

## Visualicity – on urban visibility and invisibility

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‘Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic’ (1)

The technologies of figural expression offer unprecedented control over the strategies of divide in space, order in time, and compose in space-time. This is not simply a question of what happens on the screen (cinematic, televisual, or computer), but how these technologies serve to define, regulate, observe, and document human collectivities. (2)

We are led to believe in a lie  
When we see with not through the eye (3)

Some enchanted evening you may see a stranger  
You may see a stranger across a crowded room ... (4)

What makes the urban available to the gaze? This article is intended to raise questions about the visual. It does this by developing the heuristic concept of Visualicity and exploring it in relation to urban environments. The glance is developed as a concept for understanding neglected aspects of the spatiality and the rather counter-intuitive temporality that many believe to be aspects of vision beyond its purely physiological functionalities.

Cities are an example of phenomena too extensive in scale to be empirically visible to the human eye in one glance, yet are taken for granted by virtue of our faith that the totality of the urban can be glimpsed from a part. Most discussions of the visual focus on the scrutinous gaze; this stress is problematized by a focus here on this notion of ‘glimpsing’ and this sort of visual faith makes the overall city part of a ‘public secret’. The concrete actuality of the city cannot be captured in one glance, yet we routinely participate in visual games that represent cities as simple objects, conveniently seen from a single



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point of view. Not only do we engage in this collective fiction of seeing the whole from a part, we routinely participate in rhetorical fallacies such as understanding the probable future from what we see in the present moment in an environment or scene - for example we attempt to discern the risks of a place from how it 'looks' to us now.

This 'we' is the collective of everyday life, and I am aware that it too is a rhetorical device, not a dependent variable. But I stress that we engage in this 'glimpsing' and attribute a certain power to the gaze and to the glance for the purposes of arguments, for the purposes of social co-ordination with each other and in planning not only cities but in social engineering via policies addressed to urban poverty, for example. Social science discussions of 'the gaze' would have neither their popularity nor purchase if they did not resonate in some way with this commonsensical, if strictly fallacious, practice which reaches beyond the empirical to include the entire phaneron - the psychological, remembered and ideological aspects of the event of experience. (5) We need a word for such diverse visual processes which are also articulated with the operations of power and governance. In a now classic quotation, de Certeau reminds us of this in the case of cities presented in planning documents, maps and the illusion of power and knowledge given by the view over New York which the observation deck of the World Trade Centre once afforded: 'to become a solar Eye, a god's regard. The exaltation of a scopic drive ... Just to be this seeing point creates the fiction of knowledge. Must one then re-descend into the sombre space through which crowds of people move about, crowds that, visible from above, cannot see there below? The fall of Icarus'. (6)

### **Visualicity - Beyond the visible and invisible**

Visualicity transcends the merely visible. Visualicity is concerned with the relationship between the visible and invisible, their communication and the correlation of this relation with other divisions such as the tangible and intangible. What is said to be seen in contrast to what is not seen? What is more properly imagined or seen in the mind's eye rather than literally seen? It brings the conditions of being visible into the theoretical fold of the visual.

Consider the situation of a bicycle messenger darting through traffic:

...you've got cabs and buses whizzing in and out of the corner of your eye, but you keep looking straight ahead, because you got eyes all over your head. You take everything in, you don't miss nothing, the whole street and things coming at you from around corners as you round corners, and you can see things before they appear to the non-messenger eye, you can see through buildings, you can look down a cross-street before you even get to it, half prophesy, half feel, half hear the way's clear. You have to if you want to survive... (7).

Visualicity highlights the conditions of becoming visible. Visualicity may extend beyond tangible objects to consider abstractions, virtualities and potentialities. These might include, respectively, ideological 'ways of seeing' or understanding the subject of a painting in received terms; a visualization of an intangible object such as a credit rating or a currency exchange rate; and probabilities such as a graph depicting a level of risk or the weather announcer's maps and icons showing the potential of rain.

The rich scholarship on the visualicity and visual cultures of cities may lead us to take cities for granted as inherently and easily visual, or simply 'there'. In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche comments that 'All of life is based on semblance, art, deception, points of view [*Optik* i.e. perspective], and the necessity of perspectives and error.' (7) The visual culture of the urban, for example the photographic record from the mid-nineteenth century onward, does not document solely the city as an artifact but attempts to capture its tempo and rhythm in suspended animation, to give only one example. Rhythm, however, is strictly invisible. Yet it is deduced from the image and imagined as having extended into the past and future by virtue of our bodily engagement and empathetic faith that the city is alive, in Nietzsche's sense. We see beyond the empirical image or representation that is the focus of the gaze. We are fascinated, because the division between the visible and invisible does not lie along a line that separates the apparent tangibility of cities and the immaterial virtuality of their character, of their bustle or of some urban essence. In short:

visible : invisible

tangible : intangible

The city is lived as a concrete and everyday performance of material necessity (as most people make a living on a day-to-day or month-to-month basis), as socio-cultural institutions (as children, for example, walk or perhaps must be driven to school) and economic forces (as regional and global relations of production are interwoven with decisions on investment and the location of enterprises). We usually think of the city as a material context, but of course there is more to it than that. For example, some urban centres are said to be 'more like a city' than others - what does such a comment refer to?

Clearly, the empirically visible does not exhaust the urban. This is not only a matter of not being able to see absolutely everything, despite the omniscient ambition of technologies such as video surveillance or scenic viewpoints. Abdo Malik Simone argues that the management of what is shown, what gets represented and made visible, has as its obverse a certain necessary invisibility. (8) Ways of coming to visibility, of 'coming to the stage' in Taussig's terms, are important social processes. (9) These demonstrate the visual to be cultural, and they show the supposed solidity of the visible to be constructed in such a manner that the eye is often being tricked - quite other things can be taking place in, for example, street cultures than those we think we are witnessing. (10) This happens right under our noses - and cameras.

Another case of this is the frequently disappointing snapshot of a loved one, or of an event or a place. The camera lens focuses light on to film in a literal, geometrically monocular and a static manner. Are the shortcomings of photographs, the shuffling through the deck of prints looking for a 'good one', simply a matter of discarding failures of

technique (exposure, steadiness, chemistry), the difficulty of fitting the entirety of certain scenes into a photo using a lens of a given length (normal, wide angle or other)? Are they simply a question of not having found the right angle or pose? We search for images that the eye can transcend, seeing emotion in a facial expression or the trajectory of a gesture in a pose.

What does the urban tourist see? What is the content of that social form that is 'the gaze'? Is it not more than the tangible, more than the visible? Six aspects of Visualicity may be identified but the focus in this paper is on the glance. These are intended as heuristic terms under which one might organize a broadened research agenda on the visible and the invisible for research on visual culture. Gaze and glance might be understood as twin gestures of vision, the former spatial, the latter temporal. Both are relational and indexical. Focus and depth: contrast figure and the broader context, backdrop and ground. Techniques of representation include sets of technical conventions that govern the process of visualization, thus staging or making objects visible, exposing them to the gaze.

### **Gaze and Glance**

The gaze is timeless and static, the self-conscious stare of an active viewer which defeats the otherness and autonomy of a passive reified object which is the focus of vision, assumed to be fully exposed across a representational space of full visibility.

The gaze is perhaps the most discussed element of visualicity. It is classically underscored by relations of power and desire between subjects and objects, the self and other, or across cultures (stereotypically, colonizer-colonized; tourist-native) to freeze - whether in horror or delight - a field of inequalities. Although there is insufficient space to

discuss the literature fully, the gaze refers to the influence and impact of looking or being looked at, but has become a metaphor for a certain type of coolly-distanced interaction in which cultural consumption is subsumed under spectatorship. The gaze refers as much to a reified 'way of seeing' as to simply 'looking'. For Urry, for example, 'The Tourist Gaze' seeks out signs of difference and distinctiveness as the distinguishing and representative markers or visual indexes of a tourist site. (11) Iconic images of London that circulate globally in visual media as part of the place-image of the city provide a focus for visual citations of the city. The gaze seeks out and reproduces or captures these mediated images incorporating them into a personal biography. (12) The gaze is also a cinematic, mobilized 'look' independent of its object - it is typically portrayed in the context of, for example, streetscape in which the gaze is 'a projectile propelled from one subject to another and then deflected back' in a fantasia of possession, power and pleasure. (13) Despite this potential as a dialectical object, the gaze is out of time. It presupposes a static, contemplative and interested viewer and the arrested mobility of the eternal moment. By now a humanities stereotype, the gaze entails an alienated and monadic subject, looking in fascination and with desire at a reified object. (14)

When we close our eyes and imagine the city, seeing it free of the Euclidean space of material existence, we conjure up non-retinal images of the city. These are neither material (15) nor are they simply abstractions (as in the case of representations of data). They are better understood as virtual - idealizations but not abstractions; real but not accurate visions of an actually-existing object. (16) The virtual includes imagined potentialities of urban environments, what they might be. In part, the power of the virtual derives from the mythic and memorial - urban pasts which were once actual but now reside

in memory as recollections which are neither mere fantasies (abstractions), nor projections of the imagination, but virtualities which, like a daydream or *déjà vu*, may be experienced as more real than the concrete world of everyday life. This is not simple recollection but re-creation, sometimes via rituals of re-actualization (17), producing not only, for example, a ‘tourist gaze’ but prosthetic memories in which memory is welded to flesh. (18) These go far beyond the empirical experience of an urban place in and of itself.

The glance might serve to remind us of the strange quality of visualicity which always attempts to surmount the present and empirically visible to see forward into the future. A glance, *coup d’oeil*, is a different habit and gesture from the gaze. Lash claims that brands are understood in this distracted manner, not via ‘the concentrated “gaze” ...[brands] are not expressive, but more event-like combining ephemerality and immediacy: there is no need to reflect on the part of the viewer or the user’. (19) Whereas the gaze is directed at a focus, an icon, the glance surveys a field, a context. It is a rapid scan, momentarily bringing into retinal focus a peripheral movement in search of emergent elements of the visual field. Restlessly striking first one element then another, knocking them out of the context or background into the foreground, continually interrupting the current focus of attention. The glance is visual *flânerie*. Scanning the horizon, the literature of urban visualicity is packed with notes on the surveillance of the present for contrail traces of the future - Baudelaire’s love interests passing by in the nineteenth-century metropolis, Benjamin’s commodity enticements of the Arcades, the hazards of any stroller. In Paris, a pedestrian-oriented city, those really at home in the city used to learn to continuously scan the pavements two steps ahead of them for the excrement of the city’s large canine population. The glance, in short, is a mundane and overlooked aspect of urban

sight and foresight. Chaplin and Walker hint at this when they cite the visual artist Willem de Kooning who commented that the content of his paintings was,

'a glimpse of something, an encounter like a flash.' Fleeting sensations and observations were perceived via glimpses and glances; for instance, things seen briefly from a moving car. Although de Kooning was dubbed an Abstract Expressionist, many of his paintings were figurative - woman was a favourite theme. However, de Kooning maintained that his 'content' was 'tiny'; for example, the light reflected from a puddle of water. He described himself as 'a slipping glimpser' because his perceptions were most acute when he was slipping, that is, off balance. (20)

Gaze might be also understood as contemplative and intentional, but the glance serves as a metaphor of affection - it is not concentrated but marks the itinerary of those subconscious desiring processes which are most easily distracted. It alights, only to skip on again. Glance refers us to the city which is not simply 'there', which is not,

that matter, that duration and that space that are regarded as yours by the ... legislator, the ... sergeant, the manager and the sexologist, ... the monster inhabited by the thing and, thereby, endowed with other spaces-times-matters than those known by experts and your own body consciousness ... Its space-time, its lines, its colours are liminal: there-not there, held at the threshold of the visible/invisible. That threshold is not at all the frame (neither in the technical nor even in the philosophical sense). It does not concern the relation of inside/outside. ... The 'objects' will have been reduced to nothing by a blind look. (21)

This liminality is described as 'time out of time'. (22) Glances are often described in terms of peripheral vision and as orientational rather than focused (see below). What we see 'out of the corner of our eye' is not any less profoundly registered than other objects of more purposeful forms of seeing. But the glance is out of time in the sense that it is not regulated in temporal series. The things that it anticipates do not happen in real time but in the virtual time in which past and future are connected in a present-moment – de Kooning's 'flash'. It is virtual in Proust's sense of memory as 'real but not actual, ideal but not abstract' – the epochal quotation which is the literary inspiration and point of origin for Bergson's and Deleuze's reflections on duration and virtuality.

Glances scan for emergence, (23) unpredicted outcomes, self-organizations resulting from the complex interaction of forces and bodies in the urban field. But

emergence is not properly in the present, rather it rides on the cusp of time, straddling the present and the nearest-future. The moment, the becoming of a place in time, disappears into the future as an unpredictable and hence un-locatable emergence. The glance arms the visualicity of any moment with becoming, with the 'about-to-be'. It rocks the gaze with its continual alerts, messaging change, bringing about a curious mixture of stasis and mobility.

This virtual time includes both remembrance (memory) and foreshadowing (anticipation). Given this temporal structure, it is not surprising that the glance coincides with popular notions of clairvoyance. The immediacy of the glance cannot be a pure present, a moment, but a flash of the past as well as the future merged in the present, Benjamin's 'now-time' (Jetzt zeit), something Lyotard refers to as the future perfect, a vision of 'what will-have-been'. (24) Glances might be said to draw the future into a present scenario, scanning and sampling it for not only trends but affordances and other virtualities which may come to be actualized in the next moment. Although not surveillant (a form of the gaze), these qualities are the *sine qua non* of a control that attempts to anticipate what is 'about to be' - what happens next. Monuments and look-outs which afford a commanding view are examples of the gaze, but the glance is more mundane and intimate - an object in a shop window, the approaching automobile, the passer-by.

Is the glance the apogee of surveillance? If so, it is an element of visualicity that still escapes technical approaches. In Foucauldian models of surveillance, the gaze is unmediated and omniscient, and fixed in the real time present at the centre of a Panoptic space. There is no conscious and purposeful cutting that builds into a montage in the mind, as glances might.

The glance engages with the displacement of sources of control and centres of power from the present, as in Foucault's Panoptic model of surveillance and discipline. Following Deleuze, O'Connor argues that an anticipatory quality is central to techniques of montage in cinema. (25) Displaced into the next moment, governance takes on a 'cinematic' quality, that is, it is focused on what 'lies around the corner', or what 'will be seen' like the art of montage in which cinematic shots and scenes are set up so that they appear to follow naturally from one another. Cues to the unfolding of the plot are provided in each shot so that viewers do not experience a sensation of dislocation or notice each cut in the montage. This process works to form actions that follow on from a present situation and to exclude other actions or responses. It is difficult to engage with because of its lack of location within the typical time-frame of critical analyses.

### **Focus and Depth**

Focus denotes the historical privileging of certain objects as stand-alone elements worthy of attention. A further aspect of the visibility of the city, its visualicity, is vision itself. But the visible depends on a certain way of looking, a certain 'stage space' of visual magic, (26) which establishes an order of foci, relations and visual priorities within a field. Several famous interventions follow this line of argument, including Walter Benjamin, John Berger and John Urry. For Jonathan Crary, for example, the gazing observer occupies a location at the intersection between the body and a network of practices, institutional methods and technologies. These provide an emergent modern body with a rationalized space within which to gaze. (27)

The photogenic angles of a place are established through historical and professional photographic, artistic and advertising practice. Even if we do not know the precise formula for achieving the stereotyped image of a place, such as the horseshoe curve of Niagara Falls (usually, the Canadian Falls seen from Table Rock, omitting the wider angle view which would include the American Falls across the Niagara River). This process of editing and cropping is also a matter of artistic license and ideology. Famous views of a place or its *focal icons* may not be replicable without distorting or warping perspective and could never be captured from designated viewpoints without the optical aid of a bellows-mounted lens. Such views, whether of British North America or of India, were central in the construction of a popular imaginary of the British Empire.

The *urban gaze* as much as the ‘tourist gaze’ is a performative citation of certain stereotypes in the hands of each individual, not just an enactment of normative codes. (28) In the same sense that a play may be performed differently by different companies of actors, so the gaze is always a performance which selectively actualizes, and may even contribute to a script or place image which itself is more a virtuality. That is, the ‘scripts’ ethnographers identify exist only in their performance, until represented as an abstraction in an ethnographic documentary or text. (29)

So what is it ‘to gaze’ in the city and what does the gaze reveal to the urban spectator? Returning to the work of Urry, the ‘tourist gaze’ is argued to concentrate on touristic icons – Big Ben or St. Paul’s in London, seen from specific preferred viewpoints. Capturing the ‘official’ view or experiencing an iconic pageant or place (a market, view, sunset, a walk through a village or historic town centre, for example) is taken to be the authentic experience and expression of the place and culture, part of the ‘game’ of tourism

which involves the challenge of getting to and ‘capturing’ these ‘sights’. Such photographs become memorable tokens of personal engagement. However, they are not only iconic sights but also semiotic indexes of their settings and the ambience of the place. Big Ben is an index of Parliament and British parliamentarianism. St. Paul’s is to this day widely known as a grand moral index of London’s steadfast character – thanks to its construction as such through wartime photography of the Blitz. As indexical entities, they gesture beyond themselves, and potentially beyond the ‘official’ product of the tourist experience. They may point to an eroticized culture or fetishized tourist site, or jar with the surrounding milieu.

Used in this context, the gaze is not a narrow, scopic beam but a wide *field*. It is less a question of perceived objects than it is a matter of sets, a scintillating, restless topology of interaction, reference. Mobile references, lines of flight from a would-be icon, a landmark, a fetish or souvenir, ricochet between focal icons and other elements embedded in the tourist site or local context. These may go beyond the visible to form a context that includes the past and events that have since disappeared, or the future and the potential of a sight (for development, for returning in the future).

Rather than remaining fixed on monadic icons, the gaze is also indexical, not just iconic. It references the wider context, atmosphere and resources or affordances of the city. Pierce describes indexicality as dyadic (as ‘secondness’ in his system): A throws B and, unexpectedly or in a manner we do not initially predetermine, B hits C. This involves two dyadic interactions A-B and B-C. A throwing B might then be represented as an indexical sign of the second dyad, an object B hitting C. Following the index from A to B we make a leap across the bounds of one dyad A-B to a second dyad B-C. The lines of reference A-B-

C are only reconstructed *post hoc ergo propter hoc* through a process of elision and inference that couples the pairs. This hides a sudden change of state and meaning that occurs linguistically at the point of the indexical 'and' between A-B 'and' B-C. (30)

The gaze itself is embedded within a matrix of visualicity (i.e. the six aspects above) that sutures an object or view to a wider experiential time-space milieu. In this process, aspects of the original context are thrown out of focus or cropped out altogether. Rather than a pinpoint spotlight, the gaze as developed in the recent sociological sensibility has a *depth of field* that unites foreground objects of interest with a wider background. This involves framing objects which backdrop the main figure or which focus and compose a ground for it.

Depth denotes the relational structure of a scene as a context - not only objects but sets of objects establish fields or contexts for social action as backgrounds or backdrops. Rather than objects, the move to sets and series opens up the space of the gaze and mediates between it and the glance as different modalities of seeing. Edinburgh Castle has proven to be an enduring icon of Edinburgh's metropolitan claims despite its peripheral geographical location. It is a focal point for images of Edinburgh's skyline, which is often also a part of the same image.

Indexicality is also important to the notion of the glance. Since the space traversed in the inter-action (or the space between the different actions) (31) is infinitesimal (approaching the limit or degree-zero), the distinctions that are generated by this leap across the boundary are qualitative (different in kind) rather than quantitative (different in degree). In the equivocal form of the inter-action-image, infinitesimal distance exists only to suddenly increase (explode or rapidly expand) into infinitely large distances/differences

or situations charged with ambiguity. Different states of bodies or objects go along with their geographical disposition into different spaces or territories.

Deleuze refers to this scenario as a 'skeleton-space' because so much that is significant seems to be missing, like a skeleton where organs and flesh are missing. There are:

missing intermediaries, heterogeneous elements which jump from one to the other, or which interconnect directly. It is no longer an ambient space [of flows] but a vectorial space, a vector-space, with temporal distances. It is no longer the encompassing stroke of a great contour, but the broken stroke of a line of the universe, across the holes. The vector is the sign of such a line. It is the genetic sign of the new action-image, whilst the index was the sign of its composition. (32)

Rather than being a simple, unidirectional gaze in which one look travels from a spectator or tourist to an object, a multitude of references and indexical lines of flight can thus be found in the scenario of the gaze. For example, these link not only the user of a city and a performance or commodity, but link these to a wider cultural, geographical and historical context. (33) Not only are there relations or references; visualicity is a skeleton space that allows for relations in its depths and dimensions. These are mobile vectors in as much as indexicality is interpretive and in as much as reference leaps across missing intermediaries in a manner that attracts the qualifier 'magical'.

## **Representation and Exposure**

Representational strategies and technologies make information visually accessible through the power of freezing or stabilizing rather more fluid situations. Representations are generally theorized separately from notions of the gaze. Techniques of representation not only 'make visible' abstractions such as arrays of data. They allow scenes to be reproduced or exposed in diverse media (for example, in a two dimensional painting, a stereoscopic photo, or a three dimensional virtual environment). Representations are complex

formations of material, techniques and ideologies in which social practice is indissolubly linked to social thought and imagination.

Postcards may select a widely recognizable symbol of a given city, focus on one detail (such as doorways) and overprint the name of the place, or may offer a panoramic, de Certeauian gaze, or perhaps a crowded panel of several aerial views and major landmarks. If such representations are souvenirs that serve to remind us of the city, on the other hand they replace or stand in for the city. They make the city available for analysis and re-play. Like the snow falling in a souvenir snow-bubble, representations blanket the city, changing the way it appears to us. Of course, we all realize that a totally accurate representation - a perfect copy - is impossible. We are happy to settle for a good likeness. Like a still life or *nature mort*, representations are arrangements of life - of nature *vivant*. Access to the environment in its crude 'real urban-ness' presumes that the city is a pre-formed and simply given object. A shroud of representations stands between us and the concrete objects that are the elements of 'the city'. Representations are treacherous metaphors, summarizing the complexity of the city in an elegant stroke. 'Whereas appropriation could be understood on a basis of projection, the becoming of the world cannot'. (34)

Representations exist within a broader field with depth and breadth in both space (competing foci, depth of field, background, out-of-frame references etc.) and time (glance, anamnesis and virtualities). Recalling a problematic suggested by Foucault, visualicity links the visible - what can be seen, to the articulable - that which can be presented or made recognizable by the representational repertoire available in a particular place and time. (35) The empirically visible is a set of objects that, being material, occupy space and thus have a form and reflectivity within the visible spectrum of radiation. But I have argued that what is

‘seen’ transcends the empirically visible to include abstractions such as information flows. This is true of images of the changing price of wheat or a sensation (for example ‘mood rings’ novelty toys which change colour depending on skin temperature). The advent of cinema inaugurates the representation of movement in real time. (36)

Visualicity, the ‘condition of visibility’, the logical and connotative system in which representations are formed, is so powerful as to effectively *create* the things that are the ‘subjects of representation’. (37) Only some parts are easily exposed. What is exposed and not - un-represented and invisible? Often the relationship between the viewer and the representation itself is obscured. The city is kept in focus but not the representation's audience. Conditions of visibility refer to those factors such as power, and the social construction of reality through discourses on the real, which keep the city 'in focus' as a visible object, and us, researchers and audiences, outside that focused frame. (38)

Representation therefore raises the problem of the politics of what is visible and what is hidden.

The relation between the visible built environment of the city and socio-economic relations is generally conceived as a relation between surface (appearance) and depth (structural forces), between phenomenon (appearance) and noumenon (knowledge of abstract structures and forces). This allows the visible city to be re-presented as an artifact of socio-economic relations. Critical of the Kantianism of social science thought, the broad optics of visualicity pursues a Piercean tack to embrace both the city as an object of encounter subject to the gaze, as well as a field of experience and difference, and as the subject of intelligent knowledge by which icons are related to each other and given ontological depth in time and space. This allows representations to be relativized as one

moment in the visualicity of the city, rather than as replacements that exclude other experiential- and knowledge-based aspects of urban life. (39)

Visualicity's incorporation of the visual beyond the articulable (the glance, the emergent and disappearing, and depth of field) is a type of 'supplement' to the simply visible and indicates the boundary which limits dominant theoretical paradigms of the gaze, surveillance and the reduction of visualicity to the discursive. Greimas and Fontanille refer to this supplement as '*phorie*', or the 'phoric', as in 'atmosphere'. (40) They argue that the 'phoric' problematized representations by adding a 'hither side of the subject of enunciation', a 'disturbing doubling' that accompanies the experience and identification of places. (41) We usually do not have time to consciously examine all the details of environments. We allow elements to become taken-for-granted public secrets, to slip into the background field as the atmosphere of places, or we borrow from previous experience even if it is with other places (not this train station but various other train stations) to superimpose a performance on a place (we might assume there must be a logical order to placements of ticket counters and then access to the platforms and trains).

*Exposure* includes not only perspective for example, but the rules used to plot data and thus render abstractions as artifacts such as charts, exposing them to the gaze. Disappearance is equally a matter of exposure, even if it is its negation. Disappearance in the present, into the past and into the future is another aspect of the visualicity of the urban which makes the city into an unstable, continually evolving and continually eroding 'nervous system'. (42) Vanishing in the present occurs as we become inured to change, supplanting an ideal vision of an environment for its actual state - perhaps aged or in disrepair. Disappearance into the past happens as forgetting and taking objects for granted,

the mind's eye slipping between the materiality and virtuality, again replacing 'what is' with memories.

### **The city is in the eye of the beholder**

It is almost a truism to say that urban environments are made selectively visible as 'cities' through representation. In such representations, cities are presented as primarily visual and as both fields with depth and as specific foreground, focal icons. Yet it is easy to forget that the visibility of the city is always an incomplete cipher for, or parts of, the tactility of concrete, everyday life.

Elements such as exposure and glance exceed the merely 'seen' first because they include processes and strategies of representation that depart from the usual tethering of the visible to the articulable. Exposure is a reminder that the breadth of visualicity exceeds the represented, the successfully exposed. The 'glance' as a visual gesture straddles the future and present, directing attention to the emergent, the virtual not yet actual, *becoming* of the visible. The glance operates by other than the established and articulated technologies of representation that bring 'facts' to the stage of the focused gaze. These heuristic terms help problematize and rethink the points of orientation of visual culture. They challenge the relationship to, and between knowledge and concrete objects of the gaze.

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## Notes

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- 3 William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*, c.1803, [eir.library.utoronto.ca/rpo/display/poem161.html](http://eir.library.utoronto.ca/rpo/display/poem161.html) Originally published in *Poems*, D.G Rossetti ed., London, 1863.
- 4 'Some Enchanted Evening' (song), from R Rodgers & O Hammerstein II, *South Pacific*, 1949.
- 5 'Phaneron', or 'the collective total of all that is or in any sense present to the mind' in an event or experience, is Pierce's riposte to Kant's 'phenomenon.' C S Pierce, *Collected Papers*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-5, vol.1, p.284. Phanerons transcend the verifiable because as totalities of what appears to the mind in any one encounter, they include dreams and misapprehensions. Tomaselli compares this to Marshall's notion of 'slots', akin to filmic contexts including the off-screen elements of scenes and to Ryle's notion of 'think description' as developed by Geertz. See J Marshall, *The Cinema of John Marshall*, Philadelphia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993, p.83: C Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, 1973, p.10: and K Tomaselli, *Appropriating Images: The Semiotics of Visual Representation*, Højbjerg, Denmark: Intervention Press, 1996, pp.59-61.
- 6 M de Certeau, 'Practices of Space' in M Blonsky ed., *On Signs*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, p.123.
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- 8 Abdo Malik Simone, 'On the "Worlding" of Cities in Africa', paper presented at American Association of Geographers, New York, March 2001.

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- 13 See J Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, New York: Norton, 1978: T de Lauretis & S Heath, *The Cinematic Apparatus*, London: Macmillan, 1980: and G Rose, *Lecture on Walter Benjamin*, Brighton: Sussex University, 1985. For a history see M Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in 20<sup>th</sup>-century French Thought*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- 14 In contrast to sight which is materially dependent on the organization of the waves of the visible spectrum reflected off concrete environments.
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- 16 L Kirmayer, 'Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Narrative and Dissociation' in *Tense Past*, New York: Routledge, 1996.
- 17 See M Meurleu-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Paris: Gallimard, 1992.
- 18 S Lash, *Critique of Information*, London: Sage, 2002, p.69.
- 19 Willem de Kooning cited in R Schiff, 'Water and Lipstick: De Kooning in Transition' in M Prather ed., *Willem de Kooning Paintings*, Washington DC and New Haven: National Gallery of Art and Yale University Press, 1994, pp.33-73, cited in S Chaplin & J A Walker, *Visual Culture: an Introduction*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, p.99.
- 20 J F Lyotard, *Soundproof Room*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, p.102.
- 21 See Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin*, London: Routledge, 1991.

- 22 See N Gilbert, 'Emergence in social simulation' in N Gilbert & R Conte eds., *Artificial Societies. The Computer Simulation of Social Life*, London: UCL Press, 1995, pp.144-156.
- 23 J F Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.
- 23 See D O'Connor, *Mediated Associations*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002.
- 24 See K Hillis, *Digital Sensations: Space, Identity and Embodiment in Virtual Reality*, vol.1, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999: and Pringle, 'The Space of Stage Magic', *Space and Culture*, vol.6, no.2, 2002, pp.333-345.
- 25 J Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1999.
- 26 See V Bell, 'Introduction', and A-M Fortier, 'Remembering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)', in *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.16, no.2, 1999, pp.1-11 & 41-64.
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- 29 See G Deleuze, *Cinema: The Movement Image*, vol.1, London: Athlone, 1986.
- 30 Ibid., p.186.
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- 32 P Von Bonsdorf, 'Future Architecture: The Ethics of Creation' in O Naukkarinen & O Immonen eds., *Art and Beyond*, Jyväskylä, Finland: Gummerus Kirjapaino OY, 1995, p.137.
- 33 G Deleuze, *Foucault*, Paris: Ed de la minuit, 1986, chapter 1.
- 34 See Crary, *Suspensions*.
- 35 T de Lauretis, *Alice doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p.68.
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- 40 Ibid., cited in and trans. Bonsdorf, 'Future Architecture', p.140. See also Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie* and G A Manis, *Emotion and Embodiment. Fragile Ontology*, New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- 41 Taussig, 'Viscerality', pp.221-56.