Guerrilla Gardening

**Geographers and Gardeners, Actors and Networks:
Reconsidering Urban Public Space**

OLLY ZANETTI

Submitted 17 September 2007

Guerrilla Gardening

Geographers and Gardeners, Actors and Networks: Reconsidering Urban Public Space

O L L Y Z A N E T T I

MA / MSc DISSERTATION

DECLARATION

This dissertation entitled:

Guerrilla Gardening

Geographers and Gardeners, Actors and Networks: Reconsidering
Urban Public Space

was composed by me and is based on my own work. Where the work of
others has been used, it is fully acknowledged in the text and in captions to
tables and illustrations. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other
qualification.

Signed:

Date:

Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

Abstract

In this dissertation I discuss the phenomenon of Guerrilla Gardening, which I summarise as 'any voluntary, and potentially illicit, gardening in space which can in some way be deemed public, over which the gardeners hold no direct or explicit ownership.' I engage in this discussion in order to draw into question common sense conceptualisations of public space as space set out *for* the public, rather than a space the public can inhabit, and be involved in its material formation. In order to fully understand that reconceptualisation, I undertake a deeper examination of the idea central to Guerrilla Gardening, that of gardening. Drawing on the lessons from Science Studies, I examine the role of the nonhuman within Guerrilla Gardening. Using an actor-network approach, I suggest that Guerrilla Gardening's key facet is the interaction of human and nonhuman agency. However, I do not adopt the actor-network thesis uncritically. Instead, I examine the various debates that have surrounded this paradigm. I am not convinced by the arguments proposed in 'strong' actor-network approaches as I find the notion of completely symmetrical agency problematic. I thus examine the place of a 'weak' actor-network approach, and outline my reasons for espousing this. The material used in this dissertation was acquired through a mixture of particpant action research, interviewing, and analysis of various media sources in the public domain.

1

Introduction

Setting the scene:
political ecology / science studies / public space

As the curators of the New London Architecture gallery's *Public City* exhibition assert, the

realisation of excellently planned and highly accessible public spaces is critical to the social

function of any urban area (New London Architecture 2007). In the opening months of 2007,

Public City showcased the latest initiatives in the reworking of London's public spaces.

Locations and scales were diverse, from squares to parks, canals to subways, with completed

projects exhibited alongside those still on the drawing board. Overall, the ideas and spaces

on display were exciting and innovative, yet I assert that the exhibition fell down on two

accounts, both results of a failure to critically examine themes which, while at first glance

appear banal, in fact make up a substantial portion of the epistemological questions

surrounding the subject matter presented. First, the curators never felt it necessary to define

the term central to their discussion: the notion of 'the public'. Such a construction is far from

neutral, and instead evokes strongly contested and highly politicised debates over who 'the

public' does, and perhaps more importantly who does not, consist of. This is a notion of

import geographically and politically. Second, the material production of *Public City*'s new or

refurbished public spaces is passed over without remark. So, for example, any visitor attune

to the influence of neoliberalism as it is 'rolled out' into urban space (Peck and Tickell 2002),

would immediately observe that many of what are termed public spaces are in fact the, often

exclusionary, *quasi*-public spaces of office forecourts and the like. Both materially and

analytically therefore, it is right to argue that "more and more the public spaces of the modern city are being produced *for* us rather than *by* us" (Mitchell 2003: 18 emphasis in original).

It is this contention, and it's taken for granted nature, which I seek to question in this project. Presented in *Public City* are spaces, meticulously devised to be sure, that are to be inscribed upon the city by architects and planners based upon preconceived ideas of the public good, and within predetermined limits of both legal and cultural provenance: limits which circumscribe the eventual composition of that space. In Lefebvrian (1991) terms, therefore, one must question the extent to which 'the public' holds agency as the ordered, 'God's eye' views typified by representations of space, are translated into the lived, experienced realities of representational space. In contrast to the ordered spaces of *Public City*, I present a case study of a phenomena termed 'Guerrilla Gardening'. Guerrilla Gardening can be summarised as 'any voluntary, and potentially illicit, gardening in space which can in some way be deemed public, over which the gardeners hold no direct or explicit ownership'. Like authentic guerrillas for whom ungovernable rural areas were their strongholds (Wickham-Crowley 1987), Guerrilla Gardeners make their mark in spaces out of reach of the authorities, generally the untended, derelict areas of inner cities. Through an examination of Guerrilla Gardening, I assert that the unthinking modes through which urban space has long been understood may be brought into question.

The dissertation takes the following form. After outlining the methodologies used in the collection of my data in chapter two, I move on to expand upon the brief descriptor of Guerrilla Gardening provided here, and demonstrate that, in fact, this term is permeated with contestation. Focussing therefore on Guerrilla Gardening in the direct context of my research, I move to the central theses of this work. In chapter four I elaborate on the role of Guerrilla Gardening in public space discourses, and in chapter five suggest that Guerrilla Gardening's plants themselves may be understood as actors within this process. Finally, I draw these points together in a conclusion. In the remainder of this chapter I set out the theoretical springboard from which I have approached this research, examining and drawing

together the diverse literatures of political ecology, science studies and the geographies of urbanism and public space.

Political Ecology

"[A]ll ecological projects (and arguments) are simultaneously political-economic projects (and arguments) and vice versa. Ecological arguments are never socially neutral any more than socio-political arguments are ecologically neutral. Looking more closely at the way ecology and politics interrelate then becomes imperative if we are to get a better handle on how to approach environmental / ecological questions."

(Harvey 1996: 182)

Starting Points: Third World Political Ecology

Though Political Ecology was an established subdiscipline at the time of his writing, the quotation from Harvey (above) neatly summarises what I consider central to the thinking behind its emergence. The early academic outcomes of the epistemological interface between politics and ecology were located within a very rigidly defined spatial milieu. Political Ecology, essentially the study of the ways nature could be both party to, and an outcome, of political process, was analysed as an exclusively 'Third World' phenomenon. There are two central reasons for this. First, it is significant to note the ways through which key commentators understood power's articulation through political process. Under the direction of authors such as Raymond Bryant and Sinead Bailey, Political Ecology's grounding in the Third World was a response to their assertion of the centrality of colonialism and its legacy on the power relations which overlaid these places (see Bryant and Bailey 1997). Further, political Ecology had, and continues to have, a strong Marxist influence. Not incidentally, of course, Marxian-type economic relations are inherently bound up with that colonial legacy. Second, and of equal importance, understandings of nature tended to be based on a fetishisation of expansive wilderness areas apparently not tainted by human interference, generally signified by economic exploitation (Cronon 1995). Such spaces were inevitably located largely in places of low economic development.

Current Political Ecology

While much has changed as the discipline has evolved, it would be false to suggest that the Political Ecology of a decade ago is completely divorced from that of the present. It is clear from Bryant's (1998) article that the academic tools through which Political Ecology was written, the interest in power and discourse combined with the examination of material practices, as well as a strong Marxist influence, remain backbones of the subdiscipline. Yet the expansion of Political Ecology's spatial remit from the Third World to the whole world has been hotly contested (see Schroeder 2005). For McCarthy (2002), the Wise Use movement is demonstrative of the applicability of the lessons learned from Third World Political Ecology in a First World setting. Wise Use is a United States based pressure group which contests the limitations placed on rural dwellers' right to access the economic potential of the land with which they are surrounded, on the basis of government led environmental initiatives. McCarthy argues that simply because of the 'First World' status of the country in which the movement is located, "most observers unconsciously evaluated Wise Use within a very different analytical framework" (2002: 1282) to that they might have used had the movement been located elsewhere. This framework was implicitly less sympathetic to Wise Use simply because of its location. Such assertions tally with movements across the discipline, where geographic exceptionalism is replaced with examination of holistic themes which have pertinence across space, such as Robinson's (2005) analysis of 'ordinary' cities.

Further, the largely rural focus of Political Ecology has also broadened, such that a strand of work with an explicit urban focus can now be considered a subdiscipline in its own right (such as Heynen et al 2006a). Again, Harvey (1996) summarises the point precisely, with his assertion that there is nothing *un*natural about New York City, or indeed any other urban area. For authors such as Gandy, this Urban Political Ecology calls for a "new kind of environmental politics" (2006: 72) in which the divisions between nature and culture, countryside and city, are elided. The broadening of Political Ecology's focus into the urban realm enables us to consider apparently *un*-natural, or human-made, ecosystems like parks or gardens through the same epistemological lenses we might use for natural areas such as forests, prairies and

so on. Just as First and Third World binaries are broken down, so ontological and spatial definitions of 'naturalness', and hence inclusion into the political ecology remit, are widened.

In spite of this widening remit, Urban Political Ecology has retained its focus on land-based conflict. Retaining that Marxist purview, it has been suggested that contemporary productions of nature, from rainforest reserves to urban parks, have been co-opted by capitalist enterprise such that decisions regarding the most suitable techniques for management or preservation of these "public environments" have been taken out of the public's hands (Katz 1998). As such, a history traced of what is possibly the world's most famous park, New York City's Central Park, suggests that, at its conception it was demonstrative of a privately orchestrated social improvement campaign which simultaneously acted to impose elite values over the city's working classes, while raising nearby land values and generating profits from property speculation (Gandy 2002). Further, the present management echoes such antecedents, while also acting to undermine the financial and cultural sustainability of urban parks and gardens in poorer neighbourhoods (Gandy 2002; Katz 1998).

Harvey observes that "[c]reated ecosystems tend to both instantiate and reflect … the social systems that gave rise to them" (1996: 185). So just as globalised capitalism or small scale socio-economic projects may co-opt pre-existing natures for their own ends, so the inequalities of capitalist societies are reflected in the types of nature they produce. Those with high levels of economic and social capital are able to campaign successfully for the preservation of a natural appearing rural idyll which subsequently acts to maintain social and economic class distinctions (Duncan and Duncan 2001). Capitalist enterprise is even able to produce a simulacra of nature, the production of which is predicated upon environmentalist discourses while antithetically effacing the precursory, and often ecologically more diverse, natural systems of that place (Keil and Graham 1998). Conversely, however, marginalised parts of urban areas tend to be devoid of natural landscapes, and those which do exist are often poorly maintained and perceived as unsafe (Heynen 2003; Brownlow 2006).

Moving Towards a Conclusion?

At this juncture, support for the notion that "[r]e-naturing urban theory is, therefore, vital to urban analysis as well as to urban political activism" (Heynen et al 2006b: 2) is surely forthcoming? As I have so far suggested, the presence, absence or quality of nature in its various guises in urban space clearly political. However, in such a schema nature becomes a matter based more on human politics than it is one brought about by the action of natural processes themselves. This I find problematic and thus it I now turn toward an exploration of a standpoint in which the agency of natural processes themselves are given greater consideration.

The Influence of Science Studies

> "[W]hile there is a great deal of *talk* about the importance of nature to understanding the city, and urbanization processes, it is often unclear what nonhuman nature *adds* to these accounts except the presence of a static stock of 'things' that are necessarily mobilized in the urbanization process."

> (Braun 2006: 645)

Thinking Through 'Things'

For me, it is not just the objective that is significant in Spencer and Whatmore's (2001) rallying call to collapse the boundaries between physical and human geographies, it is the very rhetorical tool they employ in putting forward their argument. Their appeal to put "life" back into the discipline ties very strongly with Braun's assertion (above) that all too often the nonhuman is reduced to a mere 'things': malleable objects under the domination of humans, rather than active living agents within the processes to which they are affiliated. In the following section I explore the employment Science Studies' conclusions within the context of Geography as a way to interrogate such concerns.

For Latour (2004), binarised conceptions of nature and culture have led to a deadlock in Political Ecology, paralysing the subdiscipline. Because politics and ecology, or more broadly culture and nature, have been artificially separated in the construction of current paradigms (or as he terms it, the 'Constitution'), attempts to bring the two together in their status as separate entities is logically impossible. This hypothesis draws upon the epistemological

outcomes of his influential text *We Have Never Been Modern* (Latour 1993). Here he suggests that the central principal of the Modern Constitution, a way of thinking foundational to the current era, is an artificial and unworkable bifurcation between nature and society. The key word 'imbroglio' is used to represent the confusion generated as in commonplace activities, whether the in subject matter read in a newspaper or the action of dispensing from an aerosol can, "[a]ll of culture and all of nature get churned up again every day" (Latour 1993: 2).

The Modern Constitution, Latour (1993: 51-55) suggests, is at its most unworkable when it comes to matters of agency. Its thinking presents social constructivism as a mode of creating objects such that the object itself has no meaning other than that imposed upon it by the social. Yet concurrently, the social being, the person, does not have free will and instead human actions are the result of the inherent, scientific, nature of things. However, social scientists have long observed that these distinctions are doomed to failure, resulting in a reliance upon dualistic thinking where both nature and society are broken into 'soft' and 'hard' parts such that hard social actants dictate over soft natural recipients, and vice versa. The inclusion of science studies into the equation, Latour argues, demonstrates the falsity of this dualism. Considering hard science using the tools usually reserved for soft science meant that "[s]ociety had to produce everything arbitrarily including the cosmic order, biology, chemistry, and the laws of physics" (1993: 55). The implausibility of this demonstrates to Latour the same implausibility of applying the rules of social constructivism to the soft parts of nature. Hence, Latour proposes the notion of quasi-objects: objects "in between and below the two poles" (1993: 55) of nature and culture, bearing parts of that which constituted objects of either pole.

'Things', Agency and Actor-Networks

Actor-Network Theory (ANT), of which Latour is one of the key proponents, offers a way through which the agency of these quasi-objects may be understood. Unlike, for example, social constructivism, where objects are apparently unable to pre-exist their discursive construction, ANT proposes instead that objects exist within networks and that it is the

dialectical relationship between that object and the network(s) in which it is enmeshed which gives that object its meaning. As such, objects, both human and nonhuman, have crucial roles to play in the formation of that network and resultantly, it would not function normally without the presence of all participants. Hence, nonhuman objects cease to be viewed as "a static stock of 'things'" (Braun 2006: 645) and instead as agents within the processes, or networks, of which they are part (see the summary in Castree 2005: 230-232). Callon's (1986) study of scallops, fishermen and scientists in St Brieuc Bay, France, is demonstrative of this and has been instrumental in the movement of ANT's theoretical outcomes into mainstream academic thinking. In this paper, Callon argues that the provision of certain type of scallops, considered a delicacy by consumers, is not the result of simply natural processes (such as the scallops very existence or growth), or a cultural process (the harvesting of the scallops, or their preparation as a foodstuff), but is in fact an imbroglio of many processes. The decline of scallop numbers, and the nascent attempts to swell that population, is in fact based on a network in which amongst others, fishermen, scientists, scientific knowledge, weather conditions, and the scallops themselves, are entangled. So, for example, scientists may employ 'scientific knowledge' in attempts to increase scallop numbers (and to cement their position within the network). But as scientists hold no greater agency than any other actors, their attempts may be thwarted.

Actor-Network Theory and Geography

> "A hardly problematised sphere of representation is allowed to take precedence over lived experience and materiality, usually as a series of images or texts which a theorist contemplatively deconstructs, thus implicitly degrading practices."

> (Thrift 1996: 4)

For proponents of non-representational theories, such as Thrift (above), ANT promises a new way of doing Geography which moves beyond simply the representation of things, instead taking an interest in the things themselves. Jonathon Murdoch has played a key role in the expansion of actor-network led theorising into Geographical work, demonstrating how ANT can offer new ways of understanding both space (Murdoch 1998) and processes (Murdoch 1997). In the latter, Murdoch sketches out, in greater detail than I have here, the theoretical antecedents within both Geography and Science Studies which form the basis of ANT, and

the planes on which the two may be integrated. Thus, for those interested in the geographies

of the so called 'more than human' (Whatmore 2002), the key observation from Science

Studies literature is that:

> "[n]atural entities are not to be regarded, therefore, simply as passive intermediaries; they retain the ability to subvert the associations of the social thereby recasting associations in new ways. The lesson is clear: we should refrain from excluding natural entities from our analyses for such entities have the ability either to consolidate or to undermine the sets of associations that constitute human-nonhuman networks."

> (Murdoch 1997: 740)

However, it would be wrong to suggest that the reception of such interest in the nonhuman

has been uncritically absorbed into Geographical epistemologies. For many, including

Murdoch himself, the upshots of ANT are as problematic as the apparent disinterest in the

nonhuman that preceded. In the remainder of this section I will review the critical thinking

which has surrounded ANT and its influence.

Critical Reflections on Actor-Network Approaches

> "It is a peculiar fact that a discipline which, in part, defines itself as the study of society-environment relations has conspicuously failed to deal with the political status of the nonhuman."

> (Castree 2003: 207)

In dealing with the political status of the nonhuman, ANT is a crucial tool. However, through

complicating the underlying theoretical assumptions with regards linkages between

nonhumans and politics, the employment of ANT has brought into question several key

premises upon which ANT itself is founded. Principally, marrying conceptualisations of

centralised *power* as held by institutions such as governments, capital, and so forth, to

notions of diffuse and relational *agency* held by all of a network's actants, has been

problematic. ANT has more in common with the postmodern *p*olitics of Foucauldian

theorising, than the *P*olitical meta-narratives of Marxist thought (Murdoch 1997: 737; see also

Hobson 2007, 252-253). However arguably that conception of agency promoted by ANT is

even more radical – and potentially more abstract – than Foucault's Benthamic Panopticon

(Foucault 1979). In this section I outline how an ANT approach may imbue the nonhuman, in

this case animals, with politics; I then move on to a closer examination of the power / agency

9

problematic that this throws up; and finally close with a discussion of the various ways in which actor-network theorists have attempted to integrate politics into their work.

For Hobson (2007), enlarging what is covered by the umbrella of the term 'political' to include animals is an inevitable and necessary process given that animals are "already subjects of, and subject to, political practices" (2007: 251). Further, that epistemological expansion is likened to antecedents within the discipline, such as the postmodern reconfiguration of the term 'politics' itself which facilitated the influence of feminism entering into the understandings of Political Geographers. Hobson argues that, though discussed in subdisciplines such as Political Ecology, animals are written into narratives in such a way that denies the full extent of their status as agents within the processes in which they are located. This results in "a partial picture of the politics at play [being] presented" (2007: 255). However, though Hobson is keen that animals be conceptualised as party to the political processes in which they are enmeshed, she exemplifies that she is not calling for an understanding which portrays animals as "possessing political agency in the rational, liberal sense" (2007: 263).

Indeed, it is the complications engendered by this formulation of power / agency that ANT sceptics most readily take on (see Murdoch 1997: 746-750). For proponents of a rigidly defined ANT, all actors hold equal agency within their networks, although undeniably the way that this agency is prosecuted differs according to the role that each actor plays. However, as Murdoch shows, for critics such as Pickering (1993, in Murdoch 1997: 746), while still concurring with the broad pronunciations of nonhuman agency, there is a difference between human 'intentionality' as a mobilising force which binds together the networks in whose eventual formation nonhumans hold simply 'agency'. This impasse between the two sides is undoubtedly problematic, however for me, the solution emerges in the place of ANT within critical theory.

> "[C]an ANT, with its seamless webs, forever crisscrossing the human-nonhuman divide, provide a secure platform for *critique*, for the expression of a profound dissatisfaction with the activities of powerful *social* actors and the attribution of responsibility to those actors? Can it, in other words, ever do anything more than *describe*, in a prosaic fashion, the dangerous imbroglios that enmesh us?"
>
> (Murdoch 1997: 750, emphasis in original)

It would be highly contentious if ANT's conceptualisations of power necessarily inhibited critical academic study. However some theorists working in the field of Political Ecology have suggested that this need not be the case. Noel Castree (2002) questions the divergence of thinking between Marxism and ANT in studies of 'nature' and suggests that instead of being viewed as antithetical, the two may actually work in tandem. That currently "the question of nature is predominantly phrased – and answered – in neoliberal terms" (Castree 2002: 112) may be taken as evidential to the continued importance of a Marxist-type purview, even in a period of paradigms shifting away from Marxism and towards ANT. In order to align both Marxism and ANT, Castree proposes that we adopt 'weak' versions of them both: the practical consequence being the adoption of both theories with a critical awareness of their limitations. Castree thus offers a 'Constitution' for weak ANT in which its key functions, the dismissal of binarist thinking which bifurcates between the poles of nature and culture and the reconsideration of power and agency to efface their limitations in earlier conceptions, remain central. However, these are located with caveats, the most significant of which being that "processes are social and natural but not in equal measure" (Castree 2002: 135). Thus, the agency of nonhuman actors remains central, but does so within a model where the social intentionality of human actors operating in a capitalist society are able to play roles of greater significance when it is theoretically advantageous, and analytically more accurate, for them to do so. Likewise, Kirsch and Mitchell (2004) suggest ANT be reconsidered in relation to the Marxist conception of dead labour. While Castree sees power as diffuse, Kirsch and Mitchell prefer to regard it as more centred in particular individuals or institutions (2004: 691). However general alignment between all is indicated by Kirsch and Mitchell's assertion that "if all actor networks are equal, then some are clearly more equal than others" (2004: 692).

Closing Comments: Politics and Actor-Networks

The theoretical link between Marxist politics and ANT can be explicated through a discussion of work which takes as its focus the seemingly banal terrain of the suburban lawn (Robbins and Sharp 2003; 2006). In these analyses, the lawn is implicated into a number of economic and environmental networks, such that the social meanings and environmental outcomes of lawns are interconnected by their relations to a struggling chemicals industry seeking new

markets; a system of values where well-kept outside space elicits signifiers ranging from wealth to moral standing; issues of environmental pollution and subsequent governmental regulation and so on. However, instead of merely suggesting that social actors such as transnational capitalism, the panoptic gaze of other community members, or the local legal requirements of lawn management stimulate humans into particular modes of lawn care, the authors suggest that "the lawn itself has independent power in the process of producing that economy, its constituent agents, and the ideas of those agents. *It is not the prime mover of such a system, but it is an essential part*" (Robbins and Sharp 2006: 122, emphasis added).

In this section I have demonstrated the ways actor-network Theories garnered from Science Studies have been enrolled in the re-theorisation of 'nature' within Geography, with particular reference to the formulations of 'nature' within Political Ecology. I have engaged in a discussion which complicates the bifurcation between 'nature' and 'culture', and outlined the theoretical consequences of this. As such, the very term 'nature,' which I – as a deliberate rhetorical technique – used freely and without quotation marks in my discussion of Political Ecology, has been problematised. The influence of ANT makes untenable the themes of protecting an out-there 'nature' against an invasive and dominating 'culture' by demonstrating the interrelatedness and agency of both. However, that formulation of agency is itself not without problems. Whether talking of animals (Hobson 2007), or lawns (Robbins and Sharp 2006), it seems clear that, while the two are evidently actors holding agency within their associated networks, the degree of agency held by each actor is variable. As such, I am inclined to subscribe to the 'weak' ANT hypothesis of, amongst others, Castree (2002) and Kirsch and Mitchell (2004). By interconnecting Marxism and ANT, such authors point to a future where Political Ecology can learn from the ideas of ANT without necessarily having to start again from scratch (cf. Latour 2004). Although the Marxist purview is far from central to the research presented in this paper, the criticisms of ANT and the necessary adjustments that must be made to make it applicable in a political setting that emerge from such discussions are central in analysing the 'nature' of Guerrilla Gardening.

The Geographies of Public Space

"Public space should not only be public in the sense of accessibility but also in conception and design. What are the mechanisms for this? Spaces for the people should be democratic not just in their physical presence and openness but also in the decision-making processes underlying the creation and management of them."

(Paddison and Sharp 2003)

Returning to the theme with which I opened this paper, in the following section I draw together a narrative through which to understand the multiple, and often contested, imaginations which underpin the notion of 'public space.' As my cursory analysis of *Public City* demonstrated, there is no fixed meaning behind the term in spite of its prevalence in everyday and analytical parlance. Similarly, there seem to be no rigid answers to questions surrounding ownership, management, limitations on behaviour, and so on. As such, a manifesto such as that from Paddison and Sharp (2003, above), while broad in scope and radical in potential, is actually severely constrained by the lack of theoretical substance to support it. The narrative I now construct discusses both public space's potential or otherwise as a site for human politics, and the material politics of the space itself. The section closes with a brief concluding remarks, which pre-empt a deeper analysis in the subsequent overall conclusion to this chapter.

Don Mitchell and the 'End of Public Space'

Of all those who have written on the subject of public space, I have found the work of Don Mitchell (1995, 2003) the most compelling. While much of the overriding themes of Mitchell's work are located contextually within the United States, his wider conclusions are of utility within the neoliberal context which encompasses much of the world. For Mitchell, public space is viewed as a site of politics and further, that politics is avowedly left leaning. Mitchell shows how physical access to public spaces, whether due to the need to demonstrate or, in the case of the homeless, the very need to live, reflects and is reflective of those people's ability to gain wider representation in the discursive space of the political sphere. Constraints to such physical access are built upon legal principles, such as the mobilisation of property rights by both the public and private sectors (see below). These are complicated as both

space and its management becomes an outcome of a mixture of both sectors. Thus how

does one classify a situation in which the state police service are defending a semi-public

space against protestors as in the case of the People's Park in Berkeley. Particularly when a

significant portion of those protestors were apparently legitimate stakeholders in the space, as

simultaneously 'members of the public'; affiliates of the landowners, the University of

Berkeley; and city residents? The key point, as Mitchell (2003) exemplifies, is that public

space is more than a passive space which materially represents a political situation, it is a site

of contest, and it is something which must be struggled over.

The Politics of Urban Green Space

> "[O]pen space serves functional and ideological roles that differ from political public
> spaces. Indeed, open spaces often share characteristics with pseudopublic spaces:
> restrictions on behaviour and activities are taken for granted; prominent signs
> designate uses or outline rules governing where one may walk, ride, or gather.
> These are highly regulated spaces."

(Mitchell 2003: 143)

For political ecologists, the formation and distribution of urban green spaces is indicative of

environmental injustices which operate along social axes (Brownlow 2006, Heynen 2003; for

a similar cultural geography analysis see Duncan and Duncan 2001). However, further to this

"parks [and other open spaces] tell stories about power, and about democracy" (Williams

2006: 139) in other ways, (such as Mitchell, above; see also McInroy 2000). Whether

considering Sefton or Stanley Parks in nineteen century Liverpool (Marne 2001), or New

York's Central Park from its inception to the present (Gandy 2002), parks have encapsulated

and, at least attempted, to engender in others, hegemonic ideals of propriety, order and

discipline. As both Marne and Gandy suggest, this is done through the formation of a space,

within which, away from the polluting influences of urbanity, 'nature' can be passively enjoyed.

Yet public open space need not simply be a place for passive consumption of 'nature', nor

must it be a bordered space separated from the rest of the city. The notion of bordered-ness

is extremely important. While parks were constructed as metaphorical and literal spaces of

'nature' bounded from the rest of the city, recent work on a smaller scale has demonstrated

that such legal boundaries between public and private are more porous than one might

imagine (Blomley 2004a). An interest in the geographies of law has led Nicholas Blomley to

reconsider the ways through which space is simultaneously bounded by legal constructs, and

opened up by everyday activity. Thus in Vancouver, municipal authorities have encouraged

members of the public to garden local open spaces under the banner of 'Community

Greenways', supposedly in order to engender the illusion of ownership on to these spaces

thus reducing crime and antisocial behaviour (Blomley 2004b). Similarly, however, others in

Vancouver have been gardening autonomously on the grass verges which line their streets,

deliberately crossing the boundaries between their own space and public (read 'municipal')

space (Blomley 2005). In both examples, the status-quo of the legal construct of 'property',

which defines ownership and rights over space, are thrown into disarray by the practical

activity of gardening. Indeed, for Blomley (2004c: 154), activities such as this are in fact

political. While gardening itself is hardly a revolutionary activity, its symbolic meaning is

likened to the methods through which British colonists formalised and justified their ownership

of North American space (see Seed 1995). As such, activities such as urban gardening,

along with squatting and more radical seizures of space formally tolerated to greater or lesser

degrees, are of great importance to understandings of cities. In this vein, Blomley poses an

important question, which I address below.

The Activities of 'Counterpublics'

> "What would the city look like if these multiple and overlapping property claims were
> formally acknowledged?
>
> (Blomley 2004c: 155)

Such a question is inevitably rhetorical. Widespread formal acknowledgment of such claims

to urban space would inevitably be tied to a release of power by urban authorities that would,

in their eyes at least, be too radical to contemplate. Yet the case of New York City's

Community Gardens does go some way towards offering at least a partial response. The

Gardens, or at least their story, have become for some as synonymous with New York City as

buildings such as the Empire State. In the early 1970s, during a time of economic downturn,

city lots containing the rubble of housing demolished due to its poor standard, stood empty

awaiting development. As the economy continued to flounder and the lots remained empty,

activists under the banner of the Green Guerrillas illegally gained access to several of these lots, cleaned them up, and established gardens. Initial disapproval from city authorities gave way to acceptance and, in 1974, the first lease was granted on a Community Garden plot. By the late 1970s public funds were made available to assist Community Gardeners. While leases were eventually granted on plots, these were tenuous at best, allowing city authorities to demand that land be vacated in as little as a month if it was required for development. Those wishing to work wholly outside the city's jurisdiction by seeking neither tenure nor city funding were in an even more precarious position (see Ferguson 1999).

With economic growth, demand for land picked up, particularly in the Lower Manhattan district where many gardens are located. In her discussion, Schmelzkopf (1996) outlines a situation where the provision by the Gardens of a number of intangible benefits to local communities are pitted against the need for housing in an already densely packed city. She thus terms the gardens "contested space." Similarly, Staeheli et al (2002) see the situation as a standoff between two conflicting conceptions of rights to the city: "the right to property (and the basis of property ownership) and the right to spaces for the public and the community" (2002: 197). Of course, the right to housing is in itself hard to deny and the gardeners were not against it per se. Instead, they saw low income Gardeners having their right to an important community resource removed so that property development companies could be given the right to profit out of low-density housing which, due to its inevitable cost, would be accessible only to the well off. Crucially, both the gardeners and the potential home-owners were members of 'the' public, however justifying the position of either side "invoked a different set of rights and rights-holders, and a different conceptualisation of the public" (Staeheli et al 2002: 202).

Concluding Remarks: the Politics of Public Space

In this section I have briefly demonstrated the immense complexity of urban spatial politics. I have come almost full circle, first indicating the importance of that intersection with space and politics, then showing its significance within understandings of urban green space. I have demonstrated the importance of boundedness in hegemonic conceptions of public space, yet also indicated how that politics of 'public-ness' can be put into action as such boundaries are

broken down practically through small scale every day actions and larger seizures of space. It is not incidental, I think, that gardening is involved in the clouding of the boundaries of public space. As a concept, gardening is at once a passive leisure activity yet, in certain contexts, affords the ability to radically appropriate space.

Conclusions and their Research Implications

In this chapter I have examined three apparently disparate portions of the discipline and in this final section I will draw conclusions which bring these segments together. In so doing, I will synthesise the theoretical standpoint from which I conceptualise the phenomenon of Guerrilla Gardening throughout the rest of this dissertation, and demonstrate how these segments operate collectively to inform my research objectives outlined in the following chapter.

I opened with a discussion of the exhibition *Public City*, and asserted that the exhibition skirted two central issues in its analysis. First, the term 'the public' was never actually defined, and second, the processes by which these urban concepts came to be material realities were not explored. As I later demonstrated, these are both extremely weighty notions. Public spaces have the potential to be exclusionary rather than inclusive, and this spatial exclusion may engender far deeper political consequence (Mitchell 1995, 2003). Yet people do not simply assert a claim to space by simply being there. As my discussion of gardening in New York and Vancouver demonstrated, members of the public may feel they have a right to access and modify that space. In such situations the growing and tending of plants is central to this modification, and is arguably undertaken in ways which are avowedly political. However, in these examples, it seems that gardening is almost incidental to the discussions about public space that the authors make. Thus, Staeheli et al (2002) reference the Community Gardens in order to explicate their wider thesis based upon a Marxian 'rights to the city' analysis. Similarly, for Blomley (2004b, 2005), gardening acts merely as a vector through which to examine the porosity of legally defined spatial divisions. Having raised issues with Paddison and Sharp's (2003) manifesto on public space, suggesting that it is limited by the availability of theoretical tools it is able to mobilise, this paper attempts to

broaden the scope of these tools. As such, the very doing of gardening in Guerrilla Gardening will itself be examined as a central part of this research.

However, I am also interested in the 'Guerrilla' aspect of Guerrilla Gardening, and as such am informed by advances within the subdiscipline of Political Ecology. Though arguably the term Guerrilla Gardening was chosen for its alliterative linguistic aesthetic, as I have suggested, the notion elicited by the word 'guerrilla' engenders a very particular form of spatial politics. While the early rural and developing world focus of Political Ecology is of little pertinence to this study, recent developments as the subdiscipline has matured have led to a broadening of its remit. As such, I would comfortably classify my research as Urban Political Ecology. As Gandy (2002) has shown, 'environmental protest' need not necessarily be limited to intensely media-linked campaigns surrounding large scale ecological centrepieces (such as that excellently analysed by Braun 2002). Instead, Gandy's discussion of the actions of marginalised communities in 1960s New York offers a useful gateway to examining the theoretical implications of a small scale environmental justice movement and their relation to public space. In the slums of East Harlem, second generation Porto Rican migrants formed a radical organisation called the Young Lords, who campaigned on issues of concern to members of their local community. The poor quality of the local environment, with domestic waste piled high, was seen to be symbolic of the wider deprivation experienced in the area. Taking matters into their own hands, the Young Lords organised environmental protests which physically intervened in the operation of New York's public space: both barricading main avenues with rubbish sacks, and sweeping clean the rest of the local area. Such actions complicated relationships of actual and metaphorical ownership between home and wider urban space, and are suggested to have been formative of a grass-roots urban environmental politics with a broader scoped political agenda.

While this is of course useful, the influence of ANT completes the picture. Following the push for further analysis of the materiality of cities (Philo 2000), engaging not only with the process of gardening but with the outcomes of that gardening is significant. Nonhuman actors such as trees have been suggested to have distinct agency in the making of the material city inhabited

by humans (Cloke and Jones 2004, Jones and Cloke 2002). Similarly, it has been shown that gardening offers a way through which the human and nonhuman interact within relations defined by ANT (Hitchings 2003, Power 2005). The undertaking of Guerrilla Gardening questions in new ways the way both gardening and public space are conceptualised. Further, as I later demonstrate, what happens to the plants after they are put in the ground is of considerable importance to the whole process. Thus, ANT, in its 'weak' form at least, is evidently central to this research. For although I do not espouse a Marxist point of view in this research in the way those I have cited situate their analysis of a 'weak' ANT hypothesis (Castree 2002, Kirsch and Mitchell 2004), I do find their arguments in which ANT and politics are combined highly compelling.

In the following chapter I make use of the theoretical backdrop so far presented in offering an account of my research. I provide detailed research questions which guided that research, and through which I structure the remainder of this paper, and I offer a critical analysis of the techniques used to undertake this research.

2

Research Methodologies

**Knowing Guerrilla Gardening:
formal research questions and analytical techniques**

Research Questions

In this section I set out the questions through which this research was structured, first

outlining the central question, then elaborating, giving an indication of the directions taken in

answering it. In detailing those questions, I also detail the reasons for their emergence, and

hence attend to the complexities involved in their evolution.

1. What is 'Guerrilla Gardening'?

On commencing the research I, perhaps echoing the mistakes of *Public City*'s curators, took

for granted the accuracy of my understandings of this key term. However, as my research

progressed I found that the phenomenon called Guerrilla Gardening held at least as many

definitions as people gardening under its umbrella, and further, that differing conceptions

could be quite incongruent. As such, the question 'what is Guerrilla Gardening' moved from

being a brief explanatory point to be slotted neatly into my introduction, to moot point requiring

analysis. To do so I had to interrogate three key ideas:

- Who are Guerrilla Gardeners? What is the interface between individual Guerrilla
  Gardeners and a holistic view of Guerrilla Gardening?

- What does Guerrilla Gardening entail? How do individual Guerrilla Gardening
  techniques differ?

- How is meaning created behind the term Guerrilla Gardening? Who are the key actors in the creation of this meaning?

2. In what ways can Guerrilla Gardening inform our understandings of the politics of public space?

This has always been the central theme of my research. Guerrilla Gardening engenders a relation with space which has few precursors. In interrogating this relationship I asked questions such as:

- Can Guerrilla Gardening be considered an overtly 'political' activity? Is it by its participants? If it is political, what kind of politics does it espouse?
- How does Guerrilla Gardening as a subversive activity relate to 'the establishment' (such as the council or the police), and what do Guerrilla Gardeners think of that relationship?
- How do the actions of Guerrilla Gardeners contribute to an understanding of the *material* politics of public space? How does this material practice contribute to the way public space is imagined *discursively*?

3. In the form of plants, the nonhuman is evidently integral to Guerrilla Gardening. How can Urban Political Ecology and Actor-Network approaches contribute to, and be contributed to, by this study?

That gardening may be enlisted in the reconstitution of public space is not new. However, other studies have limited their analysis of the gardening to being merely a vector in a wider, human-led, process. It is clear to me that Guerrilla Gardening's success is based as much upon the ability to plant, as the growing and tending of those plants. Hence, necessary considerations included:

- What role do the plants as actors take within Guerrilla Gardening? Can they be portrayed as party to the reconfigurations of public space occurring due to Guerrilla Gardening, as actors within a network?

- How does Guerrilla Gardening contribute to debates in the literature surrounding weak / strong ANT?

Summary Observations

In this section I have offered a reflexive analysis of the development of my research questions which have underpinned this final write up. Of course comparatively, writing questions is often the easy part. Responding to those questions, and doing so in ways which do them justice, is more difficult.   In the subsequent section I outline the methodologies utilised in doing this.

Research Techniques

"There is a need for the researcher to consider his / her place within the research process, not least because inclusion in this process is both undeniable and unavoidable."

(Fuller 1999)

Research is never neutral or impartial. I say this not to paralyse the research process, but to argue that enquiries and their eventual writing up are "situated" (Haraway 1997). Recognising that situatedness is an integral part of the research process. My interest in Guerrilla Gardening was personal long before it was academic, and as such I came to it sympathetic to the concept. While my status as critical analyst has developed over the course of my research, I have retained and strengthened this widely congenial personal outlook. Of course, though this dissertation is by no means intentionally bias, I evidently write from a position that is not absolutely impartial. No doubt everything from my methodology to conclusions reflects this.

My first research tool was Google. I soon came across the site www.guerrillagardening.org through the message board of which some Guerrilla Gardeners choose to organise group Guerrilla Gardening events, or digs. These are predominantly around London, though some are elsewhere in the world. I promptly signed up, and attended my first dig with a group of around ten others on March 7th 2007 in Brixton. Participation in Guerrilla Gardening was

important to me. I am convinced by the assertions of other activist researchers as to the value of collaborative methodologies, which act as a way to gain a deeper knowledge of the research area, and to dissipate accusations of data mining by demonstrating the researcher's alignment with the cause (Routledge 2001). Further, by taking part in Guerrilla Gardening I was building up good will and forming a web of social connections which would prove essential when it came to recruiting interviewees. I revealed myself as a student and researcher as early as was practical. By chance, on the night of my first dig feeling was running high with regards the presence of "unreliable bloody students," learning the back-story of which cemented in me the importance of good research practice[1].

Potentially, such an approach can be as problematic as it is useful. The researcher occupies a complex position with regards the alignment of their identity as both participant and academic (Fuller 1999). Additionally, as the boundaries between activist and academic are broken down for the researcher, so the subjects of their research experience a similar process. As such, can subjects be regarded as offering ongoing consent to being researched when much of their everyday activity is under scrutiny, and the researcher has become so fully enmeshed into the research community that their role as such becomes obfuscated by their status as being part of that community (Maxey 1999)? Such a question deserves serious analysis in this project. In all research, a diary is a crucial source. In this instance I would write diary entries as soon as possible following every dig attended. In these I would record basic details regarding the dig itself, such as location, work undertaken, attendance and so on. I would also record relevant observations from conversations with individual gardeners, in which subjects were discussed which had the potential to elicit controversy. Of course I did not wish to discount such data, however given issues of consent, I did wish to ensure that it did not make its way directly into the dissertation. As such a line was drawn,

---

[1] I later learned the back-story to this discussion. The dig we were currently undertaking had been previously organised to occur a fortnight earlier. However, on that occasion it had been organised by some media students who wished to film the event for a project they were doing. However, due to these students not gaining in good time the appropriate permissions from their university, the discovery that their insurance would have been invalid and therefore the work unacceptable for submission was made only a few days before the dig. Therefore, preparations which had been made by other Gardeners, particularly by Richard Reynolds, were wasted. Further, the students having displayed a front of being really interested in Guerrilla Gardening were actually demonstrated to have had little interest in it beyond the submission of their film for assessment.

and I decided to use the diary in an informative role only, as a way to reinforce generalised observations rather than as a direct resource.

However solid, formally collected, data was required in order to answer my research questions. This was garnered through interviews which were recorded, transcribed and analysed in the usual fashion. Interviews were undertaken with regular Guerrilla Gardeners and lasted around one hour. They were semi-structured and, while free discussion was encouraged, specific themes were to be covered and a list of questions provided a prompt should conversation slow. The following table outlines these themes:

Narrative	The informant's personal history of involvement in Guerrilla Gardening, what they considered Guerrilla Gardening to be, how they tied this narrative into a wider narratives both personally and more broadly.
Practicalities	Their experience of Guerrilla Gardening, the ways they go about organising a dig, selecting plants, and maintaining sites.
Abstractions	Reflections on the narrative they've already constructed in a more abstract way, greater focus on wider narratives such as what it 'means' socially to Guerrilla Garden.

Table 1: Summary of interview themes.

During interviews themselves I gained further from my previous engagements with Guerrilla Gardening as interviewees came as personal friends rather than simply research subjects, resulting in relaxed discussion that yielded a great deal of useful information (see Browne 2003). Five interviews were undertaken with Guerrilla Gardeners I met in the course of my participation, while another undertaken with a solo gardener with whom I made contact through Richard. After much consideration, I decided the need for anonymity was minimal. Richard has been widely named, and photographed, in the press, as have a number of other Guerrilla Gardeners. Further, interviews did not cover either personal or potentially incriminating subject matter. To preserve general privacy common sense rules have been

followed. So, for example, interviewees are cited in the text by first name only, and identifiable features such as home area, or the identification of an individual by with their full has been avoided except where such information is already in the public domain.

It was essential that research techniques attended directly to my interest in ANT. In order to do so it was necessary that I followed all actors and their interactions (see Murdoch 1997). This was achieved through a variety of means. In particular, my direct engagement with Guerrilla Gardening by digging, planting and weeding, was also a direct engagement with those actors. I learned, and noted in my research diary, my particular responses to the gardening process itself. Further, these practicalities were a central theme of my interviews. For Hitchings (2003), a researcher working on human-nonhuman relations in private gardens, interviews undertaken within the garden itself offered opportunities to analyse people's relations with their plants both on a spoken analytical level, and a practical material level. I was interested in this research technique, and as such did undertake one on-site interview with both myself and the informant weeding and talking at the same time. This yielded a great deal of useful data, with spontaneous discussions arising from the activity in hand adding richness to the interview narrative. However both the weather and the schedules of other interviewees prevented my use of this technique again, and remaining interviews took place under cover. In one situation, emulating a site visit with photographs proved a useful tool, as the gardener was prompted into providing fascinating and detailed anecdotes about a space on which she had been working for some time.

Finally, I analysed the place of the media in its capacity of telling the Guerrilla Gardening story. I made use of the media clippings archive presented on www.guerrillagardening.org and critically read three key texts in which Guerrilla Gardening is the avowed subject matter (Tracey 2007, Wilson and Weinberg eds 1999, and Woelfle-Erskine 2003). This analysis was very similar to that of transcribed interviews. It was based upon a close reading of each text, and seeking key themes and points of comparison and disjuncture between both individual texts and the narrative constructed from my own primary research.

Conclusion

One of last digs I attended before moving into my writing up phase was also attended by a French journalist. Her English was reasonable, however London accents and slang combined with gardening vocabulary meant that at times she did not understand. As the only French speaker present I was enrolled to mediate conversations and became, for her, an important informant in the writing of her article. Suddenly my position had shifted from researcher to researched. Rather than finding out about Guerrilla Gardening I became a representative of it, and, given my language abilities, a relatively authoritative one at that. This experience transformed my awareness of reflexivity and my role in the research process from being an important sideline, to a central consideration. The writing up of research is all to often a depersonalised representation of knowledge. I believe that authors should be able, within their own perceived bounds of rigour and academic convention, to write a narrative of the research they have done in which they themselves are included. Following my experience with the French journalist, this is something I hope to achieve in this dissertation. As my discussion of research questions and the methodology used to answer them has demonstrated, my research is strongly geared towards 'finding out' information from others, however my role as a regular Guerrilla Gardener will inevitably result in the incorporation of a personal narrative entwined in my discussion.

3

What is Guerrilla Gardening?

Doing Guerrilla Gardening:
narrative, meaning, activity and contest

In the early 1970s, women living in the Himalayan region of northern India decided physical obstruction of the chainsaws was the only way to arrest the deforestation occurring in their area. Thus the Chipko movement – Chipko being the Hindi verb "to hug" – was born (Routledge 1993). Tree hugging was a tactic of great efficacy, particularly because of it's huge storytelling potential. Undeniably unarmed women hugging trees in the face of men with chainsaws made, for example, a great press image. Arguably, however, through this process of mediation, what the Chipko movement became in the eyes of, particularly Western, understandings, was very different to what was intended by those actually hugging the trees. A movement dealing with issues from economic development to gender empowerment, issues in which contextually the trees played a central part, became co-opted and re-scripted as one focussed solely on environmental conservation (Rangan 1996, 2001).

Though the broad aims of Chipko and Guerrilla Gardening have little in common, I suggest that, in the processes of meaning creation and co-option, the two hold more similarities than might be immediately apparent. In both Chipko and Guerrilla Gardening, the *act*, whether protecting trees or planting flowers is important, however each has a variety of *narratives* underscoring that activity. As such, those who Guerrilla Garden in the same time and place may espouse greatly divergent reasons for doing so. However, it is not just the stories Guerrilla Gardeners tell themselves that are of importance. Because of its unconventional,

mischievous and largely visual nature it is also of great interest to others, namely the media.

In the light of these similarities this chapter examines the question, 'What is Guerrilla

Gardening?'. Critical reflection on this is of key importance, given the interrelated character of

knowledge and power, and the pair's centrality in the formation of the dominant discourses

through which the world is known, understood and is transformed into (Foucault 1980, 2002).

Such notions are referenced in theoretical analyses of 'nature'. As Castree (2001) observes

in the presentation of his thesis that 'nature' must be seen as "*inescapably* social" (2001: 3,

emphasis in original), "the 'facts' of nature never simply speak for themselves. In reality, what

counts as the truth about nature *varies* depending on the perspective of the analyst" (2001: 9,

emphasis in original). Just as with the Chipko movement, or, say, the notion of 'biodiversity'

(Escobar 1998), I argue that similar processes of power and knowledge, interfaced with

'nature', are at play in the social making and material doing of Guerrilla Gardening.

In presenting this thesis, the following chapter will examine three central sources from which

meaning is applied to the term Guerrilla Gardening. I commence with a discussion of

Guerrilla Gardening's history, considering its antecedent narratives as presented by two key

proponents of the activity. I then move on to explore the context of Guerrilla Gardening in

London, looking at its representation in the media. Finally, I close with a general discussion

of Guerrilla Gardening in London as seen through the eyes of some of its participants and

based on my own primary research.

Alternative Histories of Guerrilla Gardening

"Guerrilla Gardening is autonomy in green. You don't have to join a club or pay any
dues or accept any codes. You even get to define it for yourself. I call it 'gardening in
public space with or without permission.' But as definitions go, I have to admit, it's
pretty thin. … The 'with or without permission clause in my definition was added only
to emphasise the all-inclusive nature of the pursuit. Let no one try to tell you your
project doesn't count because it's on the wrong type of property or because you had
the gumption to ask the landowner first."

(Tracey 2007: 4-6, in *Guerrilla Gardening: A Manualfesto*)

"I've read some of it [Tracey's book, as above] and I'm very angry about it. It's really
not about- some of it's about Guerrilla Gardening but a lot of it's about community
gardening, so he's jumping on the bandwagon by giving it an edgy, trendy title. … I
think that's a daft definition. I mean, how can gardening in public space with
permission be Guerrilla Gardening? … he doesn't even say 'unpaid,' he doesn't even

say 'voluntary.' You could be a civic contractor and fit within his definition, there's nothing guerrilla about that. And so, my definition, it's got to be illicit. It's definitely got to be illicit, to be illegal. You are doing it without permission."

(Interview with Richard Reynolds of www.guerrillagardening.org, 17 July 2007)

At first glance, Canadian David Tracey and Londoner Richard Reynolds should have a fair amount in common. Both attest to work under the banner of 'Guerrilla Gardening' and each, whether through writing a book or being the proprietor of a website, has become a figurehead of that gardening movement. Yet, as the quotations above indicate, the two in fact hold vastly divergent opinions as to the central tenet of the activity: how to Guerrilla Garden, and who therefore is doing it under that banner. In this section I examine the narratives which underpin Guerrilla Gardening as described by David Tracey in his book (Tracey 2007), and that presented by Richard Reynolds on his website (www.guerrillagardening.org). I do this in order to demonstrate the diversity of thinking which underlies Guerrilla Gardening, suggesting that what is referenced as a part of Guerrilla Gardening's past will come to bare on how these key proponents construe it in the present.

Presenting Histories

Tracey's narrative (2007: 19-26) jumps quickly from the emergence of agriculture in Middle and Far East ten thousand years ago, via the biblical story of Adam and Eve and the first recorded movements of Roma gypsies, to events in far more recent history. American Prisoners of War during World War II are credited with having made Guerrilla Gardens ostensibly to provide vegetables to supplement their diet, yet also as a dump for soil excavated in the building of escape tunnels. Similarly, others held in captivity – the Dali Lama, Nelson Mandela and inmates of Guantanamo Bay are cited – are suggested to have engaged in Guerrilla Gardening as ways to keep spirits up and while away time. Tracey then moves on to the 1970s discussing Berkley's People's Park (the park that is central to Mitchell's 1996 and 2003 narratives), and the community gardens of New York and other North American cities. He closes his discussion with an unfavourable mention of Guerrilla Gardening in London's millennial Mayday protests, and references, without further examination, the actions and website of a British based "resourceful advertising chap" (2007: 26).

The website of that "resourceful advertising chap" is in fact that of Richard Reynolds[2]. Before commencing, it is necessary to state a few caveats which complicate the making of direct comparisons between website and book. First, Reynolds' website does not track a narrative with the distinct linearity of Tracey's. Instead, the history is laid out as a page of links (www.guerrillagardening.org/gglinks.html) with brief explanatory material engendering coherence between each. Second, as Reynolds has not been constrained by the spatial limitations of printed media, the diversity of his selection is inherently wider. Finally, it is imperative to note my role as mediator in the selection and ordering of the material analysed, particularly given the context of having interviewed Reynolds, and spoken informally with him about such topics. Moving on, for me, the most significant link provided by Richard is that to a transcription of Lewis Henry Berens' account of Gerard Winstanley and the Diggers in 1649. The Diggers were an English movement who gardened as a way to provide food for themselves, and explicate the principal of free and common land ownership over enclosure which, they argued, resulted in the impoverishment of many (Berens 1906). Like Tracey, Richard also makes reference to the various community gardens of North America, however unlike Tracey he also cites similar movements in European cities such as Berlin. The radical British movement The Land Is Ours, whose campaigns seek land rights for all whether rambling or squatting, receives a mention, as does a critical commentary the Guerrilla Gardening action of Mayday 2000. Finally, the activities of a number of smaller Guerrilla Gardening groups and even individuals are noted.

Convergences and Divergences in Guerrilla Gardening History

The central point of agreement between Tracey and Reynolds is their derision of the Guerrilla Gardening activity in London on Mayday 2000. The avowed aim of the day was for Parliament Square to be Guerrilla Gardened: the lawn removed and replaced by shrubs, trees and flowers as a form of symbolic anti-capitalist resistance. In reality, the square became a muddy field, with vegetation currently in place trampled and a statue of Winston Churchill

---

[2] In this paper, I call Richard Reynolds 'Richard' when citing interview material, reflecting the fact that all interviewees are referenced by their first names; and 'Reynolds' when citing his formal work, as in this case.

given a turf grass Mohawk haircut (see Do or Die 2001). On this front, Tracey's analysis is limited to the observation that "[s]ince the event has not become an annual tradition, we can surmise that its success was limited" (2007: 26). However the reasons for Reynolds' scorn for the event are rather more explicit, primarily given his alignment with the views presented in the article to which he links (Do or Die 2001). For Reynolds, the lack of long term sustainability behind the Parliament Square activities and the using of the plants as martyrs to a wider, if largely unconnected, cause, is the foundation of his discontent. Guerrilla Gardening, as they both present it, is a long term activity; it is about gardening for the love of gardening, and effecting real change in a place because of it.

Both make reference to community gardens yet, bar cursory mentions, neither cites the growing of food as a central feature of Guerrilla Gardening. This is interesting given the critical nature of food production to other accounts of illicit urban gardening, such as that of Woelfle-Erskine's (ed 2003) collection which draws together narratives from a wide collection of North American contexts. Likewise, Urban Agriculture as this may be termed, whether occurring in gardens or road verges, has been shown to be central in the livelihoods of those living in developing countries, providing cash crops and even basic subsistence foodstuffs to those engaging in it (for a definition of Urban Agriculture see Mougeout 2000, and for further discussion see the RUAF's *Urban Agriculture Magazine*). Thus, for both Reynolds and Tracey, Guerrilla Gardening is positioned as a largely aesthetic project that occurs primarily in the rich world.

However, a closer examination of the components of each proponent's historical narrative reveals a strong political divergence between the two which is overlain with an explicitly spatial frame of reference. For Tracey, it is simply the act of gardening which is itself positioned as the central element to Guerrilla Gardening. As such, gardening becomes the vector through which reaction towards or resistance against some general dominating schema, whether prison guards or urban land-use patterns is played out. Because, unlike in Richard's conception, Guerrilla Gardening is not predicated on an absence of permission, it is able to occur where it is explicitly or at least tacitly accepted, resulting in the location of the

gardening becoming incidental to its meaning. Conversely, the politics laid out by Reynolds'

understanding of Guerrilla Gardening is overtly spatial, particularly in the light of references

made to groups with avowedly anarchic spatial objectives such as the Diggers or The Land is

Ours. For Richard, Guerrilla Gardening is only undertaken when the rules governing a space

are deliberately sidelined through not seeking permission. This philosophy is arguably closer

to the notion implied by the term 'guerrilla'. And through not seeking permission, while the act

of gardening remains important, the space in which the gardening takes place becomes

loaded with significance.

Guerrilla Gardening and Structurelessness

In drawing this section to a close I propose a reading of Guerrilla Gardening through Jo

Freeman's seminal article 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' (1970). In this article Freeman

presents a profound critique of organisationally unstructured feminist movements. Though

structurelessness is employed as a tactic to combat the elitism entrenched in other,

structured, leftist groups, Freeman argues that in fact it results in a greater tyranny. Formal

structures having been pushed aside, representation in the milieu of feminist politics becomes

centred on informal ties such as friendship, and speaking becomes confined to those in the in

the in-crowd rather than being democratically open. This is not to say that I regard the

actions of Guerrilla Gardening proponents such as Tracey or Reynolds as 'tyrannical' – far

from it! Instead I use the article as a tool through which to theorise the position in which these

two characters have, perhaps inadvertently, become placed. Through writing a book or

producing a website, each has formalised themselves as a leader within a structureless

group. In becoming so, these authors have transformed Guerrilla Gardening from an

autonomous action in which someone might engage, a *process*, into an activity with a

potentially definable set of meanings supporting it, a *movement*, without providing any formal

organisation to underlie that movement. In a world where "there is no such thing as a

structureless group" and where "the public is conditioned to look for spokespeople" (Freeman

1970: unpaginated, emphasis in original), characters such as Reynolds or Tracey become

imbued with the power to make Guerrilla Gardening in their own image, and according to their

social following: "[t]his hegemony can be easily established because the idea of

structurelessness does not prevent the formation of informal structures, but only formal ones"

(Freeman 2007: unpaginated, emphasis in original).

Guerrilla Gardening in London

In this section I move from the general context of Guerrilla Gardening, to a direct analysis of its operation London, the context of my research. The account begins with a continuation of the narrative set out in the previous section, in which I explore the role of Richard as a key facilitator in London's Guerrilla Gardening scene. I then move on to examine the place of individual Guerrilla Gardeners within this matrix, and reveal the ways in which Guerrilla Gardening may be practiced in this context.

Richard Reynolds – the "frustrated gardener"

> "Before coming here [to this flat] I'd always had at least window sills or shared gardens or something. … I chose this flat because it was big, light, and cheap. And so I was a frustrated gardener. The obvious thing for me to do, as I saw it, was to do the gardens immediately in the vicinity of the building, which were in a very neglected state … it was very pragmatic, it wasn't any big political statement … I just thought 'it seems like common sense to me. I want a garden. Those things need gardening.'"

(Richard, interview 17 July 2007)

The results of these early digs, undertaken alone and at night, were written up, photographed and posted on a website called www.guerrillagardening.org (figure 1). Indeed, when this started in 2004, Richard was not even aware that Guerrilla Gardening was a widely used term – he in fact coined it from the term 'guerrilla marketing' which is used to describe advertising placed in unusual locations. It was this advertising background which led to the website's expansion. With increased media interest Richard became aware that he could make the website "into something that was perhaps encouraging other people to [Guerrilla Garden], and share what they were doing in their area" (interview 17/7/07). Thus the scope of the site was expanded. Readers were encouraged to sign up a get a Troop Number and Card. Further, a message board was added in order to facilitate communication between Guerrilla Gardeners.

Figure 1: Richard tending the gardens around his estate. (Credit: Gavin Kingcome)

Guerrilla Gardening in London

Much Guerrilla Gardening that takes place in London is coordinated through that message

board. Members with sites in mind are encouraged to take pictures of those sites and upload

them along with a general description of their plan for the space, and a suggested date and

time to meet. Other Gardeners then RSVP through the board or via email to confirm their

attendance, and thus a group dig is organised. Unlike other cities, particularly in North

America, Guerrilla Gardeners in London do not take over abandoned lots to produce small

spaces of parkland or allotments. Instead, roadside verges and planters become the targets

of Guerrilla Gardening action. Plants are usually provided by those who organise the digs,

although money is available through Richard who receives money through donations or from

media sources reporting on digs. At the time of research, there were around five sites being

Guerrilla Gardened by groups in various inner London locations. In all cases, the sites were

suggested by people who either lived or worked nearby, with extra help coming from

gardeners across the city.

Richard's role in these digs was central. Two of the five sites were close to his home, of which he was the central organiser. However, the importance of his presence at other digs cannot be understated. As a driver and thus able to transport plants and compost with ease, a regular visitor of and purchaser at New Covent Garden Flower Market, and the owner of a large stock of gardening tools and gloves, it is unlikely that digs would take place without his active facilitation. However, again Richard's position is informed by Freeman's (1970) paper. Rather than adopting the position of tyrannical leader, that "there is no such thing as a *structureless* group" (Freeman 1970: unpaginated, emphasis in original) actually works against the interests which Richard attempts to propagate:

> Olly: "How do you feel as almost a figurehead?"
>
> Richard: "I enjoy it, but it's also- My dad's a vicar so there's definitely a lot of similarities. He's not God, he's not Jesus. So I may have founded the website but I'm just about the communication. I'm just passing on this message. And this message is not from one single monotheistic figure, it's from all the people around the world who have Guerrilla Gardened for all different reasons over history.
>
> …
>
> I think there's a risk that people don't see it quite like I've described it. I think it's a big risk and that's something I've had to try and manage. I still struggle because some people do see me as leader. … It does put a lot of onus on me because people are looking to me, rather than to the website or each other, for guidance. And I'm not qualified to do that."
>
> (Richard, interview 17 July 2007)

Because of what Richard has done to formalise Guerrilla Gardening; because of his desire to see action undertaken in the name of Guerrilla Gardening succeed; and because of his status as a constant presence at Guerrilla Gardening digs, Richard has become, against his will and essentially by default, a leader of a group without leaders. As Charlie suggests:

> "I think he [Richard] is less of a facilitator than he would like to be. And I don't think that's his fault, I think maybe that's, like, our apathy. … I think he has got this status now of being the King of Guerrilla Gardening – that's certainly what I thought when I first started – and you can't Guerrilla Garden without Richard. And I don't think that he would want- in fact I know that he wouldn't want that to be the case."
>
> (Charlie, interview 10 August 2007)

Guerrilla Gardening Alone

Not all Guerrilla Gardeners garden in this way. For some, Guerrilla Gardening is an activity to be undertaken alone, without either the help of Richard or indeed any other Guerrilla

Gardeners. It is unfortunate, but these truly solo Guerrilla Gardeners will remain under-

represented in this dissertation. As they work alone and are not in regular contact via

www.guerrillagardening.org the activities of many go unrecorded. Esther, like Richard, lives

and gardens on an uncared for estate. She describes how she "used to get up really early,

and go down at the crack of dawn, and shove in cuttings that had been in little pots on my

balcony" (interview 14/8/07). After realising that none of the other residents held any

objections to her gardening activities she became more open, eventually encouraging

neighbours to be involved. This resulted in her being recognised by the Greenspace division

of her local council, and finally led to her becoming the coordinator of gardening activities in a

relatively official capacity, receiving funding from the building's management authority and

organising planting days throughout the year. Even with this official sanction, she does not

feel fully part of the system however, as she suggests:

> "I still feel quite Guerrilla-y, because every time I have to apply for money I have to
> sort of fill in forms about who does it, and you still feel like you're you know, not an
> established thing."

> (Esther, interview 14 August 2007)

Guerrilla Gardening and the Media

> "I was reading *Time Out* and there was an article about Guerrilla Gardening … I
> thought it sounded really my kind of thing."

> (Charlie, interview 10 August 2007)

> "I signed up around March because- well, I bought a *Big Issue* basically and there
> was an article and I thought, 'that's just marvellous, I'm really going to get down there
> and actually do something about it."

> (Rosie, interview 24 July 2007)

> "The first thing I heard about it was when, in May 2006, I saw Richard on the *Chelsea
> Flower Show* being interviewed by Joe Swift from *Gardeners' World*. I thought, 'that
> sounds like a really good idea, I'll have to do that."

> (Andrew, interview 13 August 2007)

As the quotations above typify, the media occupies a central role within Guerrilla Gardening,

publicising it and thus attracting new participants. Indeed, every Gardener with whom I spoke

had heard of it through that media exposure. However, the media is never a passive reporter

of events. This is not to say that Guerrilla Gardening has ever been subject to media

manipulation, beyond its enrolment in the right-wing press' eternal tirade of local authority

bashing (such as Hardman 2006, in *The Daily Mail*). Richard's role as unintending

spokesperson or head of Guerrilla Gardening is largely propagated by his relation with the

media. He is in one case referred to as the "founder member" of Guerrilla Gardening

(Vaughan 2006), and elsewhere his role as director of operations on a dig, or even simply the

fact that he is the first port of call for media enquiries, does result in his discursive elevation to

a status beyond that which he avowedly seeks. Thus, in this final section, I argue that the

media itself acts as an agent in the formation of Guerrilla Gardening. This is done through the

creation of an image of what Guerrilla Gardening 'ought' in the eyes particularly of new

participants. This in turn acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy as gardeners emulate what they

regard as the 'truth' of Guerrilla Gardening.

Guerrilla Gardening, according to mediated narratives, is always undertaken in groups. Just

as I had difficulty making contact with individual Guerrilla Gardeners, so do reporters.

Further, as Guerrilla Gardening tends to be of most interest to colour supplements,

magazines, or television – all forms of media where striking images are as central as well

composed prose – Guerrilla Gardening undertaken as a group provides greater opportunities

to produce these pictures. Likewise, before and after shots are important, and the ideal

mediated Guerrilla Gardening activity is one where a desolate, untended piece of land is

completely transformed, in a way which has more in common with a home decorating show

than realities of long term investment of time and energy required to successfully make a

garden. Because media sources tend to provide financial backing for projects they wish to

cover they have tended to get what they want. This can actually be counter productive, for

after the cameras have left the project may not necessarily continue. Here, Richard opens

with a discussion surrounding a proposition which he did eventually take up of a Guerrilla

Gardening feature as part of the *Cool in Your Code* (2007) internet documentaries, which

consider the various merits of moving house to different London postcodes:

> "That was a really difficult one because of the risk of that being very contrived- very
> fake. They were obsessed by doing it in Herne Hill [as this was the area covered in
> the documentary] and I was like 'okay, fine, but it can't just be a stunt, it's got to be
> sustainable.' I'd already made that mistake you see, for this Japanese documentary
> we did up in Manor House. And although I'd found Guerrilla Gardeners who were
> local to it, because it wasn't their suggestion to do it there, none of them were that
> committed. Well, they just weren't committed to looking after it. They all said, 'oh, it'll

be fine,' but in hindsight, if they'd chosen it I'm sure they would have been much more likely to look after it."

<div align="right">(Richard, interview 17/7/07)</div>

Of course, I do not intend to vilify the media, for undeniably, as was explicated by the three quotations opening this section, they do act very positively as a vital mouthpiece for Guerrilla Gardening. However this benefit comes with a price which is not necessarily wholly beneficial. It would be false to assume that there is somewhere an authentic, non-mediated form of Guerrilla Gardening, however it is noticeable that the story of the solo Guerrilla Gardener who has been methodically maintaining a single plot for a number of years is seldom, if ever, told.

Conclusions

In chapter one I provided only a brief description of Guerrilla Gardening, because to do would have been to conceal the underlying complexities bound up in the term, complexities which have required a whole chapter to do justice. Considering this knowledge making is central, I suggest, due to the power knowledge holds over material practice. I have demonstrated this through interrogation of two histories of Guerrilla Gardening, and my analysis of Guerrilla Gardening's media representation in the London context. This has been done in order to offer a flavour of the complexity, rather than attempting to cover it all. I have also discussed in finer detail the process of Guerrilla Gardening in the milieu in which I am involved. Again, I sought theoretical help from further afield in this discussion. I link Guerrilla Gardening's operational difficulties, outlined by a number of interviewees, with Freeman's notion of 'structurelessness'. However, I am far from suggesting that those who act as leaders within Guerrilla Gardening are tyrannical. Indeed without people such as Richard, it is unlikely that there would be a Guerrilla Gardening in the way we now see it. However, I do suggest that this structurelessness impacts strongly on the undertaking of Guerrilla Gardening, and its potential future development.

Of course, these three vectors do not act independently of one another. The media may play a role in producing Guerrilla Gardening, but is evidently limited by its source material, that of

current Guerrilla Gardening. Further, histories may be produced by its key proponents, however this does not necessarily result in them being read, understood, or acknowledged by other Guerrilla Gardeners. All the various factors suggested within this chapter entwine in different ways to produce what I term in this paper 'Guerrilla Gardening'. In the following chapter, I will explore the way Guerrilla Gardening, in the specific London context I have described, interfaces with, and tells new stories of, our conceptions of public space.

4

Public Spaces

Material spatial politics:
what does it mean to do Guerrilla Gardening?

"These public spaces have been put out for the enjoyment of the public and then left- and then totally neglected. So it is only the *activist behaviour of members of the public*, like Guerrilla Gardening, that has actually made them work to the extent that they were intended: to be enjoyable. And the fact that we've got to get dirty and garden them is fine. *It's like anything isn't it, you can be reactive or you can be active. And I guess politics is like that isn't it? You can be a dinner table politician or you can do something about it.*"

(Rosie, interview 24 July 2007, emphasis added)

Introduction

In chapter one, I sketched out a general summary of the ways through which the relatively abstract, though widely used, term 'public space' has been variously conceptualised by geographers. In so doing, I paid particular attention to work located, even if not avowedly in these terms, in the hybrid space between the misleading poles of nature and culture (Latour 1993). Core themes emerged from this analysis. Generally speaking it was acknowledged that public space is political; that its politics may be highly variable; but always that such politics is contested. However, just as Mitchell (1995) has argued that we must not reify culture, so others (such as Jackson 2000, Philo 2000) have suggested that we should attend to the matter which precludes reification through being already solid. 'Public space,' in spite of its abstract complexity, is a tangible entity and, as Rosie observes (above) "you can be a dinner table politician or you can do something about it." Rosie, like many interviewees, identifies herself as a Guerrilla Gardening "activist" – demonstrating the centrality of the

physical making and doing of politics inherent in the activity. I commence this chapter with an

outline of what might be termed the rematerialisation debate.

The Rematerialisation Debate

> "I am concerned that, in the rush to elevate such spaces [those abstract spaces of cultural geography] in our human geographical studies, we have ended up being less attentive to the more 'thingy', bump-into-able, stubbornly there-in-the-world kinds of 'matter' (the material) with which earlier geographers tended to be more familiar."

> (Philo 2000: 33)

Discussions surrounding the rematerialising of human geography have been going on,

through various lenses, for some years now. Put simply, such discussion is based upon a

broad thesis that, while not deriding the great progress made following the cultural turn, that

this focus has led geographers away from surveying the concrete places in which such

cultural entities are located. The papers of Philo (2000) and Jackson (2000) have been

instrumental in the debate. Both propose a rematerialisation of geography, but propose

different ways of doing so. For Philo, a general interest in the material is proposed, having

been set against an account in which cultural abstractions have played an increasingly central

role in the discipline. Jackson's thesis, however, is more specific. In his paper he outlines a

particular use for a rematerialised geography by discussing his own interests, not in 'raw'

culture as it were, but in the material objects of culture such as shopping centres, men's

magazines, or food. However, as Lees (2002) observes, some portions of the discipline are

more suited to such endeavours than others. Because, she asserts, the remit of urban

geography is so theoretically and empirically wide, the subdiscipline is "located at the cutting

edge of geographical research that seeks to link the material and the immaterial" (Lees 2002:

109). Guerrilla Gardening is an activity that is avowedly material, it is also, in the context in

which I have studied it, an urban activity. In the following two sections, I examine how this

materiality influences first people's relations to urban spaces, and second, to politics.

Guerrilla Gardening and Urban Space

> "Whilst it's easy to label what we're doing as some kind of benevolent act, like helping a granny cross the road, we're actually seizing public land for our own good, which

happens to be shared by other people because they can see it. … You are imposing your vision for that space on it without any consultation with anybody."

Olly: "So it is important to you, that altruistic sense?"
Lyla: "Yeah, that's exactly the word I would use. It's the one thing that I also feel when I'm there. I really like it when people walk past and see us doing it. Because I just think- and that's the first thing I thought of when I was doing it the first evening, is that people walk past, and seeing you do it makes them realise that people aren't selfish"

Knowing Public Space

Consider the phrase, '*they* are digging up the road again.' In this section it is that 'they' in which I am interested. Materially and abstractly, I suggest, cities are known through the vectors that control them: the councils, contractors, utility companies and so forth. Devolving power to ever smaller scales is widely considered a common sense way to facilitate good governance and engage people with that governance; a process with variable efficacy (see Purcell 2006). Further, as Whatmore and Hinchcliffe (2003) show, the relationship between policy-makers' desire for citizens to take an active part in the 'greening' of urban areas paradoxically does not seem to tally with the top down planning approaches that set the agenda. Engaging the public takes place solely through the narrow lens of a "community consultation [which is reduced] to a management exercise of securing … endorsement of pre-set 'expert' goals" (Whatmore and Hinchcliffe 2003: unpaginated). Whether undertaken with altruistic or anarchistic aims in mind (see quotations above), it is clear that central to the functioning of Guerrilla Gardening is the reconfiguration of those controlling vectors. Because seeking permission is not part of the Guerrilla Gardening schema in London, rather than being articulated with, or even against, the wishes of the municipal authorities, Guerrilla Gardening is undertaken in spite of them. Therefore, although Guerrilla Gardening may have an anarchistic leaning, it is not undertaken in protest - indeed, all interviewees explicitly declared that central to their partaking in Guerrilla Gardening was the enjoyment of gardening. However, fundamentally Guerrilla Gardening throws into question the position of the authorities and their mediatory role in public space: it is no longer that "they" have been working on the planters, it is, or at least it can now conceivably be, "us". The way space is known, and the knowledges required to manage that space, are taken out of the hands of a

supposedly omniscient authority, and placed into the realm of the public – or at least a portion

of it. 'Vernacular' knowledges become central (see Whatmore et al 2003), although given the

anarchistic character of Guerrilla Gardening, it is evident that this vernacular is placed

squarely with the specific Guerrilla Gardeners doing the gardening. In so doing the way

through which space is owned is brought into question. Rather than public space being

municipally owned for the people, Guerrilla Gardening articulates new forms of ownership

politics.

Owning Public Space

In many ways, this section continues previous work which has examined the legal politics of

ownership as questioned by public gardening in Vancouver (Blomley 2004b, 2005). In

London, Guerrilla Gardening has no legal protection, and can theoretically be construed as

trespass, theft or criminal damage. However, given Guerrilla Gardeners circumvent municipal

authorisation in their activities, it seems more relevant to consider the manifestation of

ownership in ways that also avoid dwelling on the status of municipal, essentially legal,

structures. Instead I suggest that Guerrilla Gardening engenders a form of affective

ownership (see Whatmore et al 2003).

> Olly: "How do you feel about that plot? Do you feel a-"
>
> Andrew: "I consider it- it's almost my baby as it were. Only because I had the idea of using the traffic light colour scheme. I wanted originally to plant a field of sweet corn because it grows really well – it's great stuff – and with sunflowers tied in with that. Then Richard and I talked about what we could plant in there and we thought sunflowers would be really good, … and I had some rowan trees that I wanted to put in. And they're good because of the colour scheme as well. And yeah, I've been down there watering it enough nights to consider it one that I look after."
>
> (Andrew, interview 13 August 2007)

For Andrew, in common with all other Guerrilla Gardeners with whom I spoke, the act of

planning, organising and undertaking a dig changed their meaning of the site in which it took

place. An abstract, uncared for plot became in his eyes, his "baby" – a space over which he

held a strong emotional attachment (figure 2). Because Andrew had been involved in the

selection of the plot and undertaken investigations into its ownership so as to ensure that it

was not, for example, imminently scheduled for demolition, this ownership extended to a

Figure 2: Sunflowers blooming in the Guerrilla Gardening plot selected by Andrew. (Credit: Andrew Haining)

certain degree of responsibility for the site. Such feelings were echoed by others in similar leadership capacities. Charlie, who took in responsibility for a plot in a different location, suggested that she felt "guilty" (interview 10/8/07) because she had not been able to return to the plot and tend it as often as she would have liked. Even for those who simply turn up and help, that feeling of ownership remains paramount: "as soon as I feel like my contribution is visible in some way, then there's some ownership in it" (Lyla, interview 17/8/07). That reconfiguration of public space ownership is not limited just to those spaces where digs have occurred. Rosie (interview, 24/7/07) reports how she surprised herself with some spontaneous litter clearance in her local park, soon after she became involved with Guerrilla Gardening.

However, the operation of this spatial politics of ownership is not solely an affective process. Engagement with the land entails the use of plants and tools, and as such the ownership of material objects also plays an important role in the functioning of Guerrilla Gardening. The initial transformation of an empty plot requires not only hard work, but also the application of

good quality compost and plants. In some cases specific tools are required, such as sieves or pickaxes when the ground is stony or hard. While Richard does hold funds from donations, often the plot's proponents contribute their own money in order that the dig can go ahead. Thus, although fairly inevitable in London, when plants do go missing due to vandalism or theft there is palpable sense of annoyance and sadness. Though the plants are given over to the public through their being planted in public space, they do remain 'owned' in some degree by their purchaser, and collectively by the Guerrilla Gardeners who planted them. Further, Guerrilla Gardening does enrol public land into economic productivity. Following the planting of one plot with lavender bushes, the buses are now used in small-scale money making initiative to finance further Guerrilla Gardening. The lavender is cut in early September to be dried and then packed in lavender bags, which are then offered for sale on www.guerrillagardening.org. So while in one sense, Guerrilla Gardening can be perceived as an altruistic act benefiting the local area, this benefit is conferred almost as a sideline. In its way, it strongly references an anarchistic purview of public space.

Guerrilla Gardening and Political Commentary

Though the act of Guerrilla Gardening facilitates a shift in public space politics by reinterpreting the way it might be 'owned,' I also argue that Guerrilla Gardening functions as a commentary on the wider politics of public space. My use of the word commentary is very specific. When asked directly if interviewees considered Guerrilla Gardening to be 'political', almost all replied in the negative. Largely, I suggest, this was due to their conceptions of what was meant by being political. For many, the fact that those in authority, namely the police, turned a blind eye to Guerrilla Gardening when they came across it was evidential to the assertion that it is not political. However, many subjects did autonomously use the word 'activism' to describe what they were doing. Further, wider discussions revealed distinctly political narratives entwined within perceptions of Guerrilla Gardening. Unlike in, for example Mitchell's (1995, 2003) work, Guerrilla Gardening's interface with public space is not based around contesting political *rights*. The politics in Guerrilla Gardening, while still important, are certainly less weighty. In this section I examine, as one might anticipate, how Guerrilla

Gardening comments on the management of public space, and then move on to discuss how it might be enrolled to effect wider political commentary.

Commenting on Public Space

> "A lot people would say 'well [Guerrilla Gardeners] are doing it because [the council] are not doing it. They're neglecting it. It's their responsibility'. … [That argument] would be kind of missing the point. I don't really want them to be doing it, because then I wouldn't have anything to do. You know, I wouldn't be able to enjoy gardening, I'd have to pay for a garden. So yeah, it can reflect badly on [the council], but it's not a bullet proof argument for a Guerrilla Gardener to make, because it ultimately shoots you in the foot."

(Richard, interview 17 July 2007)

Guerrilla Gardeners do not garden in protest at the poor job of many borough councils in maintaining public space. Indeed, for Charlie (interview 10/8/07) "there are more things to get angry about", while for Lyla (interview 17/8/07), unable to find an untended patch to Guerrilla Garden, suggests her local council do "their job too well". So Guerrilla Gardeners do not garden in order to explicate the poor job of local councils. However, Guerrilla Gardener's actions, and the council's responses to them, are tinged with a political edge. To demonstrate how this can become the case, I will tell the stories behind two Guerrilla Gardening endeavours.

The first case study is a site that can be regarded as the birthplace of Guerrilla Gardening in its current context. As already mentioned, Richard's first forays into gardening in public space took place in 2004 in the flower beds surrounding his block. This continued with little interest from the council for around a year. When residents noted that the council was levying a charge for grounds upkeep, when in fact Richard was doing the work, they made complaints. Thus, and fully demonstrative of the reason Richard undertook the gardening in a guerrilla fashion in the first place, the gardening became embroiled in the internal politics of the building. While some residents demanded a refund of the charges paid, others insisted that, having paid the charges, the council must undertake the work. The outcome was that the council did, in June 2007, come and work on the gardens and, in the process, caused serious damage to some plants in the bed. Richard now terms the situation, in a tongue in cheek fashion, as "territorial warfare" (www.guerrillagardening.org/ggblog5.html and /ggblog10.html,

Richard, interview 17/7/07) after a meeting with the local council in which, though allowing him to continue, they would not give the gardens over to him. Thus, his gardens are still vulnerable to similar "well meaning attacks" (Richard, interview 17/7/07) should council workers come again. The second case study is rather more low key. May 1st was declared 'International Sunflower Guerrilla Day' and Guerrilla Gardeners were encouraged to plant sunflowers around the cities in which they lived. Lyla and Andrew chose to take part. However both reported their sunflowers having been removed, at various stages of growth. In each case, all plants were removed at the same time, and not left dumped by the side of the road in a way that would indicate vandalism, and as such each gardener suspected that this had been the work of council officials.

Thus Guerrilla Gardening comes to comment on and critique, though not directly contest, the ways through which councils undertake maintenance on the spaces over which they have responsibility. While, in the first example, the quality of council maintenance is brought into question, and the second queries council operatives' abilities to identify which plants are weeds, the political comment engendered through Guerrilla Gardening actually has a far wider and more important reach. In an everyday context, such activities can be indicative of the petty, small-mindedness of bureaucratic regimes, as Richard suggests:

> "My local council where I do most of my gardening have never approached me, but they've given quotes to the press that are kind of ambiguous but sometimes inviting. They've said, if we work together I'm sure we can achieve more. But I could see no benefit at that stage [before June 2007). I didn't need their funding. I was sceptical of their interest. I was nervous of the red tape that I might be letting myself in for."

(Richard, interview 17 July 2007)

However, the commentary takes a more serious turn when examining why public spaces are poorly maintained. In Richard's borough, it transpires that for several years, the local council have been subcontracting their maintenance to a private company. The company has been paid, yet no work has been done. It is this arrangement, and the apparent lack of accountability that it engenders, which Guerrilla Gardening exposes. As Lyla (interview 17/8/07) suggests, "it's thieving really. And it's about the privatisation of all these services so that nobody really takes responsibility for them any more." Through Guerrilla Gardening, a

scathing critique of the results of economically 'rationalised' modes through which private capital is implicated in the running of public services may be effected:

> "[T]hey [the council] employ people for nine pounds an hour who are just temporary workers. They're just labourer guys who've got the certificate to do the mower or the strimmer, or operate heavy machinery. They don't employ people who are interested in plants or gardening. They just want to get on to the next job because they are on a timetable. … So I would actually like to get rid of that type of contracted gardening. I actually think that all people who work in gardens should be the same person who works there all the time and knows where they've sown the seeds or whatever, so they don't come and weed it because they don't know what it was or whatever."

(Esther, interview 14 August 2007)

Conclusions

The act of Guerrilla Gardening is strongly implicated in the material politics of public space. For many, Guerrilla Gardening's mischievous character was what first attracted them, though I propose that this mischievousness is imbued with political agency. This could occur through interrupting the commonplace views of how public space should be managed, to offering stronger commentary on matter articulated through, or echoed in, public space. Guerrilla Gardening is a material activity. However, it is not enough to simply 'add material and stir' – "we cannot simply rein things in and root them" (Latham and McCormack 2004: 704). Those who have written about the New York City Community Gardens, or discussed the way gardening reconfigures the borders of public and private space (see chapter one), have inevitably made use of 'the material' in their studies. However, it is the way in which the material is mobilised that makes it's presence important. While I disagree with their choice of method – an attention to the non-representational – I do concur with Latham and McCormack when they suggest that the problem is not that work "has engaged excessively with the immaterial, but, in contrast, that it has not engage with sufficient conceptual complexity with the importance of excess to any notion of the material" (2004: 704). Engaging with the immaterial must be done through the use of an analytical vector. In the next chapter I do just that, considering the role of actor-networks in the functioning of Guerrilla Gardening.

5

Actor-Networks

ANT and Guerrilla Gardening:
the consequences of disseminating agency

"[G]ardens are always more than human centred."

(Power 2005: 40)

Plants, Spaces and ANT

Unlike, for example, tropical rainforests, where untainted 'nature' has been thought to be abound, the 'nature' of gardens has long been considered solely as the product of human agency (Power 2005). Indeed, it has even been argued that 'natural' landscapes have been engendered largely through the co-option and utilisation of nonhuman entities such as trees, bushes, grasses and hedgerows to appeal to a particular class-based aesthetic (Duncan and Duncan 2001). Plants, whether deliberately planted or already in situ, have been imagined as passive objects within a world of human centred agency. Actor-network approaches have forced some geographers to reconsider this position. In work based largely on ethnographic study, Hitchings shows how, rather than humans adopting an all-powerful control over their garden and its plants, at times gardeners "enjoyed their enrolment as happy stage hands, not lead actors, waiting for and coaxing out different beautiful plant performances" (2003: 107). Hitchings suggests that, just as people enrolled plants to produce the gardens they desired, so plants enrolled people in their tending and maintenance in order that they may grow – power was therefore not held by one actor but rather was diffuse, held by various actors across the network. Power (2005) argues a similar point. However, in contradiction to Hitchings (2003), she suggests that the relation of plants and people is not necessarily

harmonious. Discussing weeds, she asserts that "plants that *are* enrolled into the garden are not simply [those] forced into this position by calculating gardeners" (Power 2005: 50, emphasis in original). Plants may act as agents in the formation of their own beauty, but equally well in arresting the realisation of a gardener's grand plan. Elsewhere, it has been argued that plants hold, if not intentionality then "purposive" agency, in the making and meanings of public space (Jones and Cloke 2002). While not wishing to attribute intentionality onto agents which cannot think, the notion of purposiveness exemplifies that trees are in no way passive: "[t]he existence of a tree represents evidence that the purposive action from whence it came worked" (Jones and Cloke 2002: 61). With examples ranging from an urban square to a rural hillside, the authors show that, once in place, the purposive agency held by trees can is an active agent in the cultural making of that place.

Enrolling Actors

Humans and Nonhumans

For Guerrilla Gardening to be a success, indeed for it to be worth doing at all, plants must grow and thrive in their plots. Such an observation may appear so obvious as to be banal, but it is in fact this central premise which makes the consideration of Guerrilla Gardening through the lens of ANT so crucial. If plants die, or do not grow as well as expected, the whole act of Guerrilla Gardening is effaced as the bed returns to its ungardened state. Further, the range of potential pitfalls for the Guerrilla Gardener is arguably far greater than for those gardening in private gardens. In this section I discuss the formation of the various actors whose successful enrolment, that attempt by one actor to "enlist the interest or action of another" (Power 2005: 42), is required for the correct functioning of the network.

In accordance with other studies of gardening and ANT (Hitchings 2003, Power 2005), I assert that the conditions of growth, the soil, climate, and aspect of a bed play major roles in the decision around what plant (figure 3), and the eventual success of that which is planted: for example, drought loving plants in waterlogged soil leads inevitably to failure. When Guerrilla Gardening all these must be considered, and more besides. Returning one evening to a roundabout site revealed a mass of dead heathers in one corner, an unforeseen result of

Figure 3: removing boulders and weeding, the interaction of human and nonhuman actors in Guerrilla Gardening. (Credit: Gavin Kingcome)

their proximity to vehicle exhaust pipes (research diary, 11/7/07). Similarly, returning to different site to conduct an interview we found that a number of other plants had disappeared. Conversation with a local shopkeeper revealed that only days after we had departed, someone arrived in their car to dig up and steal all that we had carefully planted (Rosie interview 24/7/07). Thus, everything from soil, to pollution, to vandals becomes part of the Guerrilla Gardening actor-network. However unlike other gardening and ANT studies, I assert the centrality of human intentionality in modifying the functioning of that network.

For Rosie, the solution was to seek a balance between excessively "showy" plants which would be more appealing to thieves, and ones which were dull enough to survive, at least until they were well rooted to the ground, but still create an interesting display (interview 24/7/07). For Richard, cost and time investment was another crucial factor:

> "Sunflowers are pretty desirable [for thieves] but they're also very cheap. So that trade off is, well, a packet only costs £1.99 and there's virtually no maintenance at all. If I loose them, it'd be a pity, but it's not like I've wasted days of effort or hundreds of pounds."

> (Richard interview, 17 July 2007)

Certain plants, such as sunflowers, have become favourites specifically because of their resilience and hence low maintenance requirements. Lavender is another popular choice,

because it can withstand pollution, it is of Mediterranean original and therefore requires little water and tolerates poor soil, and its bushy growth pattern discourages both weeds and people walking through it. The choice of site to Guerrilla Garden similarly reflects the various actors which may inhibit successful growth. Richard (interview 17/7/07) advises potential Guerrilla Gardeners to seek a site which they would ordinarily pass in their day to day activities, so as to undertake regular maintenance. Further, sites near home or work are recommended so that water can be made readily available during summer. Financial constraints offer the final inhibition, as the grand overarching plans of garden makeover shows are rejected in favour of a piecemeal approach where plants put in reflecting the money available, or the donations offered.

Examining Enrolment

> "I really enjoy gardening because I actually enjoy the physicality of it. And I like planting things. … I think gardening's got that extra appeal because of that growing of the plants, and seeing them develop. And that's really exciting."

> (Lyla, interview 17 August 2007)

In the section above, I have briefly sketched out a variety of actors which influence the functioning of Guerrilla Gardening. In having done so, it becomes clear that both human and nonhuman agency is visible in the process of Guerrilla Gardening. Indeed, as the quotation above demonstrates, nonhumans themselves actively enrol human actors into engagement with Guerrilla Gardening. In this section I examine the process of enrolment and liken Guerrilla Gardening's underlying operation with that proposed in seminal Science Studies case studies such as Latour's discussion of Louis Pasteur (summarised in Murdoch 1997), or Callon's (1986) analysis of the scallops of St Brieuc Bay. In doing so, I problematise the way through which human agency has been portrayed in such studies, and argue that symmetrical conceptions of agency in which all actors hold equal weight in the functioning of the network are flawed.

In both studies, science is made central to everyday life by the action of scientists who engender connections between the domains of laboratory and field. Such a connection is not inherent, instead it must be worked upon – the scientists must make others outside the

scientific community feel that both the problems they have identified *and* the solutions proposed are the correct ones. Further, to engage with the nonhuman on their terms the scientists must employ a process which Latour terms 'translation'. Murdoch summarises the key tenet of translation: "for scientific networks to be extended, actors must be interested, that is, their goals must somehow be aligned to those with the scientists" (1997: 737). These two processes each carry with them a great deal of power. For scientists, extending their remit from the lab to the wider world, not only bestows the ability to propose solutions, but also to describe the problem. However, in so doing, scientists rely upon their ability to translate effectively, to draw other actors into networks, and for those other actors to behave in the way intended or expected by the scientists. Agency, in Latour or Callon's theses is thus symmetrical, and no individual part of the network holds any more than any other.

As I have shown in chapter one, it is not the attribution of agency to nonhumans per se which makes many wary of ANT approaches, it is the insistence that that agency must be symmetrical. For theorists more used to dealing solely with humans as actors, this leap has proved controversial. Thus it has been argued instead that, while agency may be diffuse amongst various actors, some agents – generally these are human – hold greater agency than others: ""if all actor networks are equal, then some are clearly more equal than others" (Kirsch and Mitchell 2004: 692). So in Callon's (1986) example, of course the scientists cannot *make* the scallops do their bidding, and evidently the scallops hold agency in that through not growing as expected they have interrupted the scientists' plans, yet ultimately the scientists do have the final say. Without being reintroduced to the site, the scallops have no opportunity to grow. Further, it was the other human agent, the fishermen, who caused the decline in scallop numbers in the first place, a process over which the scallops had little agency other than not breeding fast enough to keep their population levels stable.

However, for me, the pivotal flaw in the symmetrical agency argument is, in fact, the status of the human scientists. Considering public space management and the role of Guerrilla Gardening within it through the same lens used for scallops highlights this discrepancy. In 'normal' conditions the planting of public space would be undertaken and managed by the

council. Councils would then justify their role in public space by making management plans integral to the operation of public space, thus dissolving the boundaries between their offices and the outside world. In organising their planting structures, municipal planners must enrol plants, environmental conditions and so on to ensure the success of their displays. However, Guerrilla Gardening coming into the equation complicates this situation and the otherwise straightforward analysis. Guerrilla Gardeners attempt to occupy a similar position to council authorities, apparently working on the same problem, but posing it slightly differently and in turn offering very different solutions. Both Guerrilla Gardening and municipal planting operate through very similar actor-networks, yet those networks diverge in both function and principle. As such, that human agency is greater than that of the nonhuman actants they enrol becomes clear. The attempts by each to produce knowledge, whether about gardening techniques or public space, are contradictory: each produces contrasting understandings and, as such, the power to make these understandings stick and in so doing instigate the formation of gardening actor-networks is shown to be a human-centred endeavour.

Conclusions: The Case for 'Weak' ANT

In concurring with the general principals of ANT, yet with reservations with regards its formulation, various geographers have argued in favour of the notion of 'weak' ANT (such as Castree 2001, 2002; Kirsch and Mitchell 2004). In a weak ANT thesis, the diffusion of agency amongst all actors, and the denial of dualistic or binarised thinking, remain paramount. However reservations, particularly with regards the equal attribution of agency throughout the network, are given greater prominence and the thesis is modified accordingly. This is crucial, as it enables recognition of the lessons from ANT without throwing the baby out with the bathwater and abandoning all previous, human focussed, intellectual production. Thus Castree (2002) and Kirsch and Mitchell (2004) have used ANT in its weak from so as to combine it with Marxist epistemologies. While I concur with their general observations, I further suggest that a weak conception of ANT is necessary in any circumstance which can be construed as political. As I have shown, any situation in which conflict arises in the formulation of knowledge is a conflict articulated solely on the human scale. Each human, or group of humans, may attempt to enrol actors in the propagation of their preferred network

formation, but this is something over which those actors being enrolled do not necessarily have direct agency over. What draws this argument together is the pivotal status of knowledge about public space within the formulation of these networks. Other studies of gardening in which ANT is used have merely discussed the networks of human-nonhuman relations between gardeners and gardens, without attending to the ways through which a gardener gains their title and status as being such. In this study, human contestation over who can be doing the gardening, and the methods that should be employed in doing so, are brought to the fore. Considered in the light of the analysis presented in the previous two chapters, this is shown to complicate the central tenets of 'strong' ANT. By indicating the particular contestations which can only occur between certain actors within a network, this example indicates the theoretical utility of ANT's 'weaker' cousin in this study, and others.

6

Conclusions

**Geographers and gardeners, actors and networks:
reconsidering urban public space**

The central focus of this dissertation has been the reconsideration of agency. The very bones of this work have been the words 'Guerrilla Gardening' however, as I have demonstrated, the meaning applied to these words, and doing of Guerrilla Gardening in the light of that meaning, is fraught with contestation. From this start point, I have examined how that process of Guerrilla Gardening may reconfigure the way public space is conceived. Drawing on public space theory I have explicated the various power relations at play therein, as people both attest their ability to express material interest in the form and function of public space; and use that public space, much as Mitchell (1995, 2003) suggests, as a vector through which to explicate a wider political commentary.

The Guerrilla Gardening that I have analysed is highly context dependent. Unlike the vacant lots transformed into community gardens which typify Guerrilla Gardening in cities such as New York or Berlin, Guerrilla Gardening in London is limited by the space it has available. Of course, this spatial limitation alters the form the gardens eventually take but, more importantly, alters the meaning behind them. As has been shown, applying political meaning to the Guerrilla Gardening of New York is a relatively uncomplicated task. As gardeners and city authorities do battle, the space becomes "contested" (Schmelzkopf 1995). Those lines of contestation can be clearly marked out along track in which neoliberal property arrangements are favoured over benefits that are monetarily intangible, yet in their own way hugely valuable (Staeheli et al 2002). London's Guerrilla Gardening does not elicit such explicit binaries and

resultantly has more in common with the blurred boundaries of ownership that are expounded in Blomley's analyses of gardening in Vancouver (2004b, 2005). London's Guerrilla Gardening does engender disorder in the way ownership is imagined in cities, yet that operation occurs in spite of legal constructions, rather than with or against them (see Swyngedouw and Kaika 2003). As I have suggested, the operation of Guerrilla Gardening actually reflects in subtle ways the actions of guerrillas in 1970s Latin America. Guerrilla Gardeners occupy space in which there is a political vacuum, the untended public spaces of the modern city. However, like guerrilla fighters, Guerrilla Gardeners use these victories to expand their power base. As Richard notes "the people I know who do ask [permission from municipal authorities] suffer from it, and get disheartened" (interview, 17/7/07), though having started gardening without permission they are unlikely to be stopped. As that power base expands so Guerrilla Gardeners may be more daring. Richard, for example, looks to cities such as Amsterdam where members of the public lift paving slabs to plant trees and flowers, and even get help from municipal workers to do so (research diary, 24/5/07).

Guerrilla Gardening is a 'more than human' activity. Plants are not simply the vectors through which Guerrilla Gardeners work, they are an integral part of that work. As such, the plants themselves become embroiled, indeed play a central part, in that shifting narrative of public space. The reading of Guerrilla Gardening through the understandings of Science Studies' actor-network approaches is demonstrative of this fact. I suggest that, following work done by other geographers on ANT and private gardens, Guerrilla Gardeners and plants work together in making Guerrilla Gardening what it is. But I do not espouse this ANT thesis without reservation. Through examining the way knowledge and intentionality interface on a wholly human scale, I demonstrate the limitations of an epistemology led by 'strong' ANT. Attention to the place of the nonhuman is essential within all work, however affording equal agency across an actor-network is highly problematic. That is not to say, as I have done in this case, that human agents must necessarily hold greater agency. Just that agency is variably situated.

Such an assertion has great significance for geographers. The weak ANT hypothesis is not useful simply because it enables the earlier products of academic thinking, such as Marxism, to retain their stronghold in the discipline. Its espousal must in fact be based on observations which run to the very foundations of contemporary Geography. The conversation in *Antipode* under the banner of 'What's Left?' is the most recent in the heated debates over 'relevance' which resurface regularly within the discipline (see Castree and Wright 2005, and subsequent articles). If ANT requires academics to merely follow the actors, as Murdoch observes, our work is limited only to description (Murdoch 1997: 750). This subtracts agency from humans by both denying the key role they play in the instigation of power through political process (a form of power distinct from agency), and further, by denies others the right to be critical of that politics. Thus, when municipal authorities and Guerrilla Gardeners compete for the ability to occupy the human place within a network, because intentionality is denied by symmetrical approaches to agency, the vocabulary to describe and therefore comment on this situation is effaced. If Geographers wish to be any more than passive reporters of events, we must retain our ability to be critical. The lessons of ANT are of huge importance, however only weak ANT, I argue, allows us to use these lessons in a critical political context.

Appendix I

Bibliography

Berens, LH (2006 [1906]) *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth* Project Gutenburg http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/17480 last accessed 12/9/2007

Blomley, N (2004a) 'The boundaries of property: lessons from Beatrix Potter' in *The Canadian Geographer* 48, 91-100

Blomley, N (2004b) 'Un-real estate: proprietary space and public gardening' in *Antipode* 36, 614-641

Blomley, N (2004c) *Unsettling the City: urban land and the politics of property* London: Routledge

Blomley, N (2005) 'Flowers in the bathtub: boundary crossings at the public–private divide' in *Geoforum* 36, 281-296

Braun, B (2002) *The Intemperate Rainforest: nature, culture and power on Canada's west coast* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Braun, B (2006) 'Environmental issues: global natures in the space of assemblage' in *Progress in Human Geography* 30, 644-654

Browne, K (2003) 'Negotiations and Fieldworkings: Friendship and Feminist Research' in *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 2, 132-146

Brownlow, A (2006) 'Inherited Fragmentations and Narratives of Environmental Control in Entrepreneurial Philadelphia' in Heynen, N et al (eds) *In the Nature of Cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism* Abingdon: Routledge

Bryant, RL (1998) 'Power, knowledge and political ecology in the third world: a review' in *Progress in Physical Geography* 22, 79-94

Bryant, RL and Bailey, S (1997) *Third World Political Ecology* London: Routledge

Callon, M (1986) 'Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay' in Law, J (ed) *Power, Action and Belief: a new sociology of knowledge?* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd

Castree, N (2001) 'Socializing nature: theory, practice, and politics' in Castree, N and Braun, B (eds) *Socializing nature: theory, practice, and politics* Oxford: Blackwell

Castree, N (2002) 'False antitheses? Marxism, nature and actor-networks' in *Antipode* 34, 111-146

Castree, N (2003) 'Environmental issues: relational ontologies and hybrid politics' in *Progress in Human Geography* 27, 203-211

Castree, N (2005) *Nature* London: Routledge

Castree, N and Wright, M (2005) 'What's left? A note from the editors' in *Antipode* 37, unpaginated

Cloke, P and Jones, O (2004) 'Turning in the graveyard: trees and the hybrid geographies of dwelling, monitoring and resistance in a Bristol cemetery' in *Cultural Geographies* 11, 313-341

Cool in your Code (2007) *Herne Hill* Times Online http://property.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/property/buying_and_selling/article1741867.ece accessed 12/9/2007

Creswell, T (1996) *In Place / Out of Place: geography, ideology, transgression* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Cronon, W (1995) 'The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature' in Cronon, W (ed) *Uncommon Ground: toward reinventing nature* London: WW Norton and Company

Do or Die (2001) 'May Day. Guerrilla? Gardening?' in *Do or Die* 9, 69-81 http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/may_day.htm last accessed 12/9/2007

Duncan, J and Duncan, N (2001) 'The Aestheticization of the Politics of Landscape Preservation' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91, 387-409

Escobar, A (1998) 'Whose knowledge, whose nature? Biodiversity, conservation, and the political ecology of social movements' in *Journal of Political Ecology* 5, 53-82

Ferguson, S (1999) 'A brief history of grassroots gardening on the Lower East Side' in Wilson, PL and Weinberg, B (eds) *Avant Gardening: ecological struggle in the city and the world* Brooklyn NY: Autonomedia

Foucault, M (1979) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison* Harmondsworth: Penguin

Foucault, M (1980) *Power-knowledge : selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* Brighton: Harvester Press

Foucault, M (2002) *The Order of Things* London: Routledge

Freeman, J (1970) *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* Victoria, Australia: Anarres Books
http://www.anarres.org.au/essays/amtos.htm last accessed 12/9/2007

Fuller, D (1999) 'Part of the action, or "going native"? Learning to cope with the "politics of integration"' in *Area* 31, 221-227

Gandy, M (2002) *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* Cambridge MA: MIT Press

Gandy, M (2006) 'Urban Nature and the Ecological Imaginary' in Heynen, N et al (eds) *In the Nature of Cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism* Abingdon: Routledge

Haraway, D (1997) *Modest_Witness@Second_Mllenium.FemaleMan©_Meets_Onco Mouse™* London: Routledge

Hardman, R (2006) 'The way I see it: Guerrilla Gardening' in *The Daily Mail* 23/3/2007

Harvey, D (1996) *Justice, nature and the geography of difference* Oxford: Blackwell

Heynen, N (2003) 'Scalar Production of Injustice within the Urban Forest' in *Antipode* 35, 980-998

Heynen, N, Kaika, M, and Swyngedouw, E eds (2006a) *In the Nature of Cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism* Abingdon: Routledge

Heynen, N, Kaika, M, and Swyngedouw, E (2006b) 'Urban political ecology: politicizing the production of urban natures' in Heynen, N, Kaika, M, and Swyngedouw, E (eds) *In the Nature of Cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism* Abingdon: Routledge

Hitchings, R (2003) 'People, plants and performance: on actor-network theory and the material pleasures of the private garden' in *Social and Cultural Geography* 4, 99-113

Hobson, K (2007) 'Political animals? On animals as subjects in an enlarged political geography' in *Political Geography* 26, 250-267

Jackson, P (2000) 'Rematerializing social and cultural geography' in *Social and Cultural Geography* 1, 9-14

Jones, O and Cloke, P (2002) *Tree Cultures: the place of trees and trees in their place* Oxford: Berg

Katz, C (1998) 'Whose Nature, Whose Culture?: Private Productions of Space and the Preservation of Nature' in Braun, B and Castree, N (eds) *Remaking Reality: nature at the millennium* Abingdon: Routledge

Keil, R and Graham, J (1998) 'Reasserting Nature: Construction Urban Environments After Fordism' in Braun, B and Castree, N (eds) *Remaking Reality: nature at the millennium* Abingdon: Routledge

Kirsch, S and Mitchell, D (2004) 'The nature of things: dead labor, nonhuman actors, and the persistence of Marxism' in *Antipode* 36, 687-705

Latham, A and McCormack, D (2004) 'Moving cities: rethinking the materialities of urban geographies' *Progress in Human Geography*, 28, 701-724

Latour, B (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern* Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA

Latour, B (2004) *Politics of Nature: how to bring the sciences into democracy* Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA

Lees, L (2002) 'Rematerializing geography: the 'new' urban geography' in *Progress in Human Geography* 26, 101-112

Lefebvre, H (1991) *The production of space* Oxford: Blackwell

Marne, P (2001) 'Whose public space was it anyway? Class, gender and ethnicity in the creation of the Sefton and Stanley Parks, Liverpool: 1858-1872' in *Social and Cultural Geography* 2, 421-443

Maxey, I (1999) 'Beyond boundaries? Activism, academia, reflexivity and research' in *Area* 31, 199-208

McCarthy, J (2002) 'First World political ecology: lessons from the wise use movement' in *Environment and Planning A* 34, 1281-1302

McInroy, N (2000) 'Urban regeneration and public space: the story of an urban park' in *Space and Polity* 4, 23-40

Mougeout, LJA (2000) 'Urban agriculture: concept and definition' in *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 1, 5-7

Mitchell, D (1995) 'The end of public space? People's park, definitions of the public, and democracy' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, 108-133

Mitchell, D (1995) 'There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography' in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, 102-116

Mitchell, D (2003) *The Right to the City: social justice and the fight for public space* London: Guilford Press

Murdoch, J (1997) 'Inhuman / nonhuman / human: actor-network theory and the prospects for a nondualistic and symmetrical perspective on nature and society' in *Environment and Planning D: Society and space* 15, 731-756

Murdoch, J (1998) 'The spaces of actor-network theory' in *Geoforum* 29, 357-374

Nandrea, L (1999) '"Graffiti taught me everything I know about urban space": Urban Fronts and Borders' in *Antipode* 31, 110-116

New London Architecture (2007) *Public City: Place for People* Exhibition Brochure, http://www.newlondonarchitecture.org/media/exhibitions/catalogues/NLA_PublicCity.pdf last accessed 12/9/2007

Paddison, R and Sharp, J (2003) 'Towards democratic public spaces' paper presented at *Nothing Special? The potential of neighbourhood space* Urban Design Group conference, The Lighthouse, Glasgow 21-22 October 2003, http://web.ges.gla.ac.uk/Online_Papers/rpaddison001.pdf last accessed 12/9/2007

Peck, J and Tickell, A (2002) 'Neoliberalizing space' in *Antipode* 34, 380-404

Philo, C (2000) 'More words, more worlds: reflections on the cultural turn and human geography' in Cook, I, Crouch, D, Naylor, S, Ryan, J, (eds) *Cultural turns / geographical turns: perspectives on cultural geography* London: Routledge

Power, ER (2005) 'Human-nature relations in suburban gardens' in *Australian Geographer* 36, 39-53

Purcell, M (2006) 'Urban democracy and the local trap' in *Urban Studies* 43, 1921-1941

Rangan, H (1996) 'From Chipko to Uttaranchal: the environment of protest and development in the Indian Himalaya' in Peet, R and Watts, M (eds) *Liberation Ecologies: environment, development, social movements* London: Routledge

Rangan, H (2000) *Of Myths and Movements: rewriting Chipko into Himalayan history* London: Verso

Reynolds, R (2004-2007) www.guerrillagardening.org on which the blogs, links and message board referenced in this dissertation may be found

Robbins, P and Sharp, J (2003) 'The lawn chemical economy and its discontents' in *Antipode* 35, 955-979

Robbins, P and Sharp, J (2006) 'Turfgrass subjects: the political economy of urban monoculture' in Heynen, N, Kaika, M and Swyngedouw, E (eds) *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism* Abingdon: Routledge

Robinson, J (2005) *Ordinary Cities: between modernity and development* London: Routledge

Routledge, P (1993) *Terrains of Resistance: nonviolent social movements and the contestation of place in India* London: Praeger

Routledge, P (2001) 'Within the river: collaboration and methodology' in *The Geographical Review* January-April, 113-121

Schmelzkopf, K (1995) 'Urban Community Gardens as Contested Space' in *Geographical Review* 85, 364-381

Schroeder, RA (2005) 'Debating the place of political ecology in the First World' in *Environment and Planning A* 37, 1045-1048

Seed, P *Ceremonies of possession in Europe's conquest of the New World 1492-1640* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Spencer, T and Whatmore, S (2001) 'Editorial: Bio-geographies: Putting life back into the discipline' in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, 139-141

Staeheli, LA, Mitchell, D and Gibsons, K (2002) 'Conflicting rights to the city in New York's community gardens' in *GeoJournal* 58, 197-205

Thrift, N (1996) *Spatial Formations* London: Sage

Tracey, D (2007) *Guerrilla Gardening: a manualfesto* Cabriola Island BC: New Society
Publishers

RUAF [Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security] Foundation (2000-
present) *Urban Agriculture Magazine* available online http://www.ruaf.org/node/101 last
accessed 19/9/2007

Vaughan, J (2006) 'The lavender hill mob' in *The Telegraph* 26/8/2006

Whatmore, S (2002) *Hybrid Geographies: natures, cultures, spaces* London: Sage

Whatmore, S, Degen, M, Hinchcliffe, S and Kearnes, M (2003) 'Vernacular ecologies in/for
a convivial city: lessons from Bristol', paper presented at the Research Committee on Urban
and Regional Development of the ISA, Milan,

http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/habitable_cities/index.html last accessed February
2006, no longer available online though this author holds a PDF

Whatmore, S and Hinchcliffe, S (2003) 'Living cities: making space for urban nature' in
Soudings 22, 37-50, version cited is an unpaginated draft sourced from

http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/habitable_cities/index.html last accessed February
2006, no longer available online though this author holds a PDF

Wickham-Crowley, TP (1987) 'The rise (and sometimes fall) of guerrilla movements in Latin
America' in *Sociological Forum* 2, 473-499

Williams, B (2006) 'The paradox of parks' in *Identities* 13, 139-171

Wilson, PL and Weinberg, B (eds) *Avant Gardening: ecological struggle in the city and the
world* Brooklyn NY: Autonomedia

Woelfle-Erskine, C (ed) *Urban Wilds: gardeners' stories of the struggle for land and justice*
Oakland CA: water / under / ground publications