaction which becomes sociological understanding reflects the fit between metaphors which becomes poetry (cf. Sorokin, 1974:4). Activity which looks like privacy, then, is privacy.

A metaphoric theme characterizes the social thought of Georg Simmel and develops further through the work of Erving Goffman. An interpretation of privacy emerges where analytic focus is on communication--rather than internal motivation--of barriers to contact, inspection and interchange.

Form

Georg Simmel distinguishes formal sociology as an effort to catalogue and classify forms of sociation (Wolf, 1950:41-44).

Distinctively sociological in conception, form is defined by Simmel (Frisby, 1984:53) as

a realm legitimized by abstraction: that of sociation as such and its forms. These forms develop out of the contact of individuals, relatively independently of the reasons for this contact, and their sum total constitutes, concretely, that entity which is designated by the abstraction: society.

More simply, forms are the shape and order of activity apart from unique moments and personal idiosyncrasies.*

Again, this is not to deny individuals are more complex than we see them being for analytic purposes. Neither science nor art pretend a true rendering of life. Their common task is development of abstractions removed from but mirroring everyday life (Wolff, 1950: 3-13, 42). Art and science recreate the world in ways that make it more malleable to their purposes than it naturally is. In something of the same way, collective human activity creates culture and society which mold and manage social life and engage a person in perpetual dualities between individual and collective meanings (Ritzer, 1983: 162; Spykman, 1966:26).

Simmel influences several schools of thought which emphasize how people make sense of and carry out everyday

*I am grateful to Christopher T. Link for contributions of his sources and thought on the work of Georg Simmel.

activity. Contemporary formal thought assumes the priority of circumstance and pursues understanding of what people know and how they know the ordinarily taken for granted world (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979:180-181).

For Simmel (1950:364) privacy is a fundamental and extreme enactment of secrecy. But, secrecy--the unknown and unknowable--is a presence and provocation in all personal bonds (Simmel, 1950:334). Aloneness is metaphorically understood as a window in which one sees outward while not seen in (Simmel, 1957:5). The human predilection to invest identity in spatial claim may be the basis of privacy (Simmel, 1957:3). By establishing a bounded location in space, we isolate ourselves. By isolation--separation--we become our own discrete entities, unique and apart. To establish privacy, then, assumes control over who one is by maintenance of and claim to distance. The experience--metaphorically understood as a window--contrasts with the maintenance of privacy. The latter is like a door with explicit and self evident rules of access and exclusion (Simmel, 1957:4).

"The Stranger" (Simmel, 1971:143-149) is particularly relevant to an understanding of privacy. The stranger is distant from and interactive with the mutually bonded, the group or community. Potential mobility and detachment distinguish the presence of one who is among but not of the group:

In the case of the stranger, the union of closeness and remoteness involved in every human relationship is patterned in a way that may be succinctly formulated as

follows: the distance within this relation indicates that one who is remote is near (Simmel, 1971:143).

The group perceives a type of stranger definable by whatever aggregates she/he might be identified with rather than as an individual (Simmel, 1971:146-148). Here, Simmel foreshadows the interface between being alone and accompanied in public: the location of unknown others by generalizable attributes and a certain mystery about those momentarily alone in our midst. There is another side to the mystery. Because one is not permanent or integrated with the group, she/he may be subject to disclosures too risky to share with other significant and long term associates: available as a low risk object of release for matters otherwise concealed (Simmel, 1971:145).

There are four guiding themes in Simmel's work for analysis: form (the organization or pattern of activity); reciprocity (the production of meaning through interaction); distance (the emergence of traits and meaning out of relative separation); and duality (the understanding of process through interplay of opposites (Levine, 1971:xxxiv-xxxvii).

Simmel's thought anticipates and lends historical precedent for frame analysis. Through his training in the Chicago tradition, Erving Goffman employs Simmel as a precedent for his study of everyday life (cf. Levine, 1971:xv).

Frame

A literary critic, Kenneth Burke (1965:274-278; 1962:viii-xxv) is a principal originator of the dramatic metaphor applied to

understanding interaction. Like Simmel, Burke provides historical context and continuity toward understanding the precedent for Goffman's work on frame analysis. Burke operates from a basic assumption human beings are active users and manipulators of symbols. In short, Burke (1962:xvii-xxv) regards humans as able to define and invest meaning in their own social world. He imputes motive by act, scene, agency, agent and purpose: a stage model. Burke is mainly interested in motive. Goffman is not. Goffman infers meaning from language by inference of underlying rules rather than motives. His use of the dramatic metaphor is by virtue of visible similarity between ordinary activity and staged versions of it.

The fundamental implications of dramaturgical metaphor are these: The social world is understood by its symbols. Human activity, then, is observable and interpretable as the production and processing of symbols. Symbols are embedded in the psyche but displayed in the expressions of people. Language is symbolic activity. Communication is the data for understanding human interaction (Brissett and Edgely, 1975:5-6).

These underlying assumptions extend to the work of Erving Goffman. John Lofland (1980:27) suggests Goffman follows Burke: "by looking at the familiar through a new set of concepts the taken for granted becomes problematic." Randall Collins (1980:171) notes Goffman explicates "things people don't talk about." Goffman develops focus on communication as the essential object of study and key to understanding social order (Collins, 1980:201-204). The culmination comes in his borrowing the metaphor, frame--credited to

Gregory Bateson--for "definitions" we both "recognize" and "display" in interaction, the outer limits of a given meaning and the shape meaning takes in behavioral realization (Manning, 1980:256-273).

Peter K. Manning (1980:256) clarifies concisely:

We communicate messages and information like machines and mirrors to each other . . . metaphorical in the sense that we act toward each other in terms of what we believe the situation to be or what the other wants us to believe . . . Goffman is concerned about . . . not the structure of the world . . . but that the social world always involves the production of performances.

Goffman (1974:1-20, 560-576) regards the activity--doings--of human beings as a strip of activity, in and of itself: not unlike a comic strip without captions. Prior learning lends a key (Goffman, 1974:40-82) to the meaning of appearances and motion which make up activity. The process by which we make meanings symmetrical is communication. The symmetry is social order. Framing becomes joint entry into a metaphor. Levels of meaning and plays on any basic model range from imagination to manipulation to deceit (Goffman, 1974:83-123).

The social order understood by Goffman is rather clearly embedded in our heads. But, the order is form, not substance. Goffman (1974:439-495) points to an uneasiness in our minds about substance, about how individual motives will work out within available forms (means). Frames are models for the process of interaction; the ways we fit form and content together. Thus, by his explication of frame analysis, Goffman (1974) encompasses the production of performance; the interplay of form and content. He lends motion and

depth--liquidity and texture--beyond the more static and untransformed base of activity (Manning, 1980:262-279).

To do frame analysis, then, one views activity as having fundamental structure and basic meaning. Beyond basic structure, one extracts the process by which activity emerges, is communicated, the simultaneous communications emitted and how activity transforms to its opposite. And process once enacted is the basis for inference of underlying order.

Further refinements appear in Erving Goffman's (1983:1-17) presidential address to the American Sociological Association. He specifies interaction--what happens when two or more people are within one another's presence and in potential or actual communication--as an appropriate unit of analysis (Goffman, 1983:2). Essential--and variable--factors for interaction, he suggests, are the cognitive dimensions engrossment and involvement, i.e., the degree to which one commits focus and immersion to present activity and company (Goffman, 1983:3). Goffman (1983:3) distinguishes the standardization, the ways we interact, as ritual (Goffman, 1983:3). And the resultant structure of ritual systems reflects order: cognitive understandings we produce in communication. People are simultaneously a product of collective creation and preoccupied with individual motives and goals. Unthinking reliance on form occurs by virtue of most of us having no viable alternatives (Goffman, 1983:4-8). Goffman (1983:2) suggests that even behind closed windows and doors, we act in stylized ways, as if--with absolute privacy--we were not alone.

Ordinary activity reflects culture, but in the way a stick is seen through water: anchored but not so rigidly as to render us clones of prevailing order (Goffman, 1983:8-9). How ordinary activity reflects cultural meanings is specifically commended for investigation (Goffman, 1983:17).

The structural dimensions of form are the occasion, ritual going on within it, costume, gesture, and body alignments (Goffman, 1983:9-10). These, in sum, are the data one gathers toward abstraction and interpretation.

The paradox of Goffman may be this: What goes on in our heads is not the social order. What we produce in joint communication is a display of understood order. For analytic purposes, that display is social order.

Privacy

Neither formal nor frame analysis explicitly focus on privacy. A literature on privacy exists and comments on privacy emerge in analyses of public space, distance, and territory. Of special import are works by Erving Goffman (1963, 1971), Edward T. Hall (1966), and Robert Sommer (1969).

Barry Schwartz (1968:741-752) offers a seminal work which outlines privacy. Privacy is the way people take leave or separate from one another. Rules organize and define--across situations--rights and ways of maintenance, rituals of entry and withdrawal. These emerge through a vocabulary of gesture and intent. Privacy

may be viewed as necessary for social order, a preserver of the group by virtue of its duality with involvement. But privacy is, as well, privilege. There is differential access by status and differential access built into space depending upon the status of the clientele served.

The status issue is addressed further by Peter K. Manning (1972:83-94). Privacy shelters and allows development of the self concept, he argues, and more, sets apart and signifies status, value and identity. W. H. Foddy and W. R. Finighan (1980:1-17) elaborate situational variations in privacy: both what is separated and how privacy relates to management of identity changes from situation to situation.

Privacy can be specifically taken in context of wider issue, aloneness (Robert Stebbins, n.d.:1-23). Privacy, and other structures of aloneness, may be viewed in their objective (external) and subjective (internal) states (Stebbins, n.d.:3).

These works are acknowledged as progeny of Goffman and Simmel. In a number of works on the social organization of public order, Goffman (1961, 1963, 1967, 1971, 1979) addresses issues which provide impressive precedent and comparative context for further investigation. More than an array of--not mutually exclusive--concepts, he sketches the outline of a dualistic model of privacy characterized by categories of separation and of interruption in the context of space, time and underlying order. The ritual process and mutuality he establishes between the alone and the with, the structure and content of

experience is the sociological taproot of privacy and the proper engagement of new data. As such, his work defines the task set forth here.

Privacy (Goffman, 1963:38-42) occurs by separation from channels of communication and simultaneous engrossment in one's activity, property and/or body. Yet, privacy is not independently chosen or claimed, but enters the larger order as an interplay between rights of a person to withdraw and limitations--roles of engagement--on separation. Privacy is, accordingly, maintained and interrupted through a process of negotiation. Privacy exists and transforms by virtue of ratification processes reflective of cultural, spatial, and status--age, gender, race, and class--order (Goffman, 1963:124-148).

Space and time emit their own superindividual order: beyond transients and their incidents; minimal risk exists as a pale sidelight of maximal predicability (Goffman, 1963:64-75, 1983:4-5).

The stranger is a routine image we put on and take off in contemporary situations. And routinely, we understand what being a stranger means in context of group and others who are strangers: playing parts and unknown, vaguely defined and usually inaccessible.

Social Space and Stratification

Lyn H. Lofland (1973) follows Goffman and Simmel in her analysis of urban space. Density and complexity--the routine concentration of strangers with strangers--generates and perpetuates

shared protocols which allow predictable dealings among the mutually unknown.

Two components of distance are useful. Space may be viewed as a portable quantity: a matter of intimacy, a range of safety around one's body. Territory is location, the bounded area one takes up: a matter of environment (Hayduk, 1978:117-134). Sommer and Becker (1969:85-92) find physical markers employed to define one's environmental space, territory. Melbin (1972:246-248) likewise finds communication a display device with multiple channels--markers, gesture, motion, sound and distance--employed to lend force and distinction to one's claims of space and of separation and avoidance rights. Henderson (1975:446-455) finds markers and self involvement in a bus terminal signify and maintain distance. She suggests these operate together in complex configurations. Unfortunately, the configurations are not specified.

Edward T. Hall (1966) poses a dialectic of language and distance. The language of space is culture-specific and produced by gesture and distance. Contact between cultures often creates offense--in the way North Americans often find their Southern neighbors too near and tactile in conversation and are themselves found cold and aloof--taking on, as do so many cultural variables, moral weight. Gesture and distance have their grammar as do spoken languages: a structure of "zones" maintained as reflective of actual and potential intimacy between people. Zones are distances of possible communication, perception and physical access.

The stratification of space is mirrored in our language. High status is often spoken of in spatial terms (Sommer, 1969). Further, sociometric analysis of group configurations finds spatial arrangements which reflect rankings within the group (Sommer, 1969). Altman (1975) finds strategic claims to space and presumed legitimacy of those claims made by both individuals and group elements, adolescent and ethnic subcultures in particular.

Goffman (1979), Eakins and Eakins (1978) and Wex (1979) specify gender as a criteria of spatial discrimination. The latter work grounds inequality of personal and territorial prerogatives in historical and cross-cultural patterns and a massive body of visual data. Unfortunately, the work proffers few, if any, fresh theoretical developments.

McCall and colleagues (1970) similarly view relationships as bounded by status differentials. Status distinctions mark us inaccessible to mutual knowing and affinities and if knowing is accomplished at all, relationships must be negotiated toward formation of a private relational culture. Here, personal and spatial distance converge as do privacy and private ties, around authority to make and maintain claims, to gain or limit access: an authority attributed to visible signs of status.

Interruption of Privacy and Themes in Public Order

One would not expect interruption to occur apart from status considerations. The two, however, do not meet in available investigations. (There is not an extensive body of discrete findings.) Findings, if not method and perspective, fit well with Goffman's work.

Interruption is treated situationally in currently known studies. Nevertheless, warranted and unwarranted entry into privacy is a key duality toward understanding. Lyman and Scott (1967:236-249) and Becker (1973:439-445) make a useful distinction to ground interruption in spatial context: public territory signified by purposive and temporary presence.

Bossley (1976:8-19) regards interruption--"invasion"--as the product of individual and environmental conditions. Gernstein (1978:76-81) explains how interruption forces one into the other's point of view and threatens identity and rights withdraw. Hayduck (1978:117-134) observes withdrawal as customarily the response to (personal) space invasion while more aggressive responses occur toward (environmental invasion of territory. Our bodies and claims to intimacy control are mobile. Territorial invasion--in Hayduk's sense--amounts to imposition on what must either be redefined as one's own or abandoned.

Laud Humphreys (1975:78-80) identifies patterns of response to interruption of private situations, in this case, of covert sexual activity between males in public restrooms.

These responses are self protective gestures as a first priority, and alternatively, dissociation from the event, assessment of the outsider, or total withdrawal from the situation.

Experimental findings by Robert Sommer (1969) specify responses to interruptions: the response is produced non-verbally. There

is an "aggressive" pattern characterized by direct focus on the intruder. Responses include a shift of position, of body and/or property to create new barriers and frowning expression aimed at the intruder. A more passive mode is characterized by generalized shifts, motion, tapping of feet and hands. The subsequent stage is one of either flight or objectification. One leaves one's place or the setting altogether. Or, alternatively, one treats the intruder as a nonperson. Objectification may be conveyed through signals of nonperception, such as closing off one's vision.

Likewise, production of actual or potential interruption is countered when one intends only to claim space (Sommer, 1969). One signals for permission to be adjacent to another, either verbally or gesturally and/or defers subsequent interference by lowering one's eyes while taking the space.

Granted, theory may come about the way poetry is made. Neither duplicates reality. Both make use of metaphor to construct heuristic worlds. So do people to construct the order which entraps them (cf. Berger and Luckman, 1966). Among and superseding all these commonalities, none of these endeavors is random or free form. Each is bound by its own rules albeit of its own collective creation.

Selection of a theoretical perspective is more than an affirmation of faith within which acts of heresy may be played out. Even the most selective review of existing literature affirms subsequently history will not be repudiated. The precedents outlined above are constraints. Within the formal perspective and by virtue

of what is known, certain elements emerge which require an accounting. An interpretation of privacy should develop through these elements which make up a fundamental order of public space: the social organization of place; differentiation between people; the organization of individual experience; and the vulnerability of experience to transformation. Through these elements--archetypes--emergent from the literature, data are organized and reveal a frame of privacy.

CHAPTER III

THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION: NOTES ON METHOD

This study is an interpretive inquiry: a comparative process across settings, activities and related to prior findings and insights (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1970:230-235). Field observations are evaluated within the concept of privacy toward refinement of understanding. The study is not an ethnography of any given public space. The study neither generates nor tests formal hypotheses. The study produces an image of privacy emergent from frame analysis of direct observations and salient images or archetypes in the literature of space, territory, interruption and communication. Interpretation emphasizes the production of privacy as a social process.

In the Realm of Duplicity: Data Collection

Once undertaken, qualitative research defines itself: its shape, process and limitations. The investigator is participant and calculated spectator in a setting qua research space. Ultimately, the space shapes both. But what space and doings within "communicate," emergent theoretical issues lead to subsequent locations where new ways of investigation and participation come about. Eventually, time itself ends the cycle and fixes the task in what data one has and what data one does without (cf. Warren, 1974:167-168, 172). The performance of research activity is not unlike the process under

scrutiny. Duplicity distinguishes and adds to the consciousness and attention of doing research. Research activity is doubly dependent on the space where it occurs. Setting structures immediate behavior and is consciously employed as a guide to where one goes next. Those essential separations are inherent in systematic seeing in contrast to routine doings.

To investigate privacy in public space, one defines it, operationally, as physical or social barriers to contact or interchange. One observes costume, gesture, body alignment, gender, race and approximate age. To investigate privacy by its dualities, one operationally defines interruption as physical or verbal entry into another's space so as to provoke response. One records, in such events, observed acts and attributes of the interrupted and interruptor. All data are collected in Knoxville, Tennessee, and at The University of Tennessee during the Spring months of 1984. "Subjects" are neither engaged nor--given the appearance of normal activity--affected by simultaneous research activity.

The first setting for observation is the laundromat. This laundromat is located in a long established "student ghetto" area near the University campus. It is one of several businesses, ranging from a grocery and a Middle Eastern foods restaurant to upstairs apartments and a hairstyling salon, both rented and all owned by a "mom and pop" operation.* All are in one large building with separate sidewalk entrances. The laundromat has a clientele made up primarily of

*The building housing the laundromat was totally destroyed by fire the early morning of July 12, 1984.

students--American and international--who live in remodeled and quite old houses broken into three to ten apartments in various states of repair. (Students who live in newer apartment complexes in this area usually have laundry facilities provided.) Central to the laundromat are seventeen washing machines pushed together in two rows. A skim of detergent clings to the rims of their tubs. Against the front wall, their backs to a window, and against the left wall, too, are six fold-down chairs. Pressed next to the left row of chairs is a long table. Against the right wall are a bench, about two to three feet from the chairs, and a small round table. A row of seven dryers is at the rear of the room. This laundromat is often cluttered with cigarette butts and softening sheets on its floor. Boxes, some stacked and some requisitioned for trash, and sections of discarded newspaper, often rest on chairs. Used soap powder and bleach containers and occasional misplaced or discarded socks sometimes litter the tops of washers. One must insert two quarters per load in a washer, one per load in dryers. Two or more dryers and three or four washers are usually out of order. Hand scrawled notes mark machines out of order, and advertise everything from used motorcycles to "moving sales" on the laundromat's left wall. While some interesting data emerge here, a university break period and subsequent reduced activity at the laundromat dictate a more busy setting where people, too, come alone: the bus terminal.

The bus terminal stands peripheral to and between the downtown business district and an interstate highway junction. It takes up the length of a short city block. Against its outer walls and at

the sidewalk entrance stand middle-aged men in loose fitting clothes. Some are cab drivers whose cabs are parked in front of the terminal. Some are simply loitering. Many often smell of alcohol. Younger men, usually in t-shirts and jeans, intermingle with the older ones. These men engage in small talk and drift in and out of the terminal to use restroom and fountain facilities, to loiter. Some enter to approach waiting passengers for spare change. Adolescent boys of slimmer build and wearing colorful t-shirts also drift through the terminal, often pausing to play video machines which line the rear wall.

The terminal walls, opposite its entrance side, are broken by exits--numbered "Zones"--where passengers enter and leave. There are restrooms, a row of telephones separated by partitions, and small counters at their base, and rows of lockers for rent. The ticket booth is set off from the main floor, in front of the terminal, by a partition; the manager's office is set off by a wall with a window looking out into the terminal. The manager wears a business suit; other employees are identified by uniforms. To the rear and center of the lot-side wall are three chairs hooked-up with portable televisions. In the center of the terminal are ten sets of seats molded of orange and yellow material, about six inches apart on poles, bolted to the floor and arranged into five rows. Less than a yard separates a row from the one in front of it. There is a passage of about a yard where each row divides. The last two rows separate from the third by about two yards. The rear of the terminal

on the entry side opens into a restaurant with small tables in its center floor and booths lining its wall.

While observation in a laundromat with few present can focus on those alone, those accompanied and interruptions simultaneously, the greater activity of a bus terminal necessitates segmentation of focus. When focus is on interruptions, general observations are made of those alone rather than detailed cases of "alone" and "with" cases, which is an alternate focus. Once patterns in both areas of interest emerge and hold for three observations beyond them, the student lounge offers an opportunity to expand a rather uniform socio-economic level characteristic of the terminal and add interaction among less transient sorts: university students who might cross paths again, have acquaintances in common, become neighbors or classmates. The lounge, unlike the laundromat, draws a wide range of student "types" between classes and in study or conversational groups.

One lounge opens to the main lobby and hallway of the university center. The other is a room to itself with two entrances. Considerable traffic passes the former. Less traffic, though steady, passes outside the latter. Both are carpeted. Both are furnished with sofas in subdued shades of blue, burgundy, gray and tan. Both have panelled walls hung with abstract paintings. Both have floor plants. Furniture is against walls and variously off-center in the closed lounge. There are tables in front of most sofas and other small tables available.

Any central position with maximum visibility serves for observation in the lounge and in the laundromat. Since writing is not a common activity in bus terminals, a more obscure spot--on the fourth row center aisle--is chosen. No interruptions occur during observation in the closed lounge. An interruption by one traveller and three spare-changers in the terminal are duly incorporated as data. An interruption by the manager elicits an explanation of the research underway, assurances nothing intrusive will occur and his permission to continue observation.* Otherwise, observation proceeds as if it were not observation at all.

What one setting offers suggests subsequent settings. For example, the bus terminal offers a higher level of activity and a greater variety of participants than the laundromat. The lounge offers a more uniform--and higher status level--set of participants with more mutual investments than does the bus terminal. Prior to leaving any one research setting, a period of immersion eliminates confounding questions, confirms patterns and suggests matters better pursued elsewhere. Once there seems no more of import remaining for discovery and once patterns fit with existing literature, data collection ceases (Becker and Geer, 1960:276-278; Glaser and Strauss, 1970:224-228, 276-278; Wiseman, 1970:279-280).

*An employee in the ticket booth informs that company employees sometimes anonymously enter terminals to observe and file reports. Thus, the uncommon activity of one entering and leaving on foot and taking notes generates suspicion among terminal employees of being evaluated by their employer.

Time constraints leave some issues unaddressed. The more interesting of these are discussed speculatively for further evaluation in Chapter VIII. All investigation takes place in one community and in one example of each type of setting. While idiosyncrasy of place might be fatal for an ethnography, support from current strands of thought can mitigate the difficulties posed for this study. Considerable merit accrues to unsystematic checks on findings--during the period of analysis--against what goes on in public places. Public cafeterias, another laundromat, and public parks confirm prior findings and likewise offer no confounding impressions.

Findings emerge from 15 sets of field notes encompassing over 20 hours of observation. Some 175 individual cases include 20 pairs or groups, 80 people alone and some 70 interruptions. General observations record seating patterns, trafficking patterns and comparisons of those alone with those accompanied.

In the Realm of Abstraction: Use and Interpretation

Patterns emergent from data and organized by the literature form the interpretation of privacy offered by this essay. Field data are usually presented comparatively and in sufficient detail to illustrate general arguments in a study (Warren, 1974:178-179). Erving Goffman (see Glaser and Strauss, 1970:136-139) develops his argument with heavily layered use of examples presented in a logic

which evolves his argument. The themes derived from existing bodies of literature take shape with data which outline the conceptual order for interpretation of privacy. A combination of both modes of preparation for field notes is employed here. Field notes present illustrative and comparative cases in order and density toward a logical texture for arguments posed. In sum, field notes illustrate a pattern they exemplify and offer an accounting and and visual dimension to argument as it unfolds.

A numerical argument is sometimes a convincing one. The argument here unfolds as a legalistic one: by logic and weight of evidence. Either, in its own way, has precedent and merit. By legal argument weighed on its own persuasion, fit with prior findings, and a sense of "having been there," deference and priority accrue to texture and imagery of activity. By their reporting, texture and imagery take shape and order. In that way, an activity of reporting parallels the activity reported.

Where Themes and Patterns Converge

When one goes in places to wait or do laundry, to study or loiter, and when one goes alone, there can be an added texture of doing research as well.

Being an observer does not render one invisible to those watched (who often watch back) or place one above entry by those who interrupt cautiously or uncautiously. Neither does it alleviate

the order of place or extricate one from the reciprocity activity has for those whose interactions are recorded. One is no less a part for being a researcher. One has no less a continuity before and after an hour or two of observation than others do around an hour or two of ordinary activity.

These are the archetypes of order for this study: for those whose doings are grounded in historical moment and situational contingency, space takes on a social order treated as real: a mythology (cf. Barthes, 1956:130-131). Likewise, being alone is socially reified into a natural order. Within physical space, similarities and differences between people--by age, gender, race, and costume--name them by category of stranger, like or unlike--thus unequal. This, as it colors production and transformation of privacy, may be called affinity (cf. Matza, 1969:90-92). Who one is--or sees oneself as--has continuity which operates in particular ways by virtue of immersion in space and its doings. Where continuity and moment meet may be called suspension. Where one's activity may be undone, an order of vulnerability emerges.

The orderings of space provide archetypes for interpretation of privacy. A more comprehensive appreciation may be obtained by interpretation in the meaning of aloneness in contemporary life. A semiotic interpretation is posed toward this end.

Semiotics is not a discipline or systematic field of endeavor. The objective is to elicit meaning without conventionally empirical grids of hard data (Barthes, 1977:457-478). Instead, interpretation

develops toward specification of signs and what signs communicate. The logic at hand runs counter to traditional Western thought patterns. We normally create discrete dimensions for analysis, e.g. "subject" and "object." From a semiotic way of thinking, a representation communicates an object; subject and object are unified in a sign. As illustrated by McCannell (1976:109), a "Sign represents/ something/ to someone." This study proposes what privacy, in a larger sense, of separation from company, means in American culture.

Literary references in particular apply to determination of what major themes run through everyday life about separation from others, about turning inward. These motifs--it can be argued--signify understandings in people's minds about constraints and options on taking leave of social bonds (cf. Barthes, 1952:29).

A semiotic analysis is employed to locate a symbol, the collective memory it draws on and its manifestation in everyday life (Barthes, 1962:211-217). Everyday structures derive from an essentially dramaturgical exposition of privacy through planes of spatial order. Textual references, to follow, provide a source to extract an underlying order, a set of symbols, and to isolate understandings they evoke (Barthes, 1966:251-295). What--this investigation poses--can be said about the order of privacy beyond obvious inferences emergent from data? There is, for extraction, an "obtuse meaning": one underlying and obscured by the observed and the obvious. In the special case of this investigation, the meaning at issue is the counterplay between privacy as a privilege to separate and accountability to the social order.

Semiotic analysis of structure--especially in the non-technical way Barthes suggests it--may seem overly interpretive. One might suggest scientific rigidity probably stifles more provocative knowledge than it produces. However, more credibility accrues to a defense calling upon Goffman's (1974:416) acclaim of Barthes' contribution by these methods and recall of Goffman's (1983:17) suggestion of efforts to get at just these issues. A more expansive discussion--if not statistically sound--points to privacy as a complex issue with a wealth of implications for subsequent thought, study and discussion. Much of the precedent for this study comes from work by Erving Goffman whose expansive contributions wear well and stimulate much beyond them.

CHAPTER IV

MYTHOLOGY: THE ORDER OF SPACE AND SEPARATION

One may visualize three intersecting planes. In the same way, three archetypes lend skeletal order to privacy. The first is mythology: of space and of being alone. The myth image applies because both, as defined, are valued and not seen as constructed entities. Both are as reified as illusory. Demystification of either either would destroy its existence as a means to organize experience (cf. Barthes, 1956:93-149).

The Design of Focus

One begins with a simple premise. A bus terminal is for people suspended in travel. A laundromat suspends people in preparation for presentability, albeit public the very time it goes on. A lounge suspends one in common roster. In the way everyone in a university lounge is about doings legitimate for one of the university and so is everyone in a physician's lounge presumed in the world of health and illness and registered by the appropriate clerk. Space, then, by design sets and constrains variation within its proper order. The possibilities by design signify what is going on and present practical difficulties for what else might. Spaces, once seen empty, take on new meaning.

A bus terminal lays messages in multiple layers probably because of the transient nature of its users and its typical placement

where those who are not able to take planes, for economic reasons, live within walking distance of both the terminal and those who might have other designs on public space. This is not to say modest incomes breed deviance but to suggest modest incomes breed travel by bus and convenient placement is convenient for those who concentrate in the areas for illegitimate reasons.

Chairs are aligned at the center of the terminal in full frontal view of the ticket booth. Television chairs are as visible in profile. There, one ideally focuses on television, momentarily turned away from the exit, from activity of travel going on through a window behind one's back. One still faces those only waiting. Video games are the most distant realm one can enter: away from ticket booth and travellers in sound and distance. That one must turn away to play these games inherently implies what is behind one's back cannot be totally ignored. Video games may particularly appeal to participants unlikely to sustain serious waiting well: those of not yet adult status or those who, additionally, do not sustain well the status age gives them. The restaurant is further removed in distance but primarily opens a realm a competent person does not fully enter. Eating and drinking, even for a moment, is not thought a full time preoccupation going on oblivious to all else (Goffman, 1963:52).

Other items stocked also ostensibly meet a traveller's needs and also do more. Storage lockers acknowledge by convenience--which nonetheless cramps--how temporary is the convenience. One can hardly

unpack and move in. Telephones barely separated by partitions and above counters just big enough to prop one's elbows on are toward the front in full view of the ticket booth and within earshot of those passing to the water fountain and restroom or watching television where a couple of phones are placed alone. One cannot be assured, talking on the edge of passageways, against visual or aural probings. If one faces totally into the phone, the price is vulnerability of one's back to whatever, routine or menacing, might be passing or pausing behind (cf. Goffman, 1971:294).

The water fountain and restrooms acknowledge nature's place in waiting in the way company advertisements as decor acknowledge the purpose of the terminal as waiting. Locks, not locked, on outer restroom doors caution of their need to be there and the entrant's responsibility to construct an efficient substitute. As are the telephones, restrooms are in front and visible lest one think stealthy appropriation--though a certain amount of male hustling goes on--could not be witnessed.

Like video machines, televisions, and a restaurant ashtrays and a change machine fit the line of signals which both acknowledge one is not utterly engrossed with waiting and delimited in realms acceptable to secondarily enter (Goffman, 1963:47-49, 62).

Seats, along the pole supporting them, are bolted down and in less than comforting--orange and yellow--colors and--about six inches apart--spacing. One could hardly doubt being the less permanent of the two. Though a space can be--and is--marked off

by property or an extended arm or leg, it requires marking for keeping. Keeping is secure only so long as there are other chairs left for those who subsequently arrive and need them (Goffman, 1971: 31). The seat is not going anywhere. If choices arise, a body and its belongings could be quite mobile. The latter are not bolted down in fact or custom.

Milling activity goes on as if it were not really milling. It occurs in a path--on the entry side of the terminal--between the posted schedule and the restaurant entrance, passing restroom and fountain, phones and wall clock, change machine and as far as video games. Escape routes are through the entrance, into the restaurant, into a restroom; all places where one enters and returns to the terminal. Milling layers one more source of information for users of those outlets that none is appropriated long or apart from the main activity and none is appropriated without being exposed. To the extent one plays here, one plays in traffic.

Space in a laundromat is organized to bring one into the task at hand with a more sparse and stark focus. Diversions one brings along and their opportunity to unfold are somewhat restricted by a singularity of design. Chairs constrain one to look out on rows of washing machines. One is frontally oriented to another loading and unloading, seen across the work each has access to do. One may also look at another loading or unloading a machine in front of any taken chair. But equipment at hand--such as a clothes basket, clothes detergent and hangers--witnesses to the task and for its suggested

constraints. There is no telephone found in the laundramat just as there is no arrangement to necessitate or encourage face to face talk. Bringing our dirty laundry out in public suffices. The laundry escapes partial containment in baskets, tubs and dryers once it is no longer dirty. And when washers or dryers stop one is as constrained to re-enter the task or to gather one's clean laundry and leave: the task finished.

A lounge is as much of curves as these other spaces are of angles. Sofas bend outward from walls; a dimming of basic colors and their textures--paralleled by carpet--softens space. Their curve, itself, allows a continuum of chosen distance rather than imposing an already calibrated one. Lightweight mobile tables offer themselves for work or rest, as barriers or decor. Green floor plants and panelled walls hung with abstract images soften matters further.

One enters a space not unlike a living room where commonalities of taste are presumed. If one plays here, one plays in front of company and kin; those on the roster by which one is entitled entry. Just as objects lend themselves to creation of alternate realms of work, conversation, relaxation, few others are invited in (cf. Schwartz, 1968:750). There are ashtrays, placed generally at one edge and slightly back from sofas.

One who means to be taken seriously in a space knows to operate within whatever focus is most general and encompassing and, as well, to recognize allowable involvements, their limits and one's error

before others or at least in time for corrections. The following case is illustrative: the young man's personal activity spills out into main activity. And he puts himself and his activity back into proper perspective.

A blonde male, probably in his early twenties, wearing unfaded name brand--e.g. Levi's--jeans and a casual shirt--uses a telephone. He smiles broadly, rolls his eyes, extends and waves his hands punctuating conversation. He pauses, drops his arm to his side, emits a blank expression and slight frown, gazes across the terminal and turns to face into the telephone. In the course of a 15 minute conversation, he turns outward, lapses back into expressions and gesturing, pauses and withdraws in the same way (Author's field notes).

Understandably, private activity can become compelling. If it appears overwhelming, private activity becomes a matter of self control.

When one waits, tasks or breaks are finished--and size plus the population of possible users prefigures turnover--one gathers parts of one's presence and leaves. Loitering is use of space inattentive to proper doings and one--properly doing--enters with proper signs, proceeds directly to what must be begun. So are alternate involvements subordinate to the rhythm implicit in parsimonious use of time and space. A typical response to such rhythm can be demonstrated. In the following case, task is lent primacy and secondary concerns are kept in their place:

A slim, dark-haired female, in her early twenties, wearing dark corduroy slacks and a denim jacket . . . is seated in a chair . . . alone in the row . . . in front of the window. Her legs are crossed one leg over the other knee . . . she is bent forward from the waist, her head down over a book held over her lap . . . when the sound of a dryer stops, she immediately looks up in the direction of the dryers . . . stands, leaves her book open and face down on her chair and, focusing on the dryer proceeds directly to hers, opens it . . . (Author's field notes).

Designs of space, then, are a geometry of constraint and option, facilitating and pointing to primary focus, opening and closing, ever subordinating other options. One must act within these constraints or act as if one were (Goffman, 1963: 50-59). The design of space, most generally, offers just enough room to do what we are supposed to (Goffman, 1971:311). That we watch ourselves implicitly reduces and distinguishes those we need to keep watch on. The design of space and its delimitation and management of alternate usage is, accordingly, the underpinning of civil inattention whereby absence of interference or its intent is silently taken for granted (Goffman, 1971:238-282).

While a dangerous element in a situation is all the more dangerous by a capacity to act as it too were properly part (Goffman, 1983:5), alternate use can emerge and be signified

innocuous. The following ritual consists of more than greeting. It amounts to affirmation of no ill intent and permission to proceed:

Two adolescent boys in colorful but now faded t-shirts and tight faded jeans enter through Zone 1-2. Entering, one glances to the ticket booth . . . lifts his arm in the air and waves . . . the wave receives a nod in return. The boys continue to the video games . . . play . . . interrupted by periodic trips to the water fountain and restroom or to the change machine and directly back to the video games . . . (Author's field notes).

The Display of Focus

Constraints of space outline a ritual production--essentially a play to space--with responsibility to demonstrate one is about the main doings and to emit no evident focus on others as more than their primary activity. One enters with basic signs of affinity--be they travel bags or baskets of clothes--and proceeds directly to enact a rationale of entry. In other words, one does what one might be expected to do. Those also present are assuaged by proper secondary involvements. One smokes where there are ash-trays and reads where there are chairs and sufficient lights. One may eat where there are no prohibitions against food or drink present or where snacking goes on and its remnants are on display.

Subordination itself continues by attention to the next main step: when one's bus is called, when one's dryer

stops, when one's watch is checked. These secondary involvements operate as connection with time before and after the moment in space. One does not, after all, long and seriously peruse detergent boxes or bus schedules or become overtly engrossed in a lounge as a lounge. One acts as if one had at most a tenuous niche:

A blonde male, about twenty, with carefully styled hair and wearing faded, torn jeans and a contrasting yellow cotton shirt, enters the laundromat and looks directly at the white male nearest the door. He drops his eyes and proceeds across the front of the laundromat, passes an Asian male, in his early twenties . . . within about a foot's distance . . . turns his back to the other . . . sits on a bench and immediately picks up a newspaper and begins thumbing through it . . . he drapes an arm over the back of the bench and lifts his gaze over the paper each time he moves it or turns a page . . . looks across the room toward the other (white) male . . . he lowers each gaze slowly . . . (Author's field notes).

Entering without proper equipment, the young man nonetheless demonstrates notice of others and their situation. He takes up the paper immediately as if to assume he will not take up something inappropriate. He maintains evident awareness of his distinction.

As crucial as these secondary involvements may be, especially for the playing as if one were properly situated, their placement signifies their status. A newspaper may be left once read or placed within immediate confines of signs for the main activity:

A black female, in her early twenties . . . her bags carried by a white male in his early twenties [who] . . . sets it down for her near the front of the terminal She raises her head and eyes to meet his . . . thanks him . . . places her property After talking with personnel at the ticket booth, she is seated . . . takes a paperback book out of her bag . . . thumbs through it . . . turns her head down toward it . . . (Author's field notes).

All obligations to personal ties and space are met first. Only then does one extract subordinate activity--in this case and often--from the prime instrument, her bag, of legitimate presence.

This property, oriented to primary or subordinate use, is not an object of inherent meaning. A grocery bag and a battered suitcase share the commonality of an athletic bag with prestigious logo and "nice" luggage, as do a garbage bag and an intact clothes basket. Inherent meaning might be attributed with gauche misuse. But, it is no less unthinkable to display a mismatch than to spill suitcases in terminals. "Inherent meaning" attributed by virtue of the mix would pass through the property as if a mere conduit to soul and merit of its carrier (Goffman, 1974:301-321).

The Order of Engrossment

One does not escape priorities of space--or even think to do so--whether one enters alone or with others. Others bring one another openly. There are ongoing ties to display and sustain which require current manifestations and maintenance (Goffman, 1971:188-237).

The alone, at the same time, are separate but not alone. The alone are in relationship with space, with those accompanied and with one another, all of whom they affect in the current instant and leave (Simmel, 1950:119).

One sees channels of activity both sensitive to space and ties in a couple:

A male/female pair sit . . . on a sofa Both are about twenty; both wear khaki shorts and "name brand" tennis shoes. The woman sits on the carpet, in front of and her legs extended and crossed at the ankles under a table. The man sits on the sofa . . . his leg tilted toward and almost touching her shoulder . . . his legs apart . . . he bends over material balanced on one knee . . . books and possessions of his are placed, too, on the table in front of him . . . her books are on the table and in front of her. . . . She leans over her work. Each time she initiates conversation with him, she turns the upper half of her body toward him . . . raises her head and eyes toward his face. He replies without looking up . . . stops to look up only after two to three consecutive

from her . . . immediately returns to focus on his work. . . . Both speak in low voices . . . (Author's field notes).

Positioning and verbal communication convey ties between the two and the task at hand. Both ties and task play simultaneously on the same channels. Multiple lines of conveying ties sustain engrossment in them, lend inseparability from current doings and sustain immediate activity in the space. More exceptional conveyance of ties by positioning and gesture certainly occur and may, in this sort of relationship, be fairly common. But no more common than a variation of less heat seen in the same light; a conversation pursued into an elevator. Both usurp a little too much space and enforce non-person standing on coparticipants (Goffman, 1963:158).

The romantic undertones removed and pair become group, similar postures may be taken:

. . . a study group . . . broken into three segments
 . . . all white males . . . all in their late teens and early twenties . . . all wearing polo or athletic shirts
 . . . fraternity caps . . . two at a small table moved against the arm of . . . a sofa One sits at the arm of the sofa, the other opposite him, chair pulled up to the table . . . their hands about a foot apart . . . they are bent over the table, their heads oriented over the work and toward one another . . .
 three others circle a table , . . one on a sofa, two on

the floor, about a foot between them . . . their materials spread over the sofa, table and floor a foot and a half on either side taken up . . . they are bent over their work, heads mutually oriented . . . conversation is sparse without looking up or with occasional quick glances and return to focus on work . . . a third is about three to four feet from and between the other two . . . his chair pulled up to a window sill, his knees against the wall . . . about every ten minutes, he glances back at them, stretches extending his arms in a wide arc . . . stares across the lounge making no effort to avert or quickly drop eye contact. . . . Upon leaving, all walk one back of the other after two to three word exchanges between them negotiating the departure and a subsequent meeting . . . (Author's field notes).

Although segmented, activity among these young men affirms both confined doings and interpersonal ties embedded in posture, distance, the geometry of segmentation and the coded nature of discussions requiring minimal verbosity to achieve symmetry. The ties neither succumb to nor overpower space. The one apart is effectively alone with visual channels to affirm his place. Otherwise, his stance, alone, conveys engrossment with an appropriate activity and periodic breaks where he embeds affirmation of ties. Aloneness may come more unexpectedly. One with another may become separated. The

following illustration, together with the previous one, outlines aloneness emergent from its opposite:

A white male, about twenty, wearing unfaded jeans and a blue shirt . . . when a third party--white male-- enters on his companion's side . . . his companion turns his head and upper body toward the third . . . turns outward, blinks his eyes . . . frowns slightly . . . lays his head back on the sofa . . . stretches, extending his arms widely . . . yawns . . . places his hands behind his neck and spreads his legs widely and stares out across the lounge . . . upon inclusion in the others' conversation, shifts toward them, tilts head and upper body in their direction . . . places his hand over his knee bent inward to cover between his legs . . . (Author's field notes).

An unanticipated transformation emerges. There is an immediate shift away and visual reorientation. The young man is powerless to act on the pair and reacts through silent channels of his separation. He reenters when invited. He enacts a break and immediately takes off that option when drawn in. He makes this correction and returns not unlike one who recalls primary commitments to spatial prescriptions when personal ones take temporary priority (Goffman, 1971:122-138).

Being with others intermingles focus on task and space with engrossment in and affirmation of ties. Being alone intermingles focus on task and space with certain options of engrossment. One

selects a seen or unseen object, a thought or a book. Or one focuses on oneself and averts intrusion of ongoing activity, thus being especially attentive to it--not unlike a child closes his eyes lest it see the ghost haunt a darkened bedroom--or one can take a break and find realms of play (cf. Goffman, 1963:64-79). In the case of privacy, obligations to space become partly obligations to others: that one is not to separate them from space or one another. Therein lies the subordination which distinguishes one alone: a profound and simple matter of the power of numbers and fatefulness of ties once named (Simmel, 1950:145-177; Goffman, 1971: 199-200).

Physical space and social subordination respected, one would then--on the surface of it--seem free to move through privacy from concentration to play and back again. A second plane now intercepts and passes through the first. This order restricts by those most basic metaphors of a stranger: seen as no more or less than gender, race and age. These are matters of affinity, of how distant we are no matter how closely we pass. One acts toward spatial order as if it were natural rather than contrived. One acts as if alone were not a momentary thing but a natural and distinct state. On the edge of company one takes subtle breaks magnified and mirrored by those alone (cf. Goffman, 1963:179-181). In the midst of privacy, one engages objects in ways mirrored amid companions. Yet, that one is alone and that space has order remain

taken for granted, a mythology, through which the mirror is not even seen darkly. Focus and engrossment deter and eschew reflection. Likewise, gender, race, costume, and age deter free play through privacy.

CHAPTER V

AFFINITY: THE ORDER OF DISTANCE

Affinity is employed by David Matza (1969:90-92) as correlation between individual and group, more specifically, as a correlation between attributes of the person and meanings of the aggregate. One has--or lacks--inclination to mirror images of the larger element: that image being style and consciousness. While Matza (1969) uses affinity to model convergence, it is employed here to model convergence around images which diverge. This order makes more of social distance. It takes those prior mythologies of space and aloneness and makes additional distance a natural order of things. Affinity with one's image diverges from alternatives on the human continuum.

Gender: Posturings of Two Languages

Being alone is subordinate activity in public space by lacking power of numbers and anchoring of present bonds. Accordingly, privacy might be constrained only by deference to the order of space and to others' involvements. Instead of one image of privacy, two immediately emerge. These are separate organized expressions--grammars--of space and distance. The duality of these postures distinguishes an essential element of privacy as produced in public space. The languages

so posed are male and female. The duality is of gender.* Alignments express not biological differences but the meanings we attribute to the whole person by virtue of those distinctions (cf. Goffman, 1979).

These images, one can see in two brief illustrations, are fundamental poses of privacy:

A white female, in her forties, wearing a blue dress, sits on a sofa . . . her legs crossed at the ankles are on the table in front of her. She sits near the arm of the sofa and places a book bag about eighteen inches to her right . . . she places work material in her lap and holds a book over it, her arms close to her sides, her head lowered over the book . . . (Author's field notes).

The woman's privacy is a contracted and relatively static pose. All signs of communication draw inward. She extends distance on one side of an empty sofa almost exactly the conventional distance for claims to be legitimately made on space (see Hall, 1966). She offers no variation beyond convention. She rests her legs drawn together. She positions herself at the end of the sofa and likewise claims little more than the edge of the table. Her legs frame her task within the confines of her body. One can not be accused of too

*Edwin Schur (1984) explores the moral order which may underlie women's contracted, stoic and vulnerable public postures. He suggests that, until recently, women were required to either behave in passive ways or risk devaluation and spoiled identity.

long a leap in logic to suggest her pose conveys taking only the essential area to be present. A comparable place taken by a male expresses the difference:

A white male, in his early twenties, wearing corduroys, tennis shoes and a white pullover shirt, sits on a sofa. His legs are apart and--bent at the knees--propped on a table. The table is pushed forward away from the sofa by his feet. One hand covers the top of an open book held upward from his thighs. His other arm is bent at the elbow and his hand is draped across his midsection. He has a book bag placed on the floor jutting forward from the side of the sofa . . . he taps his foot on the table . . . lifts his eyes and head to gaze at passers-by . . . (Author's field notes).

The man's pose is visibly expansive and relatively mobile. His posture penetrates and takes space beyond what his body necessarily would require. He mixes his messages: where he does conform to space allotted doings with his book centrally placed, he makes visual and aural claims on space. He extends his own and furnished property to bound him. He takes breaks of activity embedded in his primary doings. He opens the lower half of his body within the confines he claims.

Privacy takes on and reflects the larger male post characteristic of that gender. The male expands and penetrates space, physically, visually and aurally. He is expansive and active within his claims (see Eakins and Eakins, 1978:162-171). The female is

virtually opposite in pose at the same fundamental activity.

This base arrangement mirrors images reflected centuries ago in the painted eyes of Egypt and under the torch of the earliest Olympics, images yet standing of gods and goddesses, of men and women, translated from the books of Moses and underlined in New Testament commands of Paul the Apostle (see Wex, 1979:203-314). That a language of privacy diverges by gender is not extraordinary. It would be extraordinary and misinformed were it otherwise. Gender--it is understood--is the basic and referent point for other identity variations (Elkin and Handel, 1984:217-247). In recent years, common knowledge and academic insight have seen the difference as qualitative: one of rights to independence and being taken seriously (see Goffman, 1979).

Privacy, of course, is not a mime of being dead only of being apart. It develops within and relative to these two poses in active variations one might expect from living beings. Such variations might be called breaks. Analytically, break refers to some variation bracketed (Goffman, 1974:261-265) off from the basic structure. The observable activity refers to popular usage of setting aside a main event for some secondary one, such as a smoke break. Age and costume variations enter here, but as variations within, not discrete from, the two primary postures. Each draws on gender and diversifies distance from there. The activity within breaks looks very much like play.

Playing the Breaks: Penetration

Males, beyond physical penetration of space, visually penetrate others. Whether the other is male or female produces variation in form and inferrable content. The following case presents a more or less generic penetration by eyes and distance signals among males:

A white male, in his forties, wearing faded jeans, an orange shirt . . . faces into the aisle, his legs crossed, a knee jutting out into the aisle. He chews tobacco. A black woman, in her late teens, passes in the aisle about one foot from his extended knee. He raises his head and eyes toward her as she passes and lifts his knee up, draws it toward him . . . turns in his seat . . . faces forward, legs apart . . . within five minutes, he reverts to facing into the aisle, his knee extended into it. . . . He repeatedly combs his hair and mustache . . . pauses and combs more . . .

(Author's field notes).

The issue clarified here is that the man, already in a break, modifies and extends focus to penetrate a woman with his line of vision.* Physical response, whether due to racial difference or not,

*Sartre (1956:252-302) suggests when we look at another, we exercise power to fix (the other) in time and space as an object. Conversely, being looked at, we are open to inspection and judgements: objects. This relation of power and vulnerability may explain avoidance. To be looked at, and to exchange looks, disintegrates a personal realm and forces us to respond, in the midst of new contingencies, for others.

is a characteristic, if exaggerated, response to the woman. It is one which may, otherwise, play out by correcting a sprawled posture, by a lift of the head and refocus of gaze or by an exaggerated pause in activity to turn and gaze at a woman. It is noteworthy, expansion is not subject to contraction but to change and reclamation. A second illustration captures the same process in a more subtle form:

A black male, in his late forties, sits in a "TV chair," his arms extended on the armrests, his legs apart and feet out into the aisle . . . wearing a shirt, khakis, a light-weight jacket . . . is passed by a heavy black woman, in her twenties, wearing tight jeans and a sleeveless shirt. He leans forward just as she passes him . . . within about two feet . . . turns his head to follow with his eyes as she proceeds to and across the front of the terminal . . . up the aisle into the restaurant . . .

(Author's field notes).

While in other circumstances and among other males, the details may vary and reduce to a slight shift of body and primarily activity of the eyes, there is a ritual activity evocative of male privacy: a male shifts visual and postural focus toward and on the body of a female. The same process--an up and down scan of the body and following the gaze--is occasionally emitted toward other males, too. In any case, this play is bracketed by the main activity, or break in progress. One play off privacy, then, is a solitary version of the male group pastime, "girl-watching," a focus sharper than the rather passive verb attached.

Grooming activity, displayed above, too, is not primarily a male one. But, it takes male forms. These involve tactile contact with one's genital region, from idle tapping of the zipper to adjusting one's groin area while standing or seated. All are variations of male display most commonly represented by widely spread legs. A variation, when separate from others, occurs primarily among physically imposing men:

A black male, in his late twenties, well over six feet tall and bulkily muscular, stands . . . he stares back and forth across the terminal . . . alternately places his hands on his hips and swings closed fists back and forth across his medsection . . . his legs are apart . . . groin area thrust slightly forward . . . he shifts back and forth on his feet . . . (Author's field notes).

One has only to be male to take a similar stance which males engage in with one another. It is a penetrative one that thrusts gender forward and gazes through, not over, the other in an eye to eye stare: a key to meaning may recall a previously cited case where ". . . upon inclusion in the others' [males] conversation . . . places his hand over his knee bent inward to cover between his legs . . ." (Author's field notes). One sees accompanied males in uncovered orientation only with qualifications present: mirroring of posture and a backward thrust to the hips (among males) or connection through other channels (in cross gender pairs). In a sense, males signify exclusive visual right to space and to inspect as object whatever is

within visual range. The ritual emphasizes physical signs of gender as a challenge to "drop the gaze" if the other is male. The display of the genital region in a symbolic way, opens and extends one's claim to visual range. Maintenance of focus would suggest attention to another's genitals. Implications of such an inference in heterosexual society require aversion of focus. Where mutual ties exist, the region is usually covered by a hand, a table or desk, or crossed leg.

Young males, in particular, take quite some license in play allowed within their body space. The illustration below is exemplary:

A white male, in his late teens or early twenties, wearing brand name--e.g. Levi's--unfaded jeans--rubs and pulls at his nose . . . stands briefly and again when sitting adjusts his jeans in the crotch area, drums loudly on top of the television to music of "The Andy Griffith Show" and to music of a commercial, props his arm, at the elbow, on the top of his chair . . . opens, closes, crosses and wiggles his fingers staring out into the terminal . . . (Author's field notes).

These activities, including rather blatant self engrossment along multiple channels of activity, are a break those in adolescence and its extensions are allowed: boredom and its display.

Youth is not tolerant or patient toward time passing and shows restlessness.

Surely, objectification and penetration breaks, differentially played out toward the same and opposite gender, bodily claim to

visual space and the license of boredom among youth are not an exhaustive catalogue of male play. These portray plays distinctly and discretely male in structure.

Notably, these plays go without negative reaction and are bracketed by activities one returns to without correction or subordination of what has gone before (see Goffman, 1974:197-199). Displays drawing on the flesh, so to speak, emit a comprehensive sign of being male. At issue is power, power to establish and claim distance and volition within distance (Goffman, 1971:28-44).

Certain plays go on among men dressed in distinctive ways. Some are "fashionable" in dress, wearing signs of fashion including unfaded "name brand" jeans or designer labels, coordinated with tennis shoes and shirts or attire which emits cost and value. Others display coherence by absence of name labels and value signs, a lesser investment. Where the latter distinction is polar, play appears menacing. The subsequent illustration conveys this play distinguished by direct one-to-one focus taken at close distance:

A blonde male, about twenty, hair almost to his shoulders, wearing faded jeans and t-shirt . . . slows his walk at . . . an aisle . . . staring as he approaches . . . walks one seat in the aisle . . . still three seats from [a woman] . . . stares at her until she looks in his direction . . . nods . . . she returns his nod quickly, looks straight ahead . . . he lights a cigarette, glancing back into the terminal and then at her . . . then turns back

toward her . . . hands in his pockets, thumbs pointing inward . . . glances back into the terminal, takes one step toward her, one back . . . stretches his hand toward her, palm up, nods (she continues looking ahead) turns and walks out of the terminal . . . returns . . . walks toward a young man at the change machine . . . raises his eyes . . . walks toward him to within about three feet, turns on his heel making a semi-circle in toward the young man and away . . . the young man maintains his focus on the change machine . . . the blonde continues milling the aisle, staring into others' faces, slowing down and staring into others' face within one to two feet of the person stared at . . . (Author's field notes).

A group version of comparable presence adds further witness for interpretation:

Five young men, in their early-mid twenties, wearing faded torn jeans, cowboy hats and quite long--shoulder length or longer--hair, enter the laundromat . . . they bring a bag of beer cans from which they drink while doing their laundry . . . they exceed the conversational level in the laundromat and pepper it with loud expletives such as "motherfucker" . . . the conversational level almost immediately reduces among others . . . others arc away from them in passing and avert their eyes . . . eye contact among those others in the room increases

. . . a door the young men leave ajar is not closed though it had been each time another, leaving, had left it ajar or not closed it tightly . . . after they leave, there are periodic glances out to the street by those in the laundromat . . . all of this despite the young men being a numerical minority by two to one in the space . . . (Author's field notes).

Polarity in attire, as a sign of differentiation, permits the male of less refined attire to confront the more conventional and take allowances convention would neither permit nor be readily prepared to counter. This license strips off refinement and bears overtones of a more primitive metaphor of volition: force. Implicit force takes for granted conventional investment in order. To maintain space as designed and to maintain routine differentiations, all one can do is give no challenge.

The combination of age with devalued or unconventional costume produces a milder play. And where force is ruled out, one can be virtually ignored:

An elderly black man in a light brown suit . . . passes within about a yard of a black female, in her late teens . . . looks at her, nods, says "Hi ya?" She looks up, nods, returns to her reading . . . he repeats this with others usually receiving averted eyes and no reply . . . takes a chair . . . leans forward with his head down . . . hands folded between his legs . . . (Author's field notes).

That similar treatment happens to those who appear "retarded" by virtue of gait, lolling the tongue about, slurred speech and child-like approach indicates harmless behavior that can be ignored. That some display force notice and adjustment tells more: order is at risk where physical intervention threatens.

Playing the Breaks: Vulnerability

Few distinctive variations on privacy emerge within the conventional female pose. There are some accessible to women who engage in male plays despite gender. Costume, and secondarily, age, enter to allow play. Escape from contractive forms of privacy can be seen here:

A white female, in her thirties, her face heavily lined and without make-up, wearing faded tight jeans, an imitation leather jacket, and faded tennis shoes, sits (in an aisle seat) smoking . . . her legs crossed, ankle over knee . . . she rolls and taps the cigarette on her right knee . . . raises her eyes and watches a male pass in the aisle . . . follows with her head, eyes, and a slight turn of her body toward him as he turns in an aisle about five feet ahead of her . . . (Author's field notes).

The woman plays out a penetrative male gaze, male signals in pose,

attire, style of secondary engrossment--smoking--and notably, reflects less fashionable attire.*

While this same play occurs among adolescent and young adult women in comparable attire, vulnerability plays a stark contrast to typical female forms enacted by the aged. One sees almost total contraction in the following illustration:

A white female, in her sixties or seventies, her hair in a "bun," wearing a seersucker dress, sits motionless in front of the ticket booth . . . a first row end seat . . . her arms are crossed, hands folded over a tapestry bag in her lap, her legs crossed at the ankles, together . . . she focuses alternately down to her lap and ahead to the ticket booth . . . (Author's field notes).

The elderly woman conveys by virtually every notable channel, her vulnerability: by closure against it. One, by contrast, sees the aged distinguished, again, by less fashionable costume:

A black female, at least in her sixties, sits front row center, a scarf over her head, she wears a pink dress, worn gray imitation fur jacket. She holds a plate of food before her at chin level . . . faces to her right eating . . . stares back and around the terminal and

*Schur (1984:235) suggests women have historically been restricted to traditional postures and roles by otherwise risking spoiled identity. Lower status and male posturings characteristic of departures from contractive poses provide visual support for his argument.

chews visibly--apparently having either no teeth or ill-fitting dentures . . . she turns in her seat, to face forward . . . glances at bypassers to one side and then the other . . . (Author's field notes).

A certain non-person status accrues to the old in worn or ill-fitting costume which does not erase but reduces closure of women and--recalling the gentleman cited above--parodies license of the young in unkempt fashion. One would not suggest parody is deliberate among elderly people but that appearance loosens ties to conventions: a looseness ignored for the most part because it carries no threat (Goffman, 1963:158).

Short of a parody on male performances, a narrow range of play exists for women within privacy. As it contracts capacity to claim and extend space, gender also contracts rituals of maintenance.

The Maintenance of Distance

A signal prior to claims on space near another denies potential interruption (Sommer, 1969). Here, distinctions of gender and costume hold. There are reciprocal signals by which one closes off nearby space to another. These signals are emitted by variation in costume and by gender. A male case is indicative:

A white male, in his early twenties, wearing unfaded brand name jeans and a t-shirt, brand name tennis shoes . . . alternately writes in a notebook and reads

from a book, both in his lap . . . invariably after gazing at another, he folds his hand over his forehead . . . lowers his eyes to his property . . . a soldier in army dress uniform crosses in front of him and looks at the TV on the next chair. . . . The young man looks up, raises his eyes, opens his lips slightly, looks down and repeats . . . each time sharply turning his head and rapidly opening his eyes toward the soldier . . . (Author's field notes).

There is a "snapping" quality to this movement on the part of a male. He breaks his current activity and points visually to the other, repeating in rapid succession, verbal channels in a state of readiness. If the other does not accede his claim, the male faces outward, maintains his position and extends a gaze to the side and back when the other leaves. Costume distinctions narrow in variety but not distinction among those with distinctive signs of higher status attached to their own costumes. The closure--establishment of distance--is invariably emitted by the party with more fashionable attire and is--more often than not--honored. Concession comes with inattention: moving "on as if the space were not desired" (Author's field notes), a play itself on inattention.

A female responds with subtle and contracted variations on this same theme:

A blonde female sits between two men--acceding to a "break" in the sofa--within twelve to fifteen inches

of a white female, about twenty, in faded jeans and a white blouse . . . when the blonde approaches to rest her books on the sofa, the latter woman looks up, narrows her eyes and frowns . . . the blonde takes no notice and is seated . . . the woman frowns, pulls her legs to the edge of the table . . . lowers her head over her work . . . bends forward from the waist . . .

(Author's field notes).

There is no rapid-fire snap, but notice and disapproval signalled on a woman's part when she acts to maintain distance. Response to failure comes in contraction of her space. Especially subtle distances operate in lounge settings, differences of a patently artificial distinction where--if one were apart and vaguely objective--there might seem no difference exists (see Chapter VI). Nevertheless, these distinctions manifest as bases for efforts at separation.

Poses of privacy take on yin and yang polarities. The male pose extends space and prerogative by virtue of power attributed gender, signified by body. Within these extensions, considerable play--inclusive of a right to objectify others'--is available.

The female pose is reactive to that stance. Female privacy signifies vulnerability that increases with age the way male seriousness decreases with age and status. A male maintains distance by both gender and relatively multi-channel status signals. A female maintains by signals along fewer channels and accedes by further contraction. A male, on the other hand, accedes by rendering the

other a nonperson. One might find racial variations here across a wide variety of settings. None, however, emerge in these.* Youth seems to sharpen details and reduce accountability in play and adulthood seems to refine the same. Across gender and age lies a shadow of costume, fashion and style: the unkempt, the less fashionably dressed are apart, fashion being relative to space and its users. Those unkempt and unfashionable, in youth, adopt a swagger and threat, if male, or a mocking style, if female. In old age, the same still less bound by convention, are less taken into account. In any case, distance moves along two dimensions of power: gender and status. Status (cf. Weber, 1946:180-198) is attributed--within spatial context--to garments as display of affinity with another: by virtue of capacity and choice to dress fashionably. Plays made by the less highly ranked reproduce images attributed by dissimilarity, and menacingly make the most of them.

Here a third plane intercepts. Costume and its import are better explicated by ways people simultaneously acknowledge their temporary suspension in space and see the moment in terms of past and future identity. In this plane of order, distance expands or contracts by biography and defines actions by similarity and dissimilarity. One may call this plane or order by its circumstance in spatial order: suspension.

*Seating patterns of young black males--see Chapter VI--seem more a matter of age, gender, and costume than one understood in racial context.

CHAPTER VI

SUSPENSION: THE ORDER OF BIOGRAPHY

A distinctive attribute of public space is suspension of a person between those parts of life lent greater significance.* Matters of consequence rest suspended--ideally at least--in public space. Yet, one does not cease to exist within these bounds. One assumes a linkage of self on either side of the moment. This is so because we attribute continuity to our life history. The continuity may be called "biography," a coherent and distinguishing history of one body, the experiences it accrues and assembles by self-reflection. While most of us do not carry a literal biography with us, we attach biography, in effect, by "artifacts" we wear and carry. These signals define us where we enter, signal expectations about us and lend predictability (Goffman, 1974:286-287).

We render public space relatively insignificant to our whole vision of ourselves. What goes on is temporary, unless brought from our past into our future. This denial of ties emergent in suspended places may be graphically displayed:

*Exceptions tend to have specialized conditions of access which delimit how public they are and to have emotional realms attached to them, realms often separated by spatial design with opaque barriers, otherwise regulated access and strong demands for primary involvement. Examples range from courtrooms to doctors' offices and funeral parlors.

A "line" of fifteen or so people, when a departure is announced, come out of the restaurant, all talking loudly and at once; they proceed to zones 7-9: they are not side-by-side, but in a staggered line, one slightly behind the other . . . (Author's field notes).

Being alone in public space, one is apart from the customary luxury in life of a live entourage to lend detail and credibility for biographic claims. Privacy then becomes the vehicle by which biography is protected from consequential effect and displayed as gatekeeper of present dealings. How one reorganizes experience in the absence of witnesses can be demonstrated in the event of sudden separation:

Two blonde males, both in their late teens or early twenties, carrying suitcases and identical green notebooks with some school logo imprinted, enter the terminal . . . sit their suitcases side by side . . . the shorter of the two goes into the restroom after both use the water fountain. . . . The taller paces back and forth, looks first in one direction, then the next, all around the terminal, until his companion returns. . . . They stand, face one another, talk . . . together--side by side and each with his hand in his right pocket . . . walk to the restaurant . . . leave it and approach the ticket booth . . . (Author's field notes).

The combination of reorientation and reaffirmation of ties, occurs across gender, race and age when pairs are separated and one is left without an identity witness (see Goffman, 1971:22-23). One can infer something more than a ritual of possession in a wedding ring.

A Caricature as Biography: Costume and Toys

One reduces vulnerability by entry replete with sufficient garments and equipment to appear appropriately for the occasion. Children are told not to travel in dirty underwear lest they be exposed wearing it if taken ill. They also are allowed to gather a certain array of toys--clean underwear in place--when they go out into the world to grandma's house or day care. The same general principle applies. Our appearance accentuates what is given off appropriate to a setting and we collect a bag of toys to match* (cf. Goffman, 1974:288).

There are several dimensions to this construct of biography. A most comprehensive one is costume. Costume displays investment in two senses of the idea. First, clothes are bought. There is an economic distinction by what one wears that suggests income and occupation, taste, custom, and a moral repertoire (Berger, 1963: 80-81). These traits "look like"--rather than measure in an

*Clerks in toy stores seem to have some license, and take it, to question the purpose of a purchase not seen as consistent with age and gender (especially males) of the customer. I am indebted to a student project, by B. David Pickens, at The University of Tennessee, for this idea.

sense--status. By the commonsense distinction of status commitment to and refinement within convention is signified. Secondly, and without overstating the matter, the order attached to one's body hints the order one sustains or threatens when present. An archetype for variations such as unfaded jeans, costly fabric, and so forth, is displayed in the following case:

A white male, in his late fifties, in a pressed blue dress suit of stylish cut, his shoes polished and unscuffed, sits (in a middle row aisle terminal seat) Three white males, in their twenties, wearing faded jeans, long hair topped with feathered cowboy hats and all whistling . . . pass in front within one foot of him. . . . He raises his eyes and head toward them as they pass . . . follows with his eyes as they cross the terminal . . . follows with a quick turn of his head in their direction as they again cross in front of him . . . turns his head back after they leave through [an exit] . . . (Author's field notes).

Polar distinctions--as often emerge in bus terminals--are represented here. That a certain amount of threat enters from the bottom pole is visually evident by watchfulness. The male has certain vulnerability plays though less penetrative or intimate ones than the more generalized vulnerability of women to male power.

Another layer of biography enters with "matching," or "consistency." One's grooming, accessories and body, to be convincing, take a common line. An extremely obese body might belie the following image:

A tall, slim, black woman, in her early twenties, wears a red running suit, matching headband and tennis shoes, and tinted glasses or sunglasses . . . (Author's field notes).

She conveys a coherent "athletic" image, one set off by a further accessory--sunglasses--delimiting how much more one needs to know or see.

There are additional ways in which specificity of standing becomes visible. Shopping bags, for example, identify where one's clothes come from when used in place of suitcases or laundry baskets. Designer labels and logos of school or other affiliation operate the same way. Further credibility comes with tools of biographic trade: athletic equipment or bags, textbooks. Children and dogs serve as intermediate markers: not fully articulate but at least living and independent witnesses for claims. "Markers" (Goffman, 1971:41-44) install the outer limits of one's biography as it is produced in a given space.

Playing the Breaks: Biographical Links

Oneself identified and predictability implied by imputed character (see Hood, 1980), more shielding emerges than option for

interaction. As acquaintances owe one another interaction, strangers are entitled to its absence (Goffman, 1963:124). Nonetheless, because messages of costume and equipment are comprehensible and generalizable, certain interplays open between those who may never speak but interact at a distance. Such interplay across the room is embedded in breaks from primary doings. A break--suspension of relatively important activity--reduces one's distance (Goffman, 1963:126). That interplay occurs along biographical channels is expected. Similarity lends an empathy of community relative to dissimilarities present (Goffman, 1963:133).

These interplays take place along a continuum of distance reduced by acknowledged similarity (Altman, 1975:50). One knows a cigarette lit in public places is likely to produce subsequent smoking in fairly rapid progression. If one gauges the situation closely, there is a pattern narrower than the noticeable habit. People of common biographical signals light up more or less simultaneously. Precisely what similarities are salient expand and contract across and between settings (see below). There is a more complex set of interplays the latter might precede: an extended and rhythmic one. A case in point offers a full production:

A white male, in his early twenties, wearing unfaded brand name jeans and a t-shirt, brand name tennis shoes . . . alternately writes in a notebook and reads from a book, both in his lap . . . invariably after gazing at another, he folds his hand over his forehead . . . lowers

his eyes to his property . . . begins glancing at another white male, also with a notebook, in his mid-late twenties . . . (about fifteen feet from him) . . . wearing a button down shirt and unfaded jeans, brand name tennis shoes . . . glances are reciprocated . . . at the first couple of eye meetings, glances are dropped quickly . . . the first young man places his hand above his eyes . . . progressively, both shift slightly toward one another . . . glances are held for several seconds and eyes lowered slowly . . . some tapping or waving of feet goes on when eyes are met . . . no corrections or denials are conveyed . . . over a period of about an hour . . . (Author's field notes).

Short visual attention reciprocally opens further communication (see Goffman, 1963:128-133). This is followed by multiple channels of mutual monitoring increasingly extended in tenure or incorporated into break activity. A collective version of the same ritual occurs among young black males--only among males and only within a certain range of other biographical similarity--who establish seating patterns in one cluster, particularly in bus terminals marked by similar orientations and not necessarily by verbal contact. Side by side affinity, lacking in expressive face to face monitoring, can be readily visualized:

A white female, in her forties, wearing a blue dress, sits on a sofa . . . her legs crossed at the ankles are

on the table in front of her . . . work material in her lap . . . holds a book, her arms close to her sides, her head lowered over the book . . . a male, in his thirties, in a dress shirt and slacks, sits at the other end of the sofa . . . as, and just after he sits, she raises her head up from her work . . . looks ahead, rolls her eyes toward him . . . lowers her head . . . he glances to his side in her direction . . . they are about three feet apart . . . he places his legs on the table . . . slow shifts shortly render their leg placements an open-ended triangle rather than parallel formation . . . (Author's field notes).

A Note on Links by Space

The same biographical construction does not play the same across spatial orders. Rankings and range of possible links expand and contract. In the bus terminal, age commonality takes a fairly wide range within gender. One finds plays between "youth" of 18 to 30 differentiated by costume. In the laundromat, where one does not generally go attired in finer garments, those relatively "dressed-up" with brand logos or women in dresses and make-up, often leave the process except while their presence is required.* Plays occur between those connected by brand name tennis shoes, common

*Informants suggest people tend to eschew as contaminating any laundromat with a clientele skewed away from their own standards of fashion.

hair length, textbooks, and so forth. In the lounge, distinctions are refined by costume symmetry evocative of uniform patterns. And plays take on subtlety and contradiction characteristic of that triangle positioning illustrated above. The patterns of a common roster emerge as subpatterns in any setting where members come together (cf. Sommer, 1969). They become a subrealm of main activity, one distinguishable to those present who know rankings and act upon them beyond the grounds of their salience. By fine points of style mythologized, a multiplicity of other little worlds play their breaks just under the surface and notice in larger, more immediate, ones (see Goffman, 1974:269-286). Likewise, as space remains, interaction is fleeting; activity is vulnerable to its undoing.

CHAPTER VII

VULNERABILITY: THE ORDER OF TRANSFORMATION

Privacy undergoes transformation through play, expansive or contractive by gender and biography. Privacy is also vulnerable to others' activity. Exposure and open settings lend vulnerability to interruption (Goffman, 1963:120-132). And the less one is engaged in some activity other than privacy, one is all the more vulnerable (Goffman, 1963:126). Yet we are not constantly accosted in moments of public privacy. We are more vulnerable in some places than others. There are, in short, times we unthinkingly take privacy for granted and others when we emit a prior defense. While fences and neighbors have their affinities, fences range from the imaginary to a Maginot Line.

Friendly Incidents: Tools for Tricks

We do little casual deeds for one another which keep things running smoothly in public places. Likewise, there are ways to get out of unintended scrapes and means and to pass time with strangers. The existence of these simple pleasures provides strategy for those who extract more than one offers. A review of these minor incidents illustrates fundamental models upon which deception and exploitation are often patterned.

Whether people are inherently clumsy, or gifted with focus left to philosophy and tact, human beings are prone to a routine

and readily fixed--when on foot--encounter known neutrally as an "accident." Apparently the caveat to children that one watch where one is going is not an impressive signal for socialization. The message is certainly countered by adult models and amusement park rides where one learns to seek out accidents. The unsought accident generates a need to exchange corrections and usually easy return to prior doings (Goffman, 1963:128). The typical ritual is offered here:

A blonde female in her twenties with a travel case over one shoulder and a Glamour magazine in her other hand walks from the ticket booth toward the rear of the terminal, her eyes focused on the floor. A white male in his twenties wearing brand-name jeans and a buttondown shirt is, in the same aisle, headed toward the front of the terminal. He gazes downward. Their cases catch. She turns, faces him, makes an "O" with her lips, smiles and says "Sorry." He turns his head toward her, turns his body slightly in her direction, nods in a slight bow from the waist and smiles. Both

proceed in opposite directions . . . (Author's field notes)

Similar biographical information on display might facilitate and abbreviate the verbiage of this ritual. Where convergence is involuntary, some imbalance exists and quick procedures carry off the moment (cf. Goffman, 1981:99-103).

The imbalance due consideration is routine assistance another can offer. These circumstances are quite common and a basis for

brief intrusion (Goffman, 1963:127). There is something to be said about socialization failure when it comes to teaching preparedness. We arrive in laundromats without change and lounges or terminals without watches. Somebody who ordinarily wears a watch will be there.

A white male, about twenty-five, wearing a t-shirt and cut-offs, turns to face another white male--in his late twenties wearing jeans and tennis shoes, a pullover shirt--and asks "What time is it?" The other shifts in his direction, raises his eyes to the other's and asks "Excuse me?" The other repeats "What time is it?" He looks at his watch, saying "Let me see . . . Five-forty-three." He looks toward his washer. The other says "Forty-three?" He, without glancing back, replies "Yeah." The other says "Thanks" and resumes folding his clothes. Both had prior brief eye contact and progressive reduction in passing distance from over one foot to--after the time exchange--within six inches or less . . . (Author's field notes).

Where no prior eye contact occurs, an opening might be made by some courtesy prior to the direct question. Early requests upon entry, are directed to the same gender, to similar biographical affinity, and one to whom initial notice is lent. As in a case where a young man under those circumstances asked [one of the young men above] which washing machines were in order, the reply was courteously

An innocent play on contact may span co-presence after visual and/or verbal openings and yet not proceed to more involved linkage. This play occurs between males, for the most part, and across gender where affinities are multiple. Without direct engagement, it is a play on biographical links within breaks. After an encounter, it becomes a shade different, taking on attributes of a playful fabrication (Goffman, 1974:87-88) whereby openings made are teased rather than extended through an acknowledgement of familiarity, of access not exploited and yet not erased. What playfulness occurs may be seen in an illustration where collusion comes to the forefront at the very beginning:

A thin male, in his early twenties, with blonde hair almost to his shoulders, wearing faded jeans and a sleeveless shirt, enters the laundromat with a black male who wears camouflage pants and Nike tennis shoes. Both look at and are met in gaze by a white male, mid-late twenties, wearing unfaded jeans and Nike tennis shoes. They proceed to a washer in front of where the male is seated. As the blonde male begins to load, the black male says "I wouldn't put clothes in these things." The blonde responds, "They look clean inside." He faces the washer, his body turned slightly toward the black male who leans on an adjacent washer facing his companion. The blonde holds up a sheet, points to it and smiles. The black male says, smiling, "Will you invite her over night

again?" Both laugh and look back to the other white male behind them who averts his gaze. They turn their focus to the washer. As the blonde adds soap powder, the black male says "All that detergent?" He again looks smiling to the other white male behind and the blonde turns to look at him too, smiles, and their smiles are reciprocated with a smile and a toss of the head. The blonde says "Oh well," and adds more detergent. By this time, the black male is turned to position himself between the white male seated and his blonde companion. "You're gonna come back looking for your laundry and it'll be here--makes a waving motion to the floor and toward the door--and all the way out there." The blonde walks up to the white male and asks, "Is there a change machine in here?" Their eyes meet and heads tilt toward one another. "No, but you can get some at the little grocery"--stands and points to his right--and the blonde nods, smiles and says, "Thanks." The two companions leave as the other says "Sure," and is seated. The blonde returns alone and the two exchange glances for the remainder of their mutual tenure. The blonde follows the other with his eyes when he leaves. Both had passed within six or fewer inches of one another when passing in the course of activity (Author's field notes).

The third young man was drawn into more personal areas of the blonde young man's biographical data. Something shared was acknowledged in distance and gaze, yet in no way exploited. The opening might, in another case, have been pursued. But access was granted one whose similarity foreshadowed pursuit within safe, sociable limits. The play itself is communication about the invitation and organization of communication (Goffman, 1963:98-99). Seldom do college students, costumed as middle class people, pursue public interchange much beyond linkage and courtesy plays. The plays acknowledge mutual alignment and respect a middle class inclination to regard public approaches somewhat ingracious (Goffman, 1974:220-223, 448-463).

Where actual conversation takes place, among middle class sorts, there precedes considerable commonality and an extended period of exploration: a recognition information reduces vulnerability and vulnerability increases with investment in convention and biography (Goffman, 1974:448-463). The process emulates companions with a past and future and concludes with courtesy which affirms not a real relationship but only play on the real thing:

The black woman and white man--both in their early mid-twenties. . . talk . . . their bodies tilted toward one another . . . over a chair where her property separates them . . . for almost an hour. . . . He extends his hand and smiles, saying, "Have a good life . . . nice talking to you." She raises her eyes to meet his, smiles and replies, "Thank you. You, too." After their handshake,

he leaves. She follows with her gaze. He turns once and smiles (Author's field notes).

Vulnerability Tricks: Exploitation of Help and Linkage

Perhaps the most transparent and stylized trick plays on requests for assistance by the sparechanger or vagrant. These individuals frequent bus terminals and play tricks primarily with attributes which might incite sympathy: age and appetite. Their dress is well-worn and often stained and tattered apparel. They are ungroomed and carry an aroma of alcohol and infrequent bathing. Generally, more than one works a given space. One observes these men together to the rear of a terminal. Some sleep and others talk among themselves between busses. Usually, those who exchange the most conversation alternate working passengers rather than competing with one another and exchange little twists on routine language to assess profits and prospects. A line such as "How ya doin?" can be rejoined by a "Not so good," and the latter may receive a nod toward a potential prospect (see Goffman, 1974:222). The trick on help goes this way:

. . . He passes near . . . glances to the side . . . and from the side or while taking a seat next to [the other] . . . he asks "How ya doin'?" At this point he is seated by the person . . . with or without an opening, he volunteers he is "Not so good . . . not so good," and leans into the other's face--within six

inches or less--asking "You wouldn't give an old man . . ." first, "a couple of bucks" . . . then he produces some change, he has "thirty five cents and I jus' need a cup of coffee" He may remain and make small talk, inquiring briefly about the other and directly or implicitly awaiting a final answer . . . he may lower his head, sigh, and repeat long drawn out profanities: "Shit . . . Aww, shit . . ." before leaving . . . (Author's field notes).

A usual response maintains outward, front and center, focus and replies in as few words as possible (see Goffman, 1963:187). Courtesy and apology extend the encounter. And, one approach is generally immediately followed by another until prospects are exhausted. Any acknowledgement from one on foot may produce pursuit:

A white male in his mid-thirties with a beard and wearing a business suit passes the elderly black man who raises his hand, nods and waves when the man is within about two feet (on his way into the restaurant) . . . the man glances at him, lifts his arm at the right elbow in a quick wave and says "Hey" while turning away and speeding his pace. The elderly man stands, reaches for the other's arm and says "Hey." The man sweeps his arm back and in toward his body, palm down and says, "Go on, man; don't bother me" . . . (Author's field notes).

Primarily, adolescent boys and young, unimposing men are objects. These vagrants approach those who appear to have money on hand but who also appear--by age or activity--somewhat naive or ill at ease. Other traits are not obvious. Persistence of the ritual indicates it apparently works.*

A somewhat less transparent trick uses minimal affinity toward emotional and perhaps material exploitation. Threat is initially concealed and takes shape through a normal process of conversation with a seemingly pleasant companion (Goffman, 1971:302-309). The linkage ritual is soon undone, in most cases one might see:

A black male, about twenty, wearing a sweater and designer jeans--(it is overheard he is a college student on Spring Break)--is seated (in a center row seat) . . . a black male in his late twenties wearing faded jeans approaches from his left. . . . He looks at the younger and asks, while crossing in front of the younger, "anybody sitting here?" He turns his body toward the young man. The younger looks up, meets his eyes and says "No" . . . drops his eyes The older man spreads his legs widely when seated, folds his hands in his lap The older of the

*Not one successful effort by a "vagrant" was observed. In the only analogous case, a man with a "hard luck story," himself a traveller, did ask for and obtain a soft drink from a young man, in his early twenties, who first bought himself one while seated with the man after listening to the man's problems and telling of quitting his previous job.

two proceeds to initiate conversation . . . the younger replies generally in two to five words. . . . He faces outward, turning his head toward the other when replying or spoken to . . . the older repeats a story in regard to his truck breaking down and lists a wide range of troubling consequences; the younger replies speaking strictly about himself in all references . . . the older turns his body progressively away from the younger . . . swears under his breath . . . glances at the younger, who stares ahead. . . . He gets up and leaves without a comment. The younger stares at his back briefly and subsequently leans back in his seat, uncrosses his legs . . . (Author's field notes).

One ascertains certain patterns in exploitative encounters. The initiator remains initiator in conversation and in shift of posture toward the other. Number of words used is skewed toward the initiator. Conversation reduces rapidly to little or none. Parting occurs without courtesies. And there is at least a minimal denial gesture aimed at the intruder upon departing, unless, of course, the intruder upon withdraws entirely: itself a strong visual sign (cf. Sommer, 1969). A contrasting symmetry of biographical information among those in sustained interchanges, underscores the logic of selecting conversation partners and thin affinity between those in a one-sided trick on the small talk model.

Power Plays: Exploitation of Women and the Alone

Power derives from the vulnerability of privacy and the general vulnerability attributed aloneness itself. People probably erect barriers less against interchange with others like them than against those who--without power of position--derive power from manipulation of weakness. Another means of intrusion comes into play. There is disparity independent of but enhanced by aloneness between genders. And there is disparity defined and designed into public space itself by prerogative of company (Goffman, 1971:21-22). These mythologies of disparity diminish risk and allow a range of exploitations carried off as "the way things are." There is no lesson of socialization telling each person is created with equal standing. Some exploitations of gender and company bear a little notice.

Women are not--outside of male plays which require biographical capitulations--likely or free to engage men (Goffman, 1963:134-135). Most women in a bus terminal remain in their places and place themselves in relatively front and center positions. Men have the prerogative to scatter and roam in most public settings.

A not so subtle example makes the case of women's particular vulnerability in public space:

A white male, in loose work pants and lightweight jacket, follows a middle-aged woman, with gray hair and wearing a blue dress, when she walks out of the restaurant. He attempts a greeting. She turns, returns his greeting with

a nod and no smile. . . . He steps forward to walk even with and beside her. She speeds up and walks ahead. Twice, she turns after stepping ahead of him, turns, faces him, meets his eyes and makes statements through frowning expressions and furrowed brow. . . . He continues to follow. . . . She turns into the second row, crosses in front of a young black woman holding a child and sits one seat away from the woman. . . . He enters the row, stands directly in front of the woman with her child. (She looks up at him, shifts back in her seat, glances over to the other woman and then tilts her head to gaze around the man.) . . . He moves in front of the woman he has been attempting to talk with . . . stands directly beside and in front of her chair looking down at her. . . . He is less than one foot from her. . . . She tilts her head up to face him when he speaks, maintaining a set frowning expression. . . . She rises, exits from the other side of the aisle and enters the women's restroom. He follows her for five or six feet, then turns and goes into the restaurant . . . when she exits the restroom, she pauses, frowns, spans the terminal with her eyes and then walks out (a zone) . . . She has a tight expression about her lips and jaw as if her teeth were clenched (Author's field notes).

The ritual is continued support with no evident response to physical and gestural barriers from the woman. Indeed, a woman's arsenal appears limited to passivity or withdrawal, if honored. There is an analogy here to the male's span of area encompassed by spread legs and a woman's inspection often seen over a cup raised to her lips. A female strategy, even subject to interruption by a male play rather than male person, bears illustration:

A black female, in her early twenties, wearing a scarf over her head and a straw hat over that, a dark velour jacket, running pants and tennis shoes is seated next to a white female in her early-mid twenties wearing thick visible mascara and eye shadow, faded jeans patched with white triangles (who has already approached and repeatedly reinitiated conversation with a man in his sixties to her left) The white woman gazes at the black woman who focuses down on her travel bag . . . unzips it, extracts a book and places it on her lap . . . focuses on the book The older man drops a soft drink can The black woman looks up; the white one looks at her and smiles broadly. . . . The black woman smiles slightly and returns to focus on her book. . . . The white woman shifts her body toward the black one and says "Where you from?" The black woman raises her head and eyes to the other and answers in two words, smiles and nods at another remark by the

white woman and looks back at her book. . . . The white woman frowns at her The black woman rises and makes a phone call; the white woman stares at her back throughout the call, frowning The black woman returns to her seat The white woman continues to turn her head toward her--she faces outward and thumbs her book--and frowns . . . (Author's field notes).

A woman's vulnerability within privacy is by expanded vulnerability to male power and to female intrusion along the same lines. Where status variation exists and its vulnerabilities accrue, a woman is allotted--apart from biographical data--a secondary position. In other words, a woman's control of her biographical data is delimited by being a woman. Erving Goffman (1979), in suggesting women are attributed nonserious status and prerogatives in common with children, is not merely confirmed by these findings. His argument becomes chilling. Why women subjected to repeated, persistent intrusion do not report to personnel in a bus terminal is, perhaps, a dual matter of the inattention it elicits and the derogation of an adult taking up childish things once put away (see Schur, 1984).

Overt approach has exploitative overtones where an implicit mix or polarity of status by participants' costumes exists. When roster restricts likely entry, one is not likely to witness overt approach at all. There is no polar variation. Internal ordering does not reduce common investments. Subordination of aloneness

remains as rooted and more respectable than overt exploitation of women, elsewhere. With general status distinctions absent, so emerge niceties in decor and decorum. These do not wholly extend privilege to maintain separation, distance and private focus. Among niceties and decorum, distance and focus are not yet a certain right of privacy.* Company has the option to disrupt focus, redefine space and violate distance. Within a common roster, adjustment comes at the pleasure of accompaniment.

A common interruption is encroachment on a person's established claim (cf. Sommer, 1960). The following illustration--not restricted to groups and often seen among pairs--may be instructive:

A white male, about twenty, wearing jeans and a blue shirt . . . works at a table, his legs extended past it, his head bent over his work . . . a group of males, all in their late teens or early twenties, passes in a line, exiting the lounge, in front of the table . . . they walk within an inch or two of his feet. When the first passes, he raises his head and eyes toward them, tightens his lip and juts out his jaw . . . he repeats this as they pass and give no way. . . . He glances out

*Lengthy conversational interruptions in the bus terminal usually result in withdrawal by the person intruded upon. Disturbance of one's activity, by a group, in the lounge, does not elicit verbal protest such as "I'm trying to study here," only gestures of discomfort, increased closure or withdrawal. Retreat to one's task seems to keep unwanted intrusion brief in the laundromat, where-as might be expected--pair or group claims on space are not challenged (see Goffman, 1981:120-121).

into the lounge and twice rapidly turns his head, eyes open wide and teeth clenched, to the now empty exit.

Women require and receive similar adjustments from men. Men do not receive immediate compliance by withdrawal from one another but manage to elicit a break and snap to reaffirm claims. It is as if the other--being alone--is not present or no more present than the table. The alone are rendered objects.

While one small gathering of companions may keep conversation below normal conversational level in a space populated by several people alone, as much of exclusion as consideration may be implied. Where more than one conversation is ongoing, no single line is overheard and followed among competing ones. Accordingly, this little example is a miniature of its larger context:

A white female, around twenty, wearing faded jeans and a blouse . . . is seated beside a blonde female approximately her same age . . . two others, dressed--as is the blonde--in shorts, pullover polo shirts and brand name tennis shoes, approach the blonde (one is male, the other female) . . . they bend toward the table, place their feet on the table . . . the male's foot within an inch of the other woman's property . . . engage in animated conversation at or above conversational level The other woman turns her head in their direction as they approach, frowns . . . repeatedly turns her head toward them as the conversation goes on . . . alternately bending forward

over her work . . . she pulls her foot back to the edge of the table. . . . No one of these three glance toward her . . . (Author's field notes).

Again, the woman both displays and adjusts her claim, to no avail or notice, from those who interrupt her--it bears repeating--as if she were not there at all.

The power of company to render one an object extends to and may crystallize within capacity to deny access claimed from outside. Objectification becomes nearly a zero sum arrangement where distinctive biographical divergence--if only by in-roster standards--occurs:

A white male, in his early twenties, wearing quite short cut-offs and a sleeveless t-shirt . . . overhears a discussion among three blacks, around twenty, two female and one male, about college student fares. . . . He pauses about ten feet away, hands on his hips, listening. . . . He runs forward saying "Oh . . . oh . . . oh" . . . stops about two feet from them, they glance up and resume conversation. . . . He says, "Excuse me . . ." and they halt exchanges and look at him. He inquires about fares. At the same time he places his bag on a chair next to their gathering He receives an answer in two or three sentences They shift toward one another and away from him His subsequent interruptions are disattended. . . . One female turns to him, says "You

didn't know that?" and turns back to the group
He stands facing them, places his hands on his hips . . .
drops his hands to his sides . . . turns and walks to an
ashtray in front of him, puts out his cigarette, circles
back on the side opposite them, retrieves his bag from
behind the chair and walks away . . . (Author's field
notes).

In sum, actions are taken--often in exaggerated ways--which
would disrupt personal ties toward those alone (see Goffman, 1963:
179-180). One alone is left to produce as "assertive" a retreat
as the situation allows. The frame of privacy now lends itself
to coherence.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORDER OF PLAY: A DIALECTIC OF SOLITUDE

The major finding of this study is that much "play-like" activity builds on privacy. This activity symbolically expresses gender. Males engage in observably more plays on gender than females. A man's privacy contains more active and varied ritual activity than a woman's. In public space, women transform privacy in fewer ways than men.

Status differentials produce different transformations linked to traditional inequalities. Lower status allows more and riskier play. Higher status limits variety and range of unconventional activity.

Gender and status, then, present visible components of biography critical to sustain in public.

The activity of privacy develops summarily, below, through illustrations from literature and popular culture. Spatial order, the frame of privacy, and the social control of solitude are discussed in turn.

The Order of Space: Biography and Mythology

One enters public space and takes on certain obligations. First, one maintains the official definition of the situation. Carefully coordinated cues convey the official definition. Types and placement of furnishings emit some cues. Others are

signalled by number and placement of entrances and exits, by what is closed, what is open, and what is set apart. We have a fascination with the possibility of not knowing these cues. We play with our inability to effectively transform them. In one version, some alien being arrives from another realm of space or time. Whether we laugh or shudder, we require this interstellar creature or pyramid escapee both to find routine interior design perplexing and to manipulate it to the edge of our wildest dreams. Notably, all of these creatures think differently than we do. They speak another language. We view them as a mixture of traits from main street and zoological parks or leave them shadowy. In a second version, people who might otherwise stand politely in lines transform into beasts and beings who do violence to furnishings before their damage to people is cut short. That human beings get broken along with furniture poses an irony of mythology. Arrangements are so real we see ourselves live and die by their fare. Enough of us always survive to restore things as they were. And enough of us always meet traumatic ends to expiate the thought of playing reckless with the numena of doors and windows. It is thinkable to disrupt the way things are. But to do so must be either seriously or nonseriously mad: a clown or a monster.

Secondly, all furniture in place, one maintains appropriate distance. Not only do alien visitors make an awful mess of buildings and rooms, they have an irritating tendency to poke through windows, linger in closets, peep behind shower curtains and nest

under beds. In sum, they have a profoundly tactless inclination to put their hands and eyes where we--being neither clowns nor monsters--neither abide nor dare. It is thinkable to look and to touch. It is appropriate only to look as if one were absolutely not going to touch.

Thirdly, to look as if we understand the ongoing activity and know what to touch and leave alone, we must have appropriate things to do on the side. We bring complementary furnishings to fit the task and display the fit. And we bring counter equipment compatible with but not part of official activity. Newspapers are nice accessories for the well attired person in most public space. Companions, if available, are even better. Clowns and monsters tend to come alone, bring weapons or appropriate people and objects for diversionary pleasures. It is thinkable to roll up a newspaper and render a blow to another's head: if one would to be a clown. It is thinkable to roll up a person and render a blow to furnishings: if one would be a monster.

We bring a fourth element to public space by obligation. This element is present reputability embedded in ties to--investment in--a past and present. These rest on either side of public space. Neither side should be changed by the moment. Biography is necessarily present and suspended in space. It is thinkable that things should be otherwise. Monsters, having spent a prior affinity out of this world or quite dead to it--a significant proportion have also recently been adolescents--can well afford to play havoc with their

reputations. A minimal market exists in work or socializing for those with prior records of burial, mummification or life on Mars. And there is less to lose when one is already decaying, scaly, or inclined to break out in body hair. The clown, being as ill-proportioned and groomed as stupid, is a shade closer to monsters than to the rest of us. It is not unthinkable to come as one is. We know we are, no more or less, as we appear.

It may be no accident when we think the undoable the clown or monster is usually alone or at least distinctively restricted to a roster of the mad, the mysterious, the ugly, the idiotic, or the hopelessly lonely. While Erving Goffman (1963a) finds clowns and monsters in the flesh among those we reshape inside out by moral devaluation, Leslie Fiedler (1978) finds them set apart in fiction and in real life realms of fiction, such as sideshows. There is neither physical deformity nor alleged criminal or moral culpability embedded in this application. We attribute mystery, the realm of unknown, to deviants, our own unpredictability, and to the stranger: "Time . . . teaches us . . . so far as another person is concerned, we know nothing for sure" (Gifford, 1980:52). To be alone carries at least potential volatility, fraud. To be alone enforces reliance on one's truth in packaging. In the shadow of singular testimony lurk clowns or monsters.

Realms of Play: The Production of Privacy

If one enters public space alone--with no likelihood of clown or monster doings--the four orders of public space hold. A different order for producing the obligations at hand develops though. That order is through production of privacy.

Privacy is double volatile. While one is shielded from undue observation and unwanted communication, closure is always in potential jeopardy. Because a space is public and because the public invariably consists of at least more people than one, whatever shields exist confront a possibility of having to fend off others. In the same way, engrossment is tenuous by vulnerability to separation. The production of privacy, after or between separations, becomes the necessity to coexist with public order. And still, enactment of privacy--by virtue of being alone--invokes the shadows; it conforms necessarily to the order of things while, being a solitary activity, is unknown and mysterious. The psychic goings on of privacy--content--then are twofold and simultaneous: one is suspended in a moment and continuous in time. One enters oneself in full view of others:

Is that car yours? Run to the curb. It isn't. Feel embarrassed. Feel conspicuous. Run back to the fence so that anyone watching will think you were practicing running. Whistle and lean against the fence (Ephron, 1978:52).

And, as phrased from I Ching, China's ancient book of wisdom and

divination, one is singular testimony for one's external investments and accountable to them:

Confusion over returning;
 he goes astray.
 If he chooses to be aggressive
 his defeat will be far reaching.
 Its effect will be felt even after ten years.
 (Reifler, 1974:113)

In addition to necessity by order, privacy operates selectively. There is differential access by gender and by status. There is differential probability of maintaining privacy by status and by gender. And space is status restrictive--to a common roster--where privacy is least likely to be seriously violated and status unrestrictive along with higher risks. The rather cold pastime of slumming goes on with windows up and doors locked. Ancient precedent is, again, lent by I Ching:

The mountain reaches from the earth
 but remains beneath the sky.
 The superior man keeps lesser men at a distance,
 maintaining a dignified reserve.
 He does not let them know what he thinks of them
 (Reifler, 1974:148).

By mythology surrounding solitude, privacy is relegated to a realm of objects. By commitment to maintenance and control, the realm of objects is chosen. Objects emit biographical information which lends predictability and extends to define claim on space. These objects tell all that necessarily will be told about a person in public space. Their extent is delimited by objects brought

and in view: the clothed body and its exposed portions, whatever accessories are attached to one's costume and whatever properties of the person are carried in.

While preparation and presentation may be routine enough to be unthinking and delimited by what one has on hand, taken together, the objects tell biography in a way that is seen and evaluated. As I Ching advised in distant times, we take notice of those who might draw near us: "The superior man adorns himself / as an outward manifestation of his virtue" (Reifler, 1974:50). That biography should be so central for access to and production of privacy and that one alone is still doubtable acknowledges we attribute character as fundamental truth about a person at the same time we know it might be a contrivance (Hood, 1980:4).

In the content of order and under mediation by biography, then, the realm of objects becomes play. In the same way, the realm of company becomes, with more immediate seriousness, engrossment.

It is worth re-emphasis that at the point play begins quite a lot is already going on: one maintains the official definition of the situation; one establishes distance from others' claims and space for one's own; and one exudes biographical data all the while. The resultant repertoire for even solitary play is impressive. One can withdraw into total focus upon any object at hand. One can manipulate configurations of expressions and body poses. One can act on or toward one's body as the object of involvement. Each of these play configurations can bring out biographical information to add on

to what is already visible. Any bit of biographical data may inform or mislead one who takes notice. To the extent one's investments are secure, new parts may be put on and taken off. Facets of existing biography may expand and contract in emphasis. Indeed, play only gets out of hand when it might--or does--draw notice inconsistent with biographical information one invests heavily in: gender, status, control of oneself or ability to manage what departures are taken:

The stranger kindles his fire with a bird's nest.
This gives joy to the fire
but undermines the man.
He loses his composure (Reifler, 1974:249).

We acknowledge error and affirm control lest privacy be spoiled along with biography: "A wandering woodcutter has settled here. / He makes a good living / but seems uneasy about something" (Reifler, 1974:249). In such cases, privacy becomes a realm of uncertainty, of the uneasiness attached to aloneness. Lack of control and generation of suspicion threaten the status and selective distinctions of privacy from aloneness. Historically, higher status lends credibility to other claims. This advice was conveyed to government employees by Tuthmosis IV, Pharoah of Egypt:

. . . Remember . . . an official must live with his face uncovered The wind and the water report all that he does. . . . Look on your friend as a stranger and a stranger as your friend . . . (White, 1970:49).

While others may be objects of contained and fleeting play, interplay usually opens along lines defined by Tuthmosis' guidance.

Signals of common biographical traits draw others in. The repertoire of poses and expressions enters into exchange. There may be simple mutual acknowledgement and alignment. There may be requests and offers of assistance. There may be negotiation of lines and limits for communication. Each takes ritual form with outcome in little doubt. Any play can be bracketed by self or object or other plays with other players. Or, these plays progress toward reciprocal surrender to engagement. Reciprocity, mutual withdrawal options and routine courtesies characterize all. Most, if not all, end by a total return of another's prerogatives in exchange for return of one's own: an acknowledgement we will not see or have expectations or claims on one another again.

Exploitative mimes of these voluntary plays cut across equality of will. A need for assistance or thin affinities are exploited and impose transformation. These are one-sided, relatively transparent but confounding events for privacy. Exploitations are plays which, for deterrence, require focus back to main activity, a concentration of distance. They necessitate, within biography, dispersal with courtesy and reaffirmation of parts of biography placed in doubt. These plays, too, are ritualized with outcomes seldom in doubt. They leave a hint of risk for other affinities and perpetuate shielding, withdrawal and play rather than interplay:

For a long time now, years and years, I seem
to have felt that silence is the only way
to keep from hurting people (Gifford, 1980:9).

The intermingling of biographical lines is virtually the only means to interplay in privacy without vulnerability. As privacy rights expand in spatial segregation and interpersonal dealings--as status levels rise, gender is a status unto itself. The form of privacy and realms of play it encompasses expand with being male and contract with being female. Mobility expands for the male and contracts for the female. A woman withdraws into privacy. A man shapes it himself. A man's claims are primarily vulnerable to his credibility. A woman's are fragile, unserious and subject to her--like a child--being told repeatedly until she listens. Her strategies encompass withdrawal or play off the male posturing: a "neutralization" of being a woman. Women who step into male plays produce them off the vulnerability of women who maintain traditional poses.

Except where mutual equality is evident and affirmed between two parties, the language of privacy becomes a grammar of inequality: between statuses, between gender, between alone and accompanied. What disrupts order or casts aspersions on biography is concealed. There is considerable merit in Robert Bly's (1981:39) assessment of everyday life:

Talking, we do not say what we are! Sensing what
others want . . .
we sustain the brilliant glass skeletons on which we hang.

But there is an exception. The exception is a realm of privacy--of play--not identifiable by direct and open observation. To the extent opportunity is available, one can take leave by

privacy and do precisely what one pleases. Under those circumstances, biography is suspended. That play--distinct from deviant lifestyles and subworlds--allows one to take off and then put on, belie and believe, every facet of experience sequenced by privacy: "disguised as darkness light waits outside / the doors shut we dream" (Kallet, 1981:47). That facet of privacy warrants separate study.*

Where play and concealment meet, some directions suggest themselves for investigation. The ability to temporarily suspend investments toward getting away with dangerous play requires conditions of secrecy (Simmel, 1950:345-376). One must enter and leave concealed activity as an "entity of the activity." In other words, suspension of biography requires bracketing off other experience and entry not of individuals but of the activity. Reciprocal confidence--an honor among thieves, as it were--must bound the activity--and perhaps sustain it--with silence. Accordingly, a certain insider's sense for otherwise indistinguishable ritual is required to allow concealed play.

The persistence of ritual and meanings gesture takes on within general parameters points to a fundamental issue. We attribute what a thing is to what it most resembles: equate concepts with reality. That we know more than one reality, and that realities can be evoked by agreement, returns ritual to magical context. And this awareness renders reality the magic we make by language (O'Keefe, 1982:41-47).

*Laud Humphreys (1975) provides an exploration of this realm entered into covert homosexual activity and considerable discussion of ethical issues applicable to any investigation of concealed realms of privacy.

One transforms privacy by play. The assumption is nothing significant should occur in suspended spaces (see Goffman, 1967: 149-207), and most often this play is what it appears to be. An understanding of play and the surface validity of character allows the duplicity privacy conceals. At the same time--all of us experienced at private moments and aware of the tenuous truth to character--the possibility of secret worlds and duplicity enhances suspicion of the alone and lends logic to subordination. We do not see that passage to gray areas. A credible public performance, combined with a few secret understanding on the side, can produce the passage. The poet (Kallet, 1981:4) opens concealed realms one suspects lurk behind shields privacy holds forth:

. . . inside
 grey seems warmer--
 it is what we have to work with

 the way we dance, bending
 as if in between two walls,
 stretching to one side,
 then the other.

Where a language of silence walls off consequence, one can for a moment, indeed, be a monster or a clown and only play.

This investigation suggests distinctive differences in the way men and women enact privacy. Further investigation is suggested. A formal analysis would specify the general organization and operation of privacy beyond the observable activity of interest for the current discussion. Behavior toward one's gender and across gender might be explored in a wider range of settings for the alone and the

accompanied. Similarly, status issues need further examination. Intent and attribution of status signals might be investigated. One cannot say, from current findings, how deliberately or consciously people display or notice status traits.

Caution accrues to these findings. Not only is intentionality an abstraction invented for interpretive usage, a limited amount and range of data exist. Different regions of the country, cross-cultural data, other types of public space or more examples of lounges, laundromats and terminals might produce confounding or enlightening information. Consistency with current knowledge does not presume the knowledge final. And a formal investigation of the origin, process and universal order of privacy remains nonexistent.

Imagery and Order: A Semiotic of Solitude

Dual images of solitude--of being selective alone--exist for definition of one's experience. Cultural strands mirrored in everyday experience are potentially systematic. They lend a texture by which obvious strands can mingle toward a not immediately obvious higher order of thinking activities (see Barthes, 1966:276-285). One order compels what might be called social responsibility: "If a man is capable of leading a responsible life himself, then he is also conscious of his duties to the community" (Jung, 1970:163). The edict seems a benign and healthy one. Order and individuality are complementary and interdependent. For Jung, the statement means precisely what it seems. Symptomatic of a cultural myth, it may

not. Individualism enters the cultural text as a large and prominent figure. Some 30 years of frontier existence extend infinitely into signs of rugged romantics and their horses with backs to the world and faces against the sun. The self made man [sic] lends a central and confounding fourth to the sacred Trinity of Western faith in whose image one is thought molded. Therapeutic psychology and its medical twin, psychiatry, emphasize individuals as symptomatic of their own potentials and pathologies. Again, Jung (1970:171) means what he says and signals what order signifies:

Disregard for individuality obviously means
the suffocation of the single individual . . .
The element of differentiation is obliterated
from the community. . . . The sole and natural carrier
of life is the individual, and that is so throughout nature.

Simple enough: We can have our cake and be rugged, too. An equine romp into the sun is generally preceded by community service. That individualism, or expression, and public order are oppositional in experience shatters the symbol into competing paradigms (cf. Barthes, 1962:211-217).

The polar individual paradigm, of expression broader than ruggedness, is outlined in a classic analysis by Colin Wilson (1956), The Outsider. One apart, by virtue of insight into cultural illusions--Wilson proposes--is simultaneously tormented by isolation. There is an apparently instinctual or learned "need" to couple with fellow human lives and yet alienation from their basic underpinnings of reality. One would tell average people they are in a trance but

are unable to speak their tongue. The separated one, then, embarks on a search for shared symbols to bridge alienation. One finds left, often after eventual resignation, suicide, or visionary outlets, the work of a Georg Simmel or of an Arthur Rimbaud:

I made up rhymes in dark and scary places,
And like a lyre I plucked the tired laces
Of my worn out shoes, one foot beneath my heart
(1976:41).

One finds vision and insights immortally embedded in a futile struggle for a common language, spoken in loneliness.

In less polarized ways, unity and separation manifest in everyday experience. We need relationships and seek them out. Yet we are uncertain how to pigeonhold and understand relationships. We are uncertain how competent we are to acquire and sustain them. Barry Gifford (1980:82) captures this uncertainty well in his novel, Landscape With Traveler: "I admit that my knowledge of friendship is mainly theoretical, but I don't feel at all unique in that."

By extension, the romantic ideal is linked to order by its grounding in internalized fear of aloneness:

You shut your eyes and won't look out the window
Where shadows lurk
Hordes of black wolves and black demons and nightmares
Inhabit the dark.
(Rimbaud, 1976:41)

Clowns and monsters leap from nightmares of children to stage and

cinema. And when we play them, we go into dark places, places framed by distinct and separate real worlds, as is a dream by night and morning.

An obvious opposition occurs between solitude and solitary confinement. One is privilege and the other punishment. Within erotic realms of romantic idealism, the two dichotomize separation and control. In this way individualism splits into loneliness and linkage. Erotic pleasures are of one's flesh and subject to one's interpretation. That such expression should not be solitary and celebrated underlines most intimate prerogatives subject to pressures toward coupling or enjoyed as substitutes in desolation:

The boys and girls are one tonight.
 They unbutton blouses. They unzip flies.
 They take off shoes. They turn off the light.
 The glimmering creatures are full of lies.
 They are eating each other. They are overfed.
 At night, alone, I marry the bed.
 (Sexton, 1969:34)

While children yet believe in monsters, erotic self expression--in a larger context which denies the sexuality of children--will make transparent hairy-handed monsters of them. A more sophisticated twist on the same tale is that adult autoeroticism reflects some flaw of body or character.

Individualism is seldom associated with women except where "male plays" operate or where the heart is sacrificed for boldness. The distinction is an ancient one that places women and children on

opposite poles of mythologically based "natural" order, as I Ching indicates:

Wind passes above the fire
and warms the family.
The superior man is careful to always be truthful
and consistent in his conduct.
The wife keeps her course (Reifler, 1974:165).

East and West meet in traditional prerequisites of a male to be firm with both his children and wife. The obvious alternative bears citation: "A strong and willful woman / do not embrace her" (Reifler, 1974:195).

Similarly and in more stark configuration, individuality, solitary initiative--and of course access to privacy--are denied those of lower economic status. Matza (1966) finds the poor, if not denied individuality, gain no claims to respect. Not incidentally, access for much concealed play is located amidst rank poverty. Such control necessitates status mix along with risk to reputation and physical welfare for disapproved play. One locates disreputable games as opaque breaks in character on the turf of those we presume transparent. Much concealed play resembles a sophistication of slumming.

Explored by gender status, individual options accrue to someone who looks much like a white, middle-class male with sufficient investments not to embark on many unconventional paths. One is denied individuality to the extent suspicion exists, an actual break might occur. Conversely, aggregates are imputed the most individuality who conceive the least as feasible.

Another "obvious meaning in disguise" (Barthes, 1970:317-333) permeates an illusion of expression by mass occupation. An exemplary case is the holiday "Halloween." One appears in a patently false and public suspension of biography that shows clowns are silly and monsters are scary--and witches are women--all in one night through highly impressionable years. Adults have costume parties and set sliding dates for Halloween. Standardized and private expression [sic] is, likewise, printed on t-shirts and bumper stickers so one penetrates bounds of good taste in expression without much subversive rumination on the matter, without too eccentric an outcome. Uniqueness, then, is massified. Individuality is a shared trait. One can argue back one last time to I Ching's Thirteenth Hexagram, "Society":

A fire beneath the open sky
The superior man distinguishes things
according to their kinds and classes
(Reifler, 1974:66).

Certain "types" define one who does not fit class and kind aggregates.* "Hermit" is one. A companion and more dated term is "village idiot." Individual examples display biographical lines which combine monster with clown in varying emphases. We still occasionally hear media reports of excavation of the homes of recently deceased hermits and eccentrics. We are heartened to learn of some final capitulation to social needs, albeit posthumous: small fortunes

*Orrin Klapp (1962) suggests "social types" operate as culture-specific images of ourselves and others. These types are effective in clarification and differentiation of identity and status and in providing alternate reality.

willed to orphanages, a shrine to one's saintly mother, or cohabitation with an overweight and pampered ca. All report a mea culpa and lend redemption which could hardly be verified or renounced except by improbable and discreditable signals.

One more limitation on separation and expression lends itself to preliminary exploration. Too much self expression set apart from predominant reality gains a standardized outlet in occult plays where one can play or gain monster status if serious. One sincerely "away" is separated without considerable selective solitude (see Goffman, 1961; 1963:75-79).

One returns to the proscription of individuality without social accountability. Incidental expressions follow concealed from community and segmented from "real" life history. There barriers arise maintaining gender reputability and class respectability. Alternative images emerge of tormented creativity, sufferings of the incomplete body and unanswered heart beat. At outer limits, demons and devils arise and provoke a modern witch trial: if one is truly a devil or a demon, asylum walls will not be confining. Safe and popular expressions bridge the dichotomy, for the particular aggregate whose unique standing is thereby produced.

Two essential themes (see Barthes, 1952:23-30) come into play--and this exploration will hopefully provoke a semiotic of solitude in historical and cross-cultural depth--and both are distinctive as aspects of control. First, departures are morally tinged by their distance from immersion in the appropriate aggregate and so defined

as threat. That is, a moral dichotomy exists between integrated individuality allotted leave in visible or approved ways and simply taking leave by volition. Secondly, a collective bridge implicitly restricts and acknowledges the dichotomy.

Here is where Western thought departs from Eastern tradition despite shared precedent.* In the former a denial of duality is placed by moral weight along dichotomized dimensions. And a relationship of superordination and subordination emerges. This necessitates emergence of cooptation to account for artificial separation. The subjective organization of company and privacy are bridged by privilege of solitude and countered by the transparency of the devalued. Play, amid understood and morally defensible claims to privacy will not enter far in games uniquely the player's own. While routinization and massification of play are discussed elsewhere (cf. Schrank, 1977:169-186), the matter deserves a comprehensive analysis. What remains to be said is privacy emerges in stylized ways--through permitting concealed activity--and represents an order of introspection and expression. The way one separates and extent of separation places one's character in either conformity or jeopardy. The grammar of privacy signifies the claimant knows not to go too far.

*For a current explanation of Eastern thought and its affinities with current paradigms of natural order, see Fritjof Capra (1984). The reference in this essay suggests emphasis, in Eastern thought, on duality rather than dichotomy. Holistic perspectives of understanding and the interrelation of "form" and "content" enhance naturalistic social thought where applied.

Paradoxically, shielding oneself from others acknowledges and enacts its own limits, its own order: "Language is legislation, speech is its code" (Barthes, 1977:460).

Epilogue: Art Trouvé

Space, distance, interruption and biography emerge from discussions already in print (cf. Hall, 1966; Sommer, 1969; Manning, 1972:83-94; Goffman, 1974) and salient for understanding of privacy. This study extracts those dimensions from the literature, posed as a framework for understanding processes in public space and successfully applied toward an understanding of privacy.

Most previous analysis of privacy is redundant in refinement and reprise of a somewhat introspective model. Erving Goffman (1963:38-42, 124-148) recognizes the processual nature of transformation. He does not specify the process explicitly focusing on privacy. This essay interprets privacy as an observable series of activities produced off the prior fundamental structure.

Distance, separation and placement of privacy, in a realm of objects have been established in their significance (cf. Sartre, 1956; Simmel, 1957; Goffman, 1963; Hall, 1966). The realms of play within private posturings and the interplay of transformation have not been specified and integrated into an understanding of privacy prior to this discussion.

Robert Stebbins (n.d.:7-10) locates some motives for people to seek out separation--relaxation, contemplation, religious meditation--but by asking people what they do, he discovers internal process and misses the rich activity unthinkingly played out while separated.

Differential access to privacy by status and the role of privacy in control of access to one's person and biography is well documented (cf. Schwartz, 1968:742-744; Manning, 1972:85-88, 90-92; Altman, 1975:50). Likewise, the differential between men and women in nonverbal expression is offered by various works (e.g. Eakins and Eakins, 1978; Goffman, 1979). This essay specifies how privacy is produced through enactment of and interplay between gender and status attributes. Some implicit indication--from responses to interruption--that the least flexible elements of biography, and those most often reasserted, are gender and status, suggests further exploration. While Stebbins (n.d.:11) suggests women seek more passive and solitary relaxation in public places than men do, this essay adds a new wrinkle. Perhaps passive recreation is less a predilection of women than manifestation of a style women adopt in public (see Schur, 1984).

We seem fairly constrained to nonverbal protest or withdrawal when privacy is intruded upon (cf. Sommer, 1969). This essay, along those lines, replicates more than it adds. However, subordination of aloneness is not previously distinguished in conceptual portraits of privacy as an important theme toward outlining the image.

Furthermore, privacy is too narrowly conceptualized as motivated and positive, as an escape from regulation and demands (cf. Schwartz, 1968:748; Stebbins, n.d.:19-20). Prior to this discussion, the control of separation and the moral order restricting privacy were not integrated into interpretations.

This essay, in sum, leaves an impression of privacy as a fluid activity isolated and engaged, characterized by object play embedded in gender and status and a reflection of both privilege and subordination.

A philosophical discussion by Dwight Van de Vate (1976:1-8) contends privacy is selective and prepared for potential discrediting of self; privacy, then, exists as evasion and under the assumption of something to be hidden. Respect for privacy, accordingly, is an understood conspiracy to jointly avoid uncovering. There is merit in a less inflated version of the same idea. Erving Goffman is certainly sensitive to order and its ritual enactment through communication. And he is sensitive to the symmetry and reciprocity of interchange. It is simply too long a leap to, subsequently, suggest Goffman, or interpretations--as Van de Vate's--spun off Goffman, reduce human activity to snuffing out potential fuses. The ritualization of activity belies such interpretations: we enact forms the same reasons we climb mountains, because they are defined and understood in our prior experience.

Perhaps the entire thrust of Frame Analysis (Goffman, 1974) is toward our ability to take primary order for granted and then to

manipulate, innovate and play in nonserious inconsequential ways. Emphasis on the causal "why" distorts Goffman's "how." Therein lies a humanistic and naturalistic image of Goffman's work. This essay opened with a mention of the aesthetics and sensuality of a small circle of individuals routinely doing some school studies. To appreciate Goffman and to follow his art, one may need to look on rather than look in. We are aware of our secrets. And we take for granted the order by which we keep them. We do not conspire mutual respect lest structure itself break down. Basic forms are not fragile. We confirm the contrary by communication. Our expressiveness and diversity, although patterned, within constraints is what Goffman systematizes. A humanistic and naturalistic view of Goffman allows us to explore play, to appreciate its geometry and nonserious moments along with rituals organizing risk, subordination and objectification. Such a view is faithful to Goffman's relatively non-Western mode of analysis.

This essay provides an active visible and dualistic impression of privacy. This essay portrays human beings, ordered as their lives are, as entities of motion and expression who routinely reproduce social order. One suggests we take on conspiracy deliberately and as ritual in concealed activities of privacy.

The humanistic and naturalistic appreciation of qualitative study and formal interpretation parallels Eastern thought. The Upanishads (Capra, 1984:138) offers an illustration:

Where there is duality . . . there one sees another;
there one smells another; there one tastes another . . .
But where everything has become just one's own self,
then whereby and whom would not see? . . . smell? . . . taste?

Abstractions and interpretation offered, activity returns
where it was taken from--in this case, a bus terminal:

A boy, about fifteen, wears a black cap--beret-like
with a visor like one sees on military or police hats.
He has blonde hair to his collar . . . wears white pants
and high-heeled boots, a double-breasted denim jacket
painted on the back with skull and cross bones, the
jacket is hung--tinsel like--with narrow silver-colored
chains. . . . He stands against the water fountain,
one arm propped there, the other hand in his pocket
. . . one leg bent back toward the fountain, the other
extended into the aisle. . . . He scans the terminal,
his head raised and tilted back, a slight closed smile
on his lips . . . (Author's field notes).

Suspended in a shared moment, he is neither clown nor
monster. He is, for himself, the solitary witness.

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