

GEOGRAPHIES OF WRITING: INHABITING
PLACES AND ENCOUNTERING DIFFERENCE

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MAPS OF THE EVERYDAY: HABITUAL PATHWAYS
AND CONTESTED PLACES

Mapping is too important to be left to cartographers . . .

—J. B. Harley,
“Deconstructing the Map”

What the map cuts up, the story cuts across . . .

—Michel de Certeau,
The Practice of Everyday Life

Who is felt to belong and not to belong contributes in an important way to the shaping of social space . . .

—David Sibley,
Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West

In one episode of the popular television drama *The West Wing*, White House officials meet with groups that wouldn't normally have the ear of the White House.¹ The character C. J. is assigned the group “Cartographers for Social Equality” and meets with them reluctantly. The Cartographers for Social Equality had come to the White House asking for a mere million dollars or so to replace the thousands of Mercator projection maps still hanging in classrooms across the country with Peters projection maps that depict continents with more accuracy. In a scene where three (geeky) geographers demonstrate the different views of the world as evidenced by the Mercator projection map and the Peters projection map (Peters), C. J. is mesmerized, her “world view” decidedly shaken up, especially by an image where the map is flip-flopped so that the northern hemisphere occupies the “bottom” of the map, and the southern takes over the top (see fig. 3.1).

While some may be skeptical that different maps, created through different projection systems, could alter world politics or influence social justice

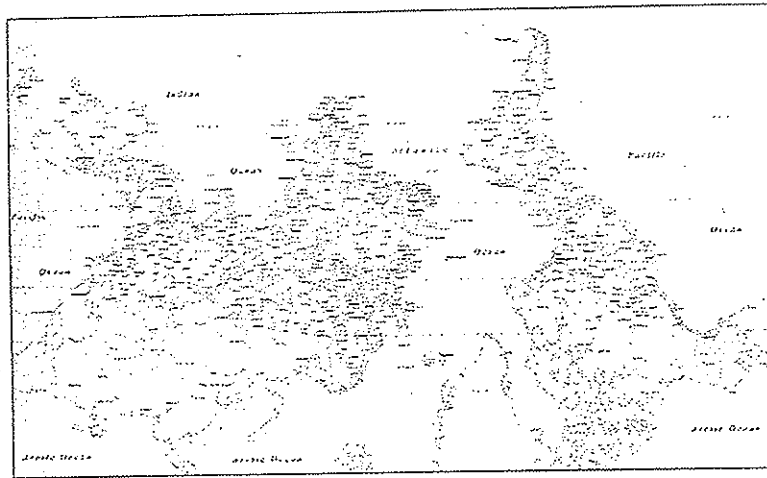


Fig. 3.1. Upside-down Mercator map. Reprinted from Map Resources, <www.mapresources.com>.

(Lemann), critical geographers insist on the connection. J. B. Harley, in “Deconstructing the Map,” asserts the rhetoricality of maps:

rhetoric is part of the way all texts work and . . . all maps are rhetorical texts. . . . All maps strive to frame their message in the context of an audience. All maps state an argument about the world, and they are propositional in nature. All maps employ the common devices of rhetoric such as invocations of authority. This is *especially* so in topographical maps. . . . Rhetoric may be concealed but it is always present. . . . (242, his emphasis)

Many areas of geographic study have changed dramatically in response to both poststructuralist claims about knowledge-making and new technologies, but perhaps none more than the science of maps and attitudes toward mapping. Our ideas about maps need to change in order to reflect how technology is revolutionizing map-making as well as map-reading, document design, and technological reproduction.

For decades if not centuries, the dignified authority of library atlas cabinets, flat drawers with neat stacks of two-dimensional maps, as well as the generally reliable accuracy of glove-compartment maps, led to dominant notions about maps not as “texts” to be interpreted but as documents to be trusted. Following Harley’s lead, critical geographers address the politics of mapping and admit that map-making is a political and interpretive act, and scholars in human geography and cartography have acknowledged in recent years the rhetoricality of map-making. The collection *Writing*

Worlds: Discourse, Text, and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape (Barnes and Duncan), for example, engages with the cross-disciplinary emphasis on intertextuality, signification, and deconstruction to argue that *discourse* creates maps and dominant images of regions, not measurements, surveys, or instruments. In *The Power of Maps*, Denis Wood asserts that maps work by serving interests, and this “interested selectivity,” embodied in the map as both presences and absences, allows the map to work, to have meaning, and in turn, to reproduce the culture that creates them in the first place (1). In nearly every field or discipline, scholars use the language of mapping to show how the field is configured, where the borders lie, and who works where. (In rhetoric and composition studies, for example, see Phelps; Lauer; Sullivan and Porter; Glenn.)

As academics and the writers of *The West Wing* recognize, mapping is an important spatial practice that illustrates the link between geography and culture, between images of the world and world power, between the concept of space and actual places. Maps and their significance loom large in both traditional assumptions about the discipline of geography and in people’s habitual ways of navigating the world. This chapter concentrates on mapping as another spatial practice that informs geographies of rhetoric and writing and that illustrates the complexity of thirdspace, where maps can be informative and useless, accurate and empty, image and text, exemplary of logic and measurement but also unreadable to a first-time user.² The maps we spread out onto a dashboard or view on a screen have very little to do with our mental maps, the images and associations of places that we carry around in our heads.

This disparity means that we must change our notions of mapping, just as we must re-imagine acts of writing, to account for paradoxical and contested places and for places that are laden with risk or the perception of risk for trespassers, the unwelcome, or “intruders” marked by difference. People move through space, in large part, very cautiously, particularly if their (visible) identity puts them at risk in certain areas or neighborhoods. Movement through the spatial world is determined largely by contested places and geographies of exclusion, by (invisible) markers of boundaries. In addition, even the finest maps—created via satellite and updated every twenty-four hours—cannot capture the contested places that are difficult even for insiders to characterize or predict.

Computer technologies and Geographic Information Systems have made maps more public and democratic, easy to reproduce, available in more than one dimension, and, via satellite technology, precisely “accurate.” Like most

advances, this presents a double-edged sword, and the dual nature of these advances encapsulates the changing nature of geography and the complications of place and space. Maps achieved much of their cultural capital in colonialist and imperialist enterprises; obviously much rarer in ink on parchment, maps and mapping services are consumed today by many professional groups as well as by farmers or fishermen and all those whose income and livelihood depends on the weather. The group of consumers gets larger, too, when you add in the avid gardeners, boaters, golfers, and other middle-class outdoor enthusiasts who now want maps that move, as on weather sites, where radar images of rain march from west to east, illustrating a “speeding up” of weather patterns and the projected paths of fronts or storms. Maps are colorful, often portable, collectible, or valuable, but their value comes, of course, from the culture’s demand for positivist, precise, measurable, and reproducible forms of “reality” and representations of regions that are meaningful to people.

Familiar to some readers, a poststructuralist critique of mapping is offered here alongside a practical fondness for maps, an admiration for their logic, and a confidence in their usefulness. Despite the wealth of persuasive arguments that maps are everything from inaccurate to instruments of oppression, I don’t want to dismiss something that we depend on so much in the everyday. The image of travelers and tourists poring over maps is a common one, but walkers and residents also depend on different types of maps, memories, or landmarks to find their way around, even for such mundane activities as errands or appointments: street names, subway maps, big trees, crosswalks, billboards, hills or rivers, bus stops or benches, shops or stores, signs of all types. Habitual pathways, of course, are characterized by signs that have faded with familiarity; the routine byways of a pedestrian, for example, may have originally been marked by signs of the built environment, but they are no longer needed when the routine becomes naturalized.

The dignified authority of maps dies hard, but it has by now been challenged rigorously by a number of geographers and cartographers—and also by revolutionary technologies of map-making. Affordable software, increasing access to GIS databases, and a growing reliance on satellite imagery might be making possible the “democratization” of cartography, but technological advances, while they may be useful in settling disputes over boundaries and borders, do not alone make new maps “more” accurate or true. Harley worries, in addition, that the

effect of accelerated technological change—as manifest in digital cartography and geographical information systems—has been to strengthen its posi-

tivist assumptions and it has bred a new arrogance in geography about its supposed value as a mode of access to reality. (231)

In other words, there is a danger of investing in technologically sophisticated maps as the new source of truth without also acknowledging the shifting, fragmentary nature of all forms of knowledge and information.

If we assume that people who never leave their neighborhoods don't really need maps, that assumption ignores the power of a globe or atlas for armchair travel, for dreaming about traveling or imagining other places. Those who do explore unfamiliar places, by choice or by circumstance, often depend on a map and often have the experience of "Hey, here it is! Just like on the map, just like the map says." Something about maps is hugely satisfying, and there's nothing quite like "a good map" to a hiker, tourist, new resident, or real estate agent. However, as this chapter will argue, mapping takes many different forms, and we need to look beyond published and copyrighted two-dimensional maps to understand mapping as a spatial practice. Rhetorical mapping addresses questions of "How do you get there from here?" that have more to do with practices of the everyday than with expeditions of the Royal Geographical Society or van trips on blue highways. "Which bus will take me to Stop and Shop?" "Don't go that way during rush hour." "How far to a good flea market?" "Turn right where the old post office used to be." Since maps have been the subject of intense debate within human geography for several years now, it's important to contextualize that debate and to come to terms with the kinds of information that maps can and cannot give us.

Mental Mapping, Maps That Move

While print and electronic maps are the most familiar forms, "mapping" is increasingly used as a metaphor for charting, understanding, exploring, or organizing. Mental mapping and cognitive mapping are both terms used by educators and researchers to refer to a person's cognitive capacity to understand where things are in relationship to one another, sense of direction, or sense of distance. It's the ability to carry around in our heads organized information or images of cities, especially images that are "soaked in memories and meanings" (Lynch 1).³ A form of imagined geography, mental maps hold the cognitive images in our minds about a place, a route, or an area. We have mental maps of our hometowns or the most familiar places of our childhoods; we have mental maps of our current neighborhoods or campuses. Based on these mental maps, many of us could give directions to a stranger or could sketch the way from A to B. In *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch introduced the concept of cognitive mapping to city planning

by testing the idea of "imageability" through interviews with inhabitants. Principles for urban design, Lynch believed, would develop from a comparison between group images of their city and visual reality. Residents were asked to describe places, sketch locations, or take an imaginary trip through the area.

The techniques of mental mapping are not only useful to city planners. Educators, like the fictional cartographers portrayed on *The West Wing*, know the importance of teaching children spatial sense: children should be able to make a short trip alone to the school library; or tell a driver how to get to their house; or know how far it is to other neighborhoods reported to have better playgrounds. The point of teaching "spatial sense" is not to turn schoolchildren into cartographers, but to make them safe in their lifeworlds and to expand those lifeworlds gradually without endangering or intimidating them. In geographic education, mental mapping usually begins with freehand drawings of a place, proceeds to fieldwork or other types of investigation, and then returns to revising or redrawing the original map, based on new knowledge and understanding (see Mental Mapping and Mental Mapping Project).

Geography educators argue, rightly, that it is an important form of visual and global literacy to be able to read maps. Children should understand something about the relative size of countries, the differences among continents, the way that the sun, for example, affects cultures in dramatically different ways. It matters, for purposes of employment or to increase one's opportunities, to have good map literacy or a strong spatial sense. For example, the navigational skills required for reading a map are similar to those found on a computer interface, but also in very practical terms, how can someone get to a job interview without finding their way there? Here's the case that geography educator Patrick Wiegand makes for children's spatial literacy:

Children's need to understand the spatial relationships of the Earth's land masses will become more important. For example, increasing school use of the Internet and the opportunities offered by videoconferencing will enable children to undertake interactive investigations around the world. They will need a sharper awareness of where places are in relation to each other and how time zones operate. Having a reasonably accurate image of the way the continents are arranged around the globe and the limitations of world maps not only allows us to make better sense of travel and world events, it is [also] one of the building block of international understanding. (6)

Using mental maps, researchers have learned about people's ability to navigate space and to remember places based on mental maps. Wiegand

and Bernadette Srieil, in "Mapping the Place Knowledge of Teachers in Training," asked geography student-teachers to draw a freehand sketch map of the British isles—a "mental map" or "free recall" map as an admittedly partial test of place knowledge. The results, while varied in theme and significance, showed that "all students in the sample drew England 38 percent larger than its actual relative size. The Republic of Ireland and Scotland were shown 45 percent and 20 percent smaller respectively" (195). Similarly, in a large-scale study of mental mapping, researchers collected 3,568 maps of the continents drawn by students in seventy-five universities in fifty-two countries (Monastersky 222). A predictable "home-turf exaggeration" emerged, but even more striking was the consistent pattern by which Europe was enlarged in scale while Africa's dimensions shrank. No matter where students lived, they exaggerated the size of Europe, and a full 80 percent of the maps featured Europe in the middle (Monastersky 222). The point is not, then, that students need to be taught the right scale, but that mental mapping can tell us a great deal about how people perceive the world, and how ideology (i.e., Eurocentrism) is reproduced in images and school exercises.

The legitimate criticisms of mental maps are that most exercises or experiments using them require people to draw, and then drawing ability comes into the picture. Some research subjects may have very accurate and even unique mental maps but not feel comfortable with the activity of drawing or putting those images on paper. This has always been a disadvantage in using mental maps for research, and, of course, as composition readers know very well, cognitive research is often problematic when divorced from the social production of knowledge.

Mental maps, however cognitively housed, are socially constructed. They are a particular form of "imagined geography" that illustrate the complex relationships between the social and the spatial. Most importantly, maps and spatial memory have been shown to relate to gender and class. This means they are not "cognitive" topics but social ones. The research of Peter Orleans from 1967 in Los Angeles provides the most striking example of this: asking residents of L.A. to share their mental maps of urban space, Orleans questioned a wide range of groups and then created composite maps from their responses (Gould and White). Unsurprisingly, the higher the income and the whiter the neighborhood, the richer and more wide-ranging were residents' knowledge of L.A. White respondents from Westwood represented tourist areas and the coast, for example, while black residents in Avalon identified main streets leading to downtown, but other districts were vague entities. Finally, Spanish-speaking residents in Boyle Heights con-

structed the smallest mental maps of all, representing only the immediate area, the City Hall, and the bus depot (Gould and White 17). In other words, leisure time, access to affordable transportation, and above all, feelings of empowerment and safety allow people to explore little-known regions and to broaden and deepen their own "mental maps" of a place or region.

Soja pins a fondness for mental mapping on secondspace epistemologies,

immediately distinguishable by their explanatory concentration on conceived rather than perceived space and their implicit assumption that spatial knowledge is primarily produced through discursively devised representations of space, through the spatial workings of the mind. (*Thirdspace* 78-79).

Artists and architects, urbanists and designers can be found in secondspace, according to Soja, where "the imagined geography tends to become the 'real' geography, with the image or representation coming to define and order the reality" (79). Despite his criticisms, others believe that mental maps and a variety of forms of mapping can become vital tools in exploring people's understanding of space, or the cultural and social spaces that mark inclusions or exclusions: "Just as individuals need cognitive maps of their cities to negotiate their spatial environment, so we need maps of society to intelligently analyse, discuss and intervene in social processes" (Gregory, Martin, and Smith 10).

One form of mapping can be found in William Least Heat-Moon's *PrairyErth*. Subtitled "A Deep Map," his book captures the character, history, and richness of Chase County, Kansas, in the Flint Hills, "the last remaining grand expanse of tallgrass prairie in America" (12). Using the image of a grid to organize Chase County into twelve quadrangles, and hoping that coordinates would lead to connections (15), Least Heat-Moon's chapters—his in-depth visits to each quadrangle—all begin with sections "From the Commonplace Book" and "In the Quadrangle." His deep map is mostly textual rather than visual; the rare visual maps he includes are two-dimensional and not even in color. But to make this map, for thirty months Least Heat-Moon walks across approximately 780 square miles of landscape and explores a dozen small towns; he searches county records, talks to residents, and collects Native American legends. Partly geographic and partly anthropologic, the deep map merges botany, geology, history, and anthropology; Least Heat-Moon is explorer and recorder and narrator. Least Heat-Moon's deep map is a story written geographically, and illustrates vividly how much we need stories for our maps as well as maps for our stories.

Within rhetoric and composition studies, Ralph Cintron uses mapping to situate his ethnographic study of *Angels' Town: Chero Ways, Gang Life*,

and *Rhetorics of the Everyday*. His second chapter, titled "Mapping/Texting," uses a map of Angelstown (the size of a double bed) as an example of the discourses of measurement, particularly reduction (17); distinctions between grids and circuitry; and the rhetoric of place names (20). A map is "one kind of optical knowledge that comes into being after real space overwhelms the eye" (29); it is a material representation of space, one that furthers "the desire to conquer and colonize," desires made possible by the processes of mapping and texting (35).

Influenced by Lynch, Least Heat-Moon, Cintron, and others, I rely in this chapter on overlapping versions of mapping to argue that mapping as a concept helps us understand the social production of space and people's experiences in space, but our concept of mapping must include the real and imagined and needs to be drawn from the actual experiences of sociospatial beings. Mental maps are drawn by people's experience in space and with specific places or locations—experiences that have everything to do with class, race, gender, age, mobility, and sexuality. Identity is constructed in place, via place, and I hope to build on that assertion both by qualitative research methodologies and through the rich literatures of cultural geography.

A Study: Mental Maps and Living in Leeds

I often rode the bus in Leeds from St. Michael's to the Headrow, observing the politics of space even on a double-decker bus: young adults in groups, probably students, always go upstairs. Young men riding alone go up, too. Young women alone, though, stay down. Do the students and younger riders consciously leave the lower level seats for pensioners or mothers with children—those who cannot navigate the stairwell—or do they want to "claim" the upper deck, where the view is better and the driver's gaze removed?

In order to explore the relationship between the spatial and the social in a concrete and practical way, I interviewed eight students in a cultural geographies class at Leeds University about their experiences in Leeds, with getting around the city, with living and working there as students.⁴ My purpose was to explore the everyday material existence of university students in the "mundane landscape" of the campus, the surrounding area, their housing, and the other places of their social and spatial lifeworlds. What places did these students see as contested, desirable, or dangerous? Which places did they avoid or feel excluded from? How are their experiences in space shaped by their identities as students, who are typically transient members of learning communities? In what ways do students—straddling

the borders of a number of communities—describe geographically-constructed difference? My analysis of the interview transcripts suggests that an awareness of the workings of geographic exclusion helps us come to terms with the "invisible" types of difference that are the hardest to identify and understand. Geographies of exclusion (Sibley) are worth far more of our attention as we attempt to understand the various ways in which difference is encoded.

I asked for volunteers and conducted managed conversations with eight students from the third-year cultural geographies module in which I was a participant observer in the spring term of 2000. While participants were certainly not randomly selected, they were all third-years, all seeking BA degrees in geography, and all white. With the social advantages of race and excellent educational backgrounds (only about the top 10 percent of all eligible college-age students are accepted into university), the students with whom I worked were very representative of "the student body" at Leeds.

Here's how the interview project began: during a workshop early in the term, the lecturer asked students to do a version of a mental mapping exercise as a sort of pre-writing activity to their research project on a place new to their experience. "Tom" (all names are pseudonyms) gave students, in pairs, a photocopy of an Ordnance Survey map of Leeds (see fig. 3.2) and asked them to identify four types of areas: no-go, ethnic, conflict, and normal. Using colored markers, students were to shade in or outline these types of areas and then get together to compare and discuss their shadings.

I was immediately struck—and troubled—by Tom's terms for these categories. "Normal to whom?" I wanted to ask. "No-go for whom?" "Doesn't it depend on gender, race, class, modes of transport, and abilities?" I didn't raise these questions that day, but the classroom activity—observing students and listening in on their decisions about what to mark—sparked my interest in one-on-one interviews with students about their mental maps of Leeds. I combined, then, a form of mental mapping with one-to-one semistructured interviews.⁵ The interviews, like the activity in class, asked students to sit with a map of Leeds and colored markers and to talk about their *personal* definitions of and experiences with the following categories (changed slightly from those in class): "no-go," "ethnic," and "desirable."

The interview transcripts (a total of approximately seventy-eight pages) touch on a range of issues well beyond the three categories. The eight students (four males and four females) talked about their main modes of transport and their habitual routes in getting around the city; they described types of housing that worked as signifiers for them; they shared anecdotes of feeling fearful or excluded; they discussed how they had "come to know"



Fig. 3.2. Ordnance Survey map of Leeds proper. Used with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright, NC/01/577.

about certain places; and they made comparisons between Leeds and their own hometowns. One of the striking findings of this data is that these students, despite their training as human geographers, stuck to a very limited area within Leeds and were either reluctant or totally uninterested in exploring other parts of the city. They also held strong opinions—some of those uninformed—about particular neighborhoods. The interview data I share below supports the argument of feminist geographers Geraldine Pratt and Susan Hanson, “that most people are fixed in and by space. Understanding these processes provides one way of seeing differences as socially constructed” (12).

The (Confined) Spatiality of Social Lives

In “Geography and the Construction of Difference,” Geraldine Pratt and Susan Hanson point out the tension between postmodern views of experiencing space and more everyday and down-to-earth realities:

Much has been made of the shrinking world, of the increasing ease of travel and communication, and of the resulting homogenisation of space around the globe. Although the world is indeed increasingly well connected, we must hold this in balance with the observation that *most people live intensely local lives*; their homes, work places, recreation, shopping, friends, and often family are all located within a relatively small orbit. The simple and obvious fact that overcoming distance requires time and money means that the everyday events of daily life are well grounded within a circumscribed arena. (10–11, my emphasis)

A passage from my interview with “Elaine,” which highlights students’ reluctance to stray from well-defined student areas, offers considerable support for Pratt and Hanson’s assertion. Here’s the passage in full.⁶

- I: Anything else you want to say about your map of Leeds?
 E: Not many details is there? [laughs]
 I: Well, why do you say that or why do you suppose that is?
 E: It’s just a general knowledge that I don’t really have of the area; I think I know Leeds well, but all I know is like Headingley to the city center—I know the city center quite well, but there’s a general lack of details thing.
 I: Well, do you think that’s because . . . you’re a student?
 E: Uh-huh.
 I: And your particular place and time in life?
 E: I think so but not necessarily ‘cause when I was working in Comet [a retail store] back in the summer, there were people there that didn’t have a clue about north of Leeds or where I live.
 I: Any part?

- E:* Yeah, and most of them had lived there all their lives.
- I:* So it's not necessarily about being a student; it's about . . .
- E:* It's like your neighborhood is your whole life, isn't it? . . . People identify with their neighborhood, and if you've got everything there, then you didn't need to go out of it, and you're safe in this area where you live 'cause that's where the home is.
- I:* So you haven't really felt compelled to explore . . . the areas of Leeds that you don't know.
- E:* No, not really, no. I suppose it brings questions of home into it, doesn't it? 'cause Headingley is my home at the minute, so therefore that's where I'm going to spend the majority of my time.

All eight of the participants commented on their own neighborhoods and their limited knowledge of the city of Leeds. Mitchell says, "I don't really know too many areas of Leeds because when you're a student you're only really going between the university, your house, and into the city center," and he repeats the point about his ignorance of Leeds twice more. Anna puts the issue rather succinctly: "because I have no need to go very far out, I mean my knowledge of Leeds is pretty much concentrated into that student area or where students live." Zoe compared her limited sense of place in Leeds with her similar experience in London:

I don't really feel like I know Leeds at all really 'cause I only know a narrow corridor; . . . a bit strange really [. . .] but I suppose like if you're living in London, I mean I only knew my borough, I only knew that really well; I didn't know that much of the rest of London at all.

Julian believes that most people's familiar territory occurs within a limited radius:

I only know sort of a limited, I think you'll find this with everybody else, they've got a sort of chunk of Leeds that they know quite well [. . .] You've got a sort of radius—if you live in that, like I live in that so I've got a radius of about five miles either side of that which I know quite well, which is everywhere within walking distance basically.

Some were quite matter-of-fact about their ignorance of the city while others seemed a bit regretful that they had not done more to explore a wider range of places. Sheila, in particular, seemed to feel that she had failed somehow as a geographer in her tendency to stick to student areas, but she explains her behavior in terms of security and convenience.

- S:* I'm totally ashamed of myself for the fact that I've just basically been on this road here which is just basically where students live—the town center and—

- I:* Between the city center and—
- S:* And I'd say even as far as Headingley—
- I:* Just up the A660, right?
- S:* That's it. That's the area where students all live; that's where all the pubs are, the clubs are in town and basically I mean, I've been, the area that I've functioned in is so restricted I'm almost ashamed of myself, but—
- I:* It's not because you're afraid, it's because—
- S:* No, it's because I can't, it's because . . . everything I want is here [taps finger on map] which is really bad. I've got friends who've gone out into the countryside and explored all around, but I'm bored with that because that's what it's like when I'm at home [in Wales]. Everything I want is, has been along this road, and students do feel like quite secure there I suppose as well.
- I:* Well it's their, their culture.
- S:* Yeah, put it this way: [. . .] I wouldn't *not* go to Bramley for the day 'cause I'm a student, but I wouldn't want to live there amongst . . . I'd want to live—
- I:* With students?
- S:* Yeah! Definitely and that's probably some sort of security issue there and also because you know it's just that there's four cinemas, . . . there's all my friends, there's loads of pubs, and it's just—
- I:* Convenient?
- S:* It's convenient, yeah, which I'm quite, I am ashamed of it, I should've been around a bit more but—
- I:* Well, it's about who you are right now, I guess.

Students were able to name the reasons for their restricted knowledge of Leeds, namely the convenience and a desire to share in "student life," defined in part by being surrounded by other students. If "everything they need is there" in the student neighborhoods, why should (white, middle-class) college students venture into unknown territory? They relied very much on what friends and acquaintances had told them about certain places, and "things they'd heard" as well as their own impressions of places formed through their regular routes through Leeds. Except for Sheila, they accepted their confined spatiality as a fact of life, a reality connected either to their position as students or to the geographic given that "for many people in the world, everyday life continues to take place within a restricted locale" and that "the 'localization' of most of everyday life is indisputable" (McDowell, *Gender* 2–3).

Students' identities as students—their embodied practices—kept them from venturing into certain areas where they had strong feelings that they weren't welcome or would feel "out of place." At my suggestion, students used the term "no-go" to name and discuss places where they personally

would not feel safe.⁷ Anna talks about one no-go area, determined for her by one (accidental) drive through the area and information from others:

I wouldn't feel comfortable walking down Chapletown at any time just because I'm obviously not [a resident]; I don't think I would fit in there, I mean the kids that hang about on the streets there [. . .] the people who are sort of my age tend to be hanging around in, we call 'em pikeys which is like Adidas pants and all the girls have their hair scraped up onto their heads and spiral perms with blonde hair and I'd be, just by standing there it'd be obvious that I wasn't one of them, so I just wouldn't stop.

Students were well aware of the features that marked them as students and used these differences to explain their isolation from many areas of the city. Elaine can't really name the areas but says "some of the ones down here [in south Leeds] because, just because of my position in Leeds at the moment as a student they wouldn't appreciate us going there." When I asked her to elaborate, she admits that she is stereotyping the areas or basing her notions on hearsay but also is clear that her reluctance to enter these areas comes from her identity: "just because I'm, mind, a student with student feelings putting myself into one of these like council estates it wouldn't be a wise thing to do; you just don't go there, just for your own safety."

These students have good reasons to worry about their own safety, as most of the participants mention incidents where they had abuse directed at them or felt vulnerable because of crimes against students. Elaine clarifies that things can happen even in daylight, even in residential areas: "I've had little groups of kids throw stones at you and stuff." Liam talks about being spat upon as he walked by "kids who sit on walls," but he emphasized that he didn't take it personally. In naming no-go areas, Liam describes an area near his house: "There's footpaths down at the bottom of that—I wouldn't actually go up there for fear of being, well, I get abuse shouted at me, every now and again, all students do I suppose, but then there's bricks in there, and I wouldn't walk down that way at night." While he seems quite casual about the verbal abuse, Liam avoids an area where greater physical harm could be done. In addition, both Sheila and Anna narrate the details of a crime scheme in this area of Leeds where (male) students are grabbed off the streets at night and taken to cash points, where they are forced to withdraw money to give to their attackers. This pattern had been repeated three or four times over a few months, and most students were well aware of it.

In less threatening ways, however, students were also made aware that they were unwelcome in certain areas, that they were trespassers in areas that "belonged" to other social groups. Half of the students interviewed talked about their tentative status, even in neighborhoods—in this case,

Hyde Park—full of student dwellers. Hyde Park, a neighborhood near the university occupied by both students and Asians,⁸ is the epitome of a contested place, where the local businesses' economic dependence on students bred an attendant feeling of resentment of them. In this space, students realize their economic clout but are equally aware of their temporary status as residents. In the next section, I try to illustrate further the complexities of Hyde Park as both realandimagined space, where the construction of difference can be illustrated by conflicts related to liminal spaces and residential segregation.

Contested Spaces

On a gray afternoon in February, taking my usual route from campus to Headingley, I overheard one side of a mobile phone conversation, where a male student said to his caller, "I'm walking through Hyde Park. . . . No, the dodgy one. In Leeds."

Hyde Park is most often associated with London, but that confusion is only one of many layers of complicated meaning affixed to this place. I begin with Hyde Park, the dodgy one in Leeds, because it emerged in these interviews as a place marked by contestation and controversy, while it was also obviously a gathering place and a playground. It served the functions that city parks fulfill—it was a pleasantly green respite from the otherwise brick and stone environment—and it was also perceived to be a dangerous place. As one geographer has noted, "Parks are typical of those spaces that make the edge of the street ambiguous, that extend the space the street signifies" (Crouch 165). It was often filled with people using the space in various ways; on a nice day, you could see dogs being walked, children on the playground, older teens on the skateboard ramp or basketball court, pick-up football matches, and many people just passing through on their way to and from the university or towards the Hyde Park bus stop on one edge of the park. However, at dusk or after dark, it took on a different identity, and for women, at least, even the streets surrounding the park take on a sinister quality.

For residents of Leeds, "Hyde Park" refers to both a park, with clear borders, and a neighborhood, with boundaries less obvious. Hyde Park is both a clearly bound green space, with playground areas and trees lining the sidewalks, and also a residential area characterized by red-brick terraced housing, a shopping area, and at least one major traffic artery (the Orley road). I often had to ask students to clarify whether they meant Hyde Park as *park* or as neighborhood, and this distinction is just one layer of the contestations surrounding this space. On the city of Leeds ward map, Hyde

Park is part of the Headingley ward. One would have to “know the area,” in experiential ways, to distinguish the boundaries between Hyde Park and other parts of the Headingley ward (including Headingley the residential and commercial district within the voting ward of Headingley) (Leeds City Council). Rates for rentals, higher in Headingley, and the number of “ethnic” shops, higher in Hyde Park, can serve to distinguish between the two areas.⁹ On the northwestern edge of the university, the park serves as a *space in between* the campus and some of the most student-populated neighborhoods in Leeds—streets that are also more permanently occupied by a very diverse group of residents.

Hundreds of pedestrians and cyclists, making their way to or from the university, walk through Hyde Park, both as a shortcut to certain parts of campus and to avoid or take a break from the busy and noisy main road. My first reaction to it was a very pleasant one—after a mile of walking on an exhaust-fumed main road, I welcomed a calmer green space. However, I was to learn later that Hyde Park is considered by most students to be unsafe at certain times or in certain situations. In addition, students consider Hyde Park the neighborhood to be, simultaneously, terrible, rundown, and full of character. Even though those I interviewed called it “student land,” it is also presented in social geography lectures as one of the most ethnic areas in Leeds, occupied mostly by South Asians, many of whom run businesses: shops, taxi stands, takeaway restaurants. I want to write about Hyde Park here to illustrate how contested places can be. Hyde Park operates as a complicated signifier for the students I interviewed and supports the argument that even the most precise, sophisticated map cannot represent much about a place except where it exists in (geometric) relationship to other places.

My own understanding of Hyde Park, and all its contestations, comes from walking through the area a few days a week and from living in Headingley, adjacent to Hyde Park the neighborhood. But none of my experiences as a transient resident prepared me for the strong reactions most of the students I interviewed had towards Hyde Park or the strong associations or a particularly resonant sense of place.

When asked how she knew that Hyde Park was an ethnic area, Elaine replied, “I know about Hyde Park because we live round there, so we have to walk through that.” She doesn’t pause to clarify what “that” is, but given her wording and tone, it is clearly distasteful (why didn’t she say “we have to walk through *there*”?). Elaine also says: “I’ve been in Hyde Park in the middle of the night, and it’s like oh my gosh I’m so scared.” When I asked her whether she meant the park itself or the neighborhood, she said “both

really,” but she emphasized that “when it goes dark, you don’t walk through the park, you walk around it.”

Elaine lives nearby, in Headingley, but she doesn’t hesitate to draw firm boundaries between the two (despite the fact that firm boundaries are not drawn by the city). Headingley is, in fact, considered by Elaine to be a desirable area: “I suppose at the minute, I’d say Headingley is desirable to me because it is a student area and it’s very accessible to the center of town. Hopefully when I finish next year I want to stay in Headingley; I don’t want to move out; everything is just there for you.” She clarifies that it’s not so much physical attractiveness that makes the area desirable but “it’s just everything’s there in a community; there’s young people and lots of services, like good bus routes into town and takeaways, the cinema, everything.” Elaine ignores the fact that Hyde Park is also accessible to the city center; also has a cinema (see fig. 3.3) as well as a number of shops. What Hyde Park does not have, unlike Headingley, is a number of pubs; what it *does* have are a number of nonwhite and nonstudent residents.

Anna’s boyfriend lives in Hyde Park, but she attributes her avoidance of the area to her upbringing in a small village, a small-town experience that cultivated in her a sharp awareness of her surroundings for city life: “Because I’m from a little country village I’m more aware of that than a lot of other people; I never walk through Hyde Park even though a lot of my friends don’t believe it’s violent.”

Her geographic upbringing and gender make Anna notice many of the details that then contribute to her judgment about Hyde Park:

Even walking through Hyde Park, you can see that it’s not a desirable place to live. It’s the sort of place that people go and live when they’re students, and they’re fine ’cause they can treat it as student land, but then when they leave, you know, as soon as they stop being students they want to go somewhere nice. The reason it’s not nice is because there’s bars over all the windows, there’s robberies and people driving around in cars with darkened windows a lot with the music coming out—... so I’m going to ring that in ethnic as well. I don’t know if that’s because it’s ethnic or not, or if it’s just because it’s so run down ... there’s rubbish in the streets; there’s stray cats everywhere; there’s gangs and gangs of Asian kids playing behind the terraced houses on the back streets.

According to Anna and others, Brudenell Road (see fig. 3.4) is the clearest signifier of an “Asian street,” but Anna says, “To be honest, the students and the Asians live side-by-side.”¹⁰ Brudenell Road is characterized by, says Liam, “a lot of ethnic shops and food places—there’s a big concentration of them. When I walk round there—I’ve got a couple of friends who live

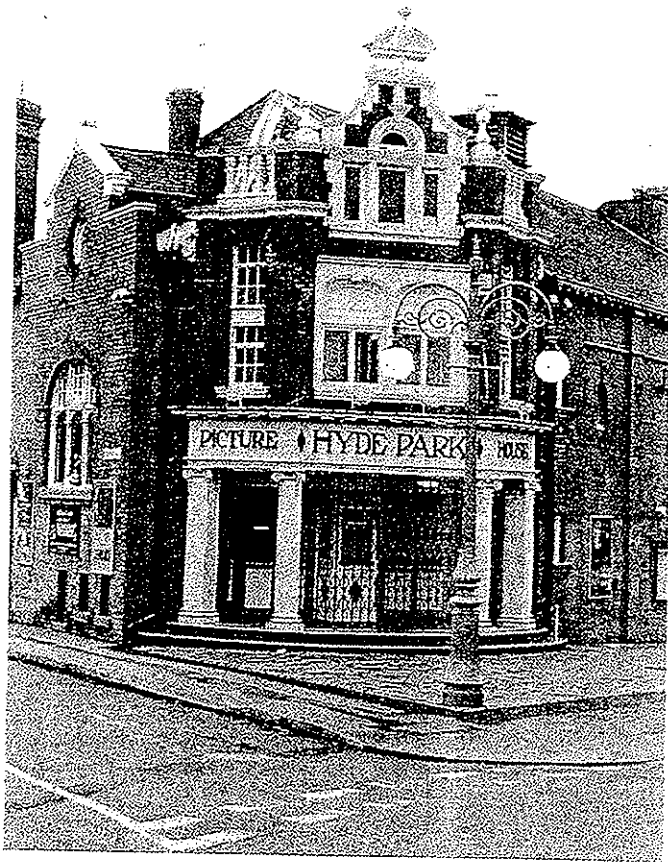


Fig. 3.3. Hyde Park cinema. Photo by Randy Blackburn.

down there—there's always more ethnic minorities walking around than you see white people." Mitchell, who calls Hyde Park "definitely one of the ethnic areas," also specifically mentions "a lot of Asian shops like grocery shops and meat shops' Halal signs."

Sheila was the only student of the eight interviewed who lived in Hyde Park by choice: "I live in this area here—it's Hyde Park and it's definitely ethnic 'cause there's a lot of like Asian families that live in and around here; I've been there so I know." Since all of her friends live there too, Sheila is careful to distinguish between Hyde Park the neighborhood and Hyde Park the park.



Fig. 3.4. A small section of Brudenell Road, Hyde Park. Photo by Randy Blackburn.

I: Would you walk in Hyde Park, at night?

S: Hyde, the actual park? No, you never walk through Hyde Park, that's definitely a no-go area; I'll mark that one actually. . . . The actual park is not lit; it's really dark; actually the council should probably spend a bit of money on lighting. Of course I'd walk through at night but in a massive gang, I'm talking four plus. Walk through coming back home from the university union Old Bar and go home; I'd walk through there if there's more than four of us usually—usually if there's a lad as well but *never* just me and my friends walking in from the union, always round the side of the park, never through the park.

I: Even in the daytime you go around?

S: The worst time apparently for like student muggings or other incidents is around five or six o'clock at night when it's dark, so going home from uni, that's the time I usually go, between half five and seven at night I'm usually on my way home so then I would always go around the side.

I: And that's better lit?

S: It's better lit and there's just traffic and houses.

I: More people?

S: Yeah, there's loads of students walk down there; I mean 'cause it's terrifying when you're walking through the park and it's dark and someone comes from the opposite direction and you're oh no, and you realize that there's students so it's okay, and you think oh it's just students so they're legitimate, which is a bad thing to think anyway. [laughter]

Sheila's relief at seeing other students, which she admits is problematic, may

illustrate the high ethnic population of Hyde Park. Even Sheila, who enjoys living in Hyde Park for its diversity, expresses her sense of relief at encountering other students at night—rather than, one assumes, other locals who may not be white.

Mitchell and Anna both talk about the contested claims to residency status or the about the contestation over who belongs in this neighborhood and who doesn't. Mitchell says,

I know people who live in the Hyde Park area, and their next door neighbors who're Asian come round and knock on their door and say, "Why are you living here, this is an Asian area." So I think as well as white people saying it's an ethnic or Asian area, Asians see it as an ethnic area themselves.

Anna relates her own experience as a visitor and nonresident:

A: Basically I went to a friend's house there [in the Hyde Park area], and we're all sitting in the lounge having a cup of tea or something, and these kids were climbing on the bars in front of the windows climbing across the bars [imitates them], "Oy mister, mister, give us this, give us that," and they [my friends] can't put any, any of their washing out, and there are literally—there are sort of bars over the windows to stop the kids coming in, and they're inside the house and that's their territory—soon as you step outside the house then it's almost like it's Asian people's territory, really, . . . so

I: They'll ask you things like—

A: What are you doing here, what are you doing here. If you're in the way, or if you're wanting to get past them, it's fine if . . . you, you know, keep yourself to yourself and you've been quite separate about it, but if you—if there's any attempt to mix in any sense then, that, you know, I'd be nervous about it, definitely, so you tend to sort of keep yourself to yourself and walk with your head high and hopefully no one will bother you.

Anna identifies in this passage what David Sibley, in *Geographies of Exclusion*, calls a liminal zone, spaces of ambiguity where the categories of inside/outside, public/private, or home/street become blurred or uncertain. Sibley asserts "for the individual or group socialized into believing that the separation of categories is necessary or desirable, the liminal zone is a source of anxiety" (33). If students are in their homes, they are "safe," but Anna's anxiety begins when she has to cross the threshold, enter the streets, and move through the neighborhood.

In these mixed residential areas, where races and classes share limited space, inevitable conflicts arise, not just from racial or economic differences but from a whole set of issues that are deeply embedded in English culture

and the experience of immigrants. Elaine tells a story that illustrates these layers of tensions:

On our street, there's an Asian lady that lives opposite us, and we've always said "Oh look, she's got a lot of plants." Everything in her garden looks really nice. We had a friend come and stay with us and she gave us a window box, so we put it out on the back of our kitchen window which doesn't face her house—we put it inside. Well, one day in the summer came a knock on our back door, and we never use our back door, so it's like, oh, who's that? So we open the door, and there's this lady, and she accused us of stealing her window box, and we were just like [laughs], "Come on now this is ridiculous." And then she started going on about how we were students and we come from middle-class families, which isn't necessarily true, and how just that we think we're better than everybody else and tra la la.

Several things about Elaine's brief narrative give us some insight into the sociospatial construction of difference and everyday conflicts related to co-existing in shared neighborhoods. The permanent resident takes great pride in her garden and works hard at maintaining the flowers and plants, which the students do notice and appreciate; however, one assumes that the student residents have never shared their appreciation with their neighbor in a conversation that may have preceded this encounter. When a single window box appears on the students' otherwise unadorned flat, the gardener notices, even though it doesn't face her house. The gardening neighbor comes to the back door, a door that the students never use, giving an immediate sign that this visitor does not belong—and doesn't want to. (Does she walk around to the back because she wants this conversation to take place "off the street"? Because she feels unworthy to come in the front? Or because she wants to make her case next to the window box in question?) For whatever reason, the neighbor woman resists the students' habitual spatial practice of always using the front door. Her decision to knock at the back door forces students to encounter her in different territory, somewhat unfamiliar to them. As this woman's confrontation of her student neighbors suggests, Asians' own exclusions from so many neighborhoods and from "middle England" in general leads them to want to claim Hyde Park as their own. They see students as trespassers in the streets where they, in fact, feel somewhat protected, by virtue of residential segregation, from confrontations with non-Asians. They want to keep students out to increase their own sense of belonging.

The students I interviewed did not openly challenge others' claims that they didn't belong; they recognized that other residents were far more permanent, with more of a stake in the area. Some students were willing to

admit that they didn't always make "good neighbors"; Mitchell talks about how students don't care for their houses (because they'll lose their security deposit anyway). Elaine, however, describes an "antistudent sentiment" that she claims is held by most locals: "The locals think that we come in and make loads of noise and create rubbish and get drunk and we're hooligans; and they've just got quite a lot of negative feelings against us."

Sheila thinks the antistudent attitudes result from a very limited form of contact between the two groups: the Asian businesses provide services to students, and students are interested in or dependent on the Asians only as "service providers." The students are consumers, and the businesses need them to survive.

Yeah, the only thing I do dislike about [Hyde Park] a lot is the fact the community's so divided, students and you know, the Asian families and businesses. The only thing you ever come into contact with people for unfortunately is buying burgers from the takeaway or taxis; that's the only contact. [...] I think that students, well I know that students are really resented by the locals—cause we can really misbehave.

For the residents, students' economic clout often overrides residents' resentment of their noise and "hooligan" behaviors. Sheila remarks about how "welcomed" the students feel when they return to Leeds in September: "We come back and the taxi drivers always say 'Oh I'm so glad to have you back.' You know, students do bring most of the money into the area and businesses, especially all the takeaways."

As Sibley says, "In the interaction of people and the built environment, it is a truism that space is contested but relatively trivial conflicts can provide clues about power relations and the role of space in social control" (xiii). It's impossible to tell how serious or how trivial some of these encounters were between students and the Hyde Park residents; however, it's clear that the mix of social differences, beyond "race" or "class," causes boundaries or borders to shift and slide; those unsure of their place use tactics, like Anna's, of "keeping herself to herself" in order to get through territory that belongs to others.

These students' accounts of their experiences in and reactions to contested places like Hyde Park can tell us a great deal about the construction and reproduction of cultural difference. Places can only be contested, however, if there is some conflict, a mix and diversity that some students will find unnerving while others will find it refreshing. With one exception, these students were willing, theoretically, to live in Hyde Park, or they knew plenty of students who did; it was convenient and relatively inexpensive. Other

places in Leeds, however, were no-go, a category that Tom introduced in the initial mapping activity in the class workshop and that I also used to question students about areas of Leeds into which they would not venture.

No-Go Areas

As I walked to and from campus that spring, geography lectures in my head, I tried to pay attention to my habitual pathways and variations from it. In one spot along the Otley Road, in front of several billboards, pedestrians had worn a path between the billboards and the backs of several buildings. Shadowed and often damp, it was a mathematical shortcut but too intimidating for me, too narrow and deserted looking. I couldn't make myself walk through it alone.

In the mid-1980s, following violent clashes between the police and the black community in London, the press and political discourse used repeatedly the term "no-go area," as Michael Keith explains, a phrase with roots in Northern Ireland, "a phrase that implied that there were parts of British cities which the police were unwilling or unable to patrol" (39). Calling it term a surrounded with mystification, Keith acknowledges the pejorative use of the term but presents two fallacies of its use: "one that this phenomenon is new to mainland Britain, the other that it is causally related to the number of crimes committed by black people" (40). These students did report one such area in Leeds, an area that the police entered only reluctantly and therefore a distinct no-go area, in keeping with the evolution of the term. For this mental mapping exercise, however, I encouraged students to define no-go areas (and the others as well) with whatever terms they chose; Liam, for example, defines no-go areas as those where "I wouldn't feel safe at night, but I suppose in the daytime as well." Elaine says for her, no-go areas are all about fear, "whether or not I've got myself in a position of vulnerability."

Liam identifies Chapletown as "notorious," something he knows by reputation rather than experience. Chapletown was, in fact, the most often named no-go area for these students. Elaine says that there's a special police force unit there, and Mitchell refers to information they received in the halls of residence during first year:

There was quite a big thing about not going to Chapletown during the day, and don't even think about going at night, because it's unsafe and you'll get mugged. Also in lectures on social geography, we were told that it's an area where if you do get mugged the police won't do anything because they'll say, "Well, what are you doing here in the first place?"

Sheila confirms this, that first-years are advised to stay out of there, and that social geography lectures identified Chapletown as a site of deviance and crime, that it is a no-go area for the police.

Liam and Sheila and most of the group agree about what constitutes a no-go area in terms of the physical characteristics. Sheila lists "some of the characteristics of urban deprivation like more graffiti, more litter, vandalism; . . . and the shops tend to have physical barriers like grilling on the windows." Liam mentions twice the feature of terraced housing as well as vandalism: "housing is terraced, . . . litter everywhere, kids running around screaming." Note the similarity to Julian's description of a no-go area: "Everything's boarded up, and there's nobody about. . . . You see burned out cars and broken windows; you see high security fences everywhere and rubbish strewn everywhere and a few kids perhaps running around the place looking wild." Zoe mentions litter repeatedly to describe no-go areas, as well as "back-to-back houses, really run down."

Although there was considerable agreement about one no-go place (Chapletown) and about the physical signs of urban deprivation, no-go, like all neat and tidy categories for capturing a sense of place, didn't quite apply to some more nuanced or complex places. Mitchell: "So I suppose although Hyde Park's quite a green area, it's seen as an undesirable park with undesirable houses around it." Liam makes it very clear that he considers Burley "quite a scrubby area," but he's not exactly frightened to be there: "I mean if I walked through Burley, I wouldn't think someone's gonna come at me. I just don't like the feel of the place; I just don't like it."

Anna explains that for her, Hyde Park is not exactly no-go but that she approaches it with some trepidation or what she calls "provisos"—her own improvised rules for navigating the area:

So yeah, I walk a lot, I walk from university home to Headingley, but I always walk along the Otley Road; I don't walk through Hyde Park, unless someone's walking through Hyde Park with me and they prefer to go that way. Once I'm out of Hyde Park, I walk up Cardigan Road without a problem; Cardigan Road's fine, it's just . . . it's just Hyde Park that I don't like, and walking down Victoria Road's fine as well 'cause it's on the edge, isn't it?

"On the edge" is safer, then, than being in the thick of it. Liam is one of the few students who acknowledges that people actually *live* in no-go areas:

Having said that [about Burley], I live in Woodhouse, and a lot of people think of Woodhouse as being a not very nice area because it's inner city and it's not aesthetically pleasing to look at, but in fact, living there I know it's really only kids that cause trouble. I feel quite safe walking around Wood-

house, but I suppose that's only because it's my home. . . . I think of Burley as being quite a scrubby area, for want of a better word, but people who live there might not think so.

Mitchell also mentions Burley, but as a no-go area based on "what people told me about it, because of the riots that happened there." According to newspaper accounts, however, the riots were in Hyde Park.

Riots in Leeds erupted in both July 1995 and May 1997. According to newspaper accounts, the 1995 conflicts, in Hyde Park, left a pub in smoking ruins and on successive nights, attracted between fifty and a hundred youths to the area, where they attacked police with stones (Wilkinson). Those who set the pub alight were reacting to police raids on The Jolly Brewer and claimed that it was "the center of a police surveillance operation" for drug dealing and robbery, which the reporter confirmed. Although there were no arrests and only one person slightly injured, these are the "riots" that Zoe, for example, referred to in trying to name her aversion to Hyde Park.

The 1997 riot was more complicated. Centered in Harehills, where the minarets of a new mosque are visible on the skyline, an Indian shop owner made a "tactless" decision to stock a video about the Indo-Pakistan conflict which features a Koran being flung to the ground" (Wainwright). A crowd of three hundred Muslim youths gathered, throwing stones and threatening arson. The police response, a "high-profile response" (i.e., with riot police) was blamed for making the situation worse, and officials called it the worst violence among British Muslims since *The Satanic Verses* was publicly burned in Bradford. None of the students I interviewed lived in Harehills, but one group did explore part of it for their streetwork projects, the subject of the next chapter.

Liam also assumes that there have been riots in Chapletown, though he's quick to point out that he hasn't actually been there himself. From his knowledge of Manchester, Liam draws parallels between the worst-by-reputation areas of Manchester (Northside and Hume) with Leeds's Chapletown and assumes that the area is defined by drugs and prostitution. But the main marker for no-go areas for Liam, is that of housing: "See, I'd actually go around Burley rather than walking through the center, you know there's quite a lot of terraced housing near the bottom of the hill from the university; . . . there's a lot of housing around there that I wouldn't walk through at all."

In describing where she lives and how she gets around Leeds, Zoe mentions an area that, while surrounded by places she considers safe, is nevertheless an island of no-go. Near her home in Meanwood, this area represents a complicated set of boundaries.

- Z: This is Meanwood Road, and I live just off the ridge just up here, but as you walk into the center of town like here, it's not nice—actually I shouldn't have put that bit as desirable 'cause that's Little London there, in here [see fig. 3.5].
- I: Is Little London good or not?
- Z: No, it's horrible. {laughs}
- I: Why?
- Z: Little London is . . . , well it's in Woodhouse I suppose . . . Little London is like here.
- I: Okay.
- Z: I live just before Little London; it's not nice at all.
- I: So what characterizes Little London, I mean how do you *know* that that's Little London?
- Z: Because all the houses are the same—it's all council houses; there's a lot of tower blocks as well; I mean there's about five tower blocks; they're all—all the roads are called after London stations, and there's a Little London community center, but basically all the houses look the same, and then it suddenly changes when you get out of that. But it's not nice at all because I suppose a very poor area and what people have said about it as well; I think there's quite a lot of crime that goes on round there.
- I: Okay, so, in getting from your house to the city center, do you avoid Little London?
- Z: Oh, yeah, definitely. Where I live it would be quicker for me to just walk down the main road to get on to the interchange here, and then there's this sort of pedestrian park that goes through the tower blocks of Little London towards the city center, but there's no way I'd walk there because, I just wouldn't want to.

Desire and Place

Despite students' claims not to know much about Leeds, they could be quite precise, like Zoe is above, about the places they feel comfortable in and those they are determined to avoid, even if it means going the long way round. Students were also quite clear about the desirable areas of the city, characterized by the amount of green space, the type of housing, feelings of familiarity, and a sense of community. Open space, green space, and unoccupied land hold a very high value in England, of course, and students' comments certainly reflected this ideology as well as their middle-class upbringings and general inexperience in strange cities. With a couple of exceptions, none of the students was living in a place they identified as desirable, and while their definitions of desirable varied depending on students' background or future plans, students unfailingly pointed out the same areas as being "very nice, very posh."



Fig. 3.5. A part of Little London. Photo by Randy Blackburn.

Elaine identifies a specific area of Leeds, Adel, "cause it's rich with big houses; that's the majority of the north really," and when asked to identify what she meant by desirable, Elaine answered, "Mine's materialistic I suppose, big house, nice car, everything that you can visually see in the neighborhood . . . big houses, nice cars and a kind of suburban life, middle England [laughs]." Anna names Beckett Park as an area where she feels "quite happy walking around; it's quite green and tidy and everyone's got their green wheelie-bins out, and people wash their cars on Saturday mornings [laughs]."

The type of housing is one of the most obvious indicators of desirability. Students most often mentioned detached or large semidetached houses with walls and cul-de-sacs. And as Mitchell explains it, houses need gardens to be desirable:

I think the houses in this area are still back-to-back houses, but they've made real front gardens and are set back off the road, so they appear to be more desirable . . . whereas if you're living in the back-to-backs in Hyde Park or Burley, your front door is right on the pavement.

Without a driveway as well, according to Mitchell, your car (your stuff) belongs to "the actual street."

These definitions of desirable hinge on green space, so Woodhouse, where Mitchell is living now, doesn't qualify: "I think the area of Meanwood and

Weetwood's quite desirable. . . . [There are] sports pitches up there, the university sports pitches so when you're traveling by bus to that area you can see the big houses and posh cars and lots of grounds." But perhaps the biggest "hinge" is that of ethnic identification. In talking about an area near where he does his weekly shopping, Mitchell says: "If you go a bit past [the Sainsbury's in Moor Allerton], you can see slightly posh houses, and that's the Jewish cluster so I suppose that's an ethnic area as well." This part of the transcript with Mitchell is worth quoting at some length.

I: How do you know that [that it's a Jewish cluster]?

M: 'Cause I'm Jewish so.

I: Okay.

M: I've been there; it's quite well publicized that that's a Jewish area of Leeds and northwest Leeds, . . . and obviously they perceive Jewish people as having a bit more, a bit more wealth.

I: Have you learned in your social geography classes that people tend to congregate, in particular areas?

M: Yeah, we learned about clusters, positive and negative segregation. We learned about people clustering because they felt they have to live together because of discrimination they'd get if they lived in separate areas. Also people want to live together because, if they have to go to mosque five times a day . . . then they can walk to the mosque and they can walk together. That's the problems and the sort of themes you get in a social geography class.

I: I'm just now noticing that there are synagogues marked on the map.

M: Yeah, I think there are two synagogues in the vicinity of the Ring Road, and there's also a lot of golf courses around here, so you can just look on a map and see that that's quite a posh area.

Liam wants to mark the whole of "outside Leeds" as desirable because of the "masses" of green space. Outside of the Ring Road is "the beginning of the great green expanses," he says. Anna also notes that the area around Bodington Hall is desirable because "there's lots of country side, the playing fields were wide open green spaces, and to get into university . . ." it was a simple direct route, there and back, very safe, very familiar." Anna particularly liked living there because you could "choose the city, but it wasn't in your face," and she mentions the comforting presence of a police station nearby. For Anna, "the further out you get the better it gets. . . . Out towards Adel behind Bodington Hall all of these houses—they're all old-fashioned, high-walled houses but not threateningly so, very sort of private residences that you feel quite safe walking around."

Along with the desirable suburbs, however, several students noted how happy they would be living downtown, in the new posh flats being con-

structed along the canal and near the heart of the city center. Sheila talks about this area "where Granary Wharf is [and all of the] gentrification":

That's definitely desirable 'cause they're high priced sort of homes and desirable for going out at night to posh restaurants around there, and there's nice walks down there. [This area is] desirable for a yuppie kind of life, young people I suppose, not families.

When asked "Twenty-somethings?" she answers, "Yeah! People like me when they graduate hopefully." Mitchell, who already has a job in the city center for the following year, also mentions this part of town as desirable:

I've thought about living in the city center 'cause they've got quite modern flats. And because I'm still quite young, I'd like to be near the hustle and bustle of town and that's where I'll be working; I think there's quite a lot of young people are living in like modern flats in town because they like to be close to work and they like to be close to going out [at night] as well.

Finally, desirable places to live are those that have a sense of community, which Liam defines as the presence of "a social center, the local pub, and the chip shop." It's also important to community that those who run the shop be "very friendly people and tend to know everyone in the area." Liam also notes all the kids that run around, enhancing further a positive neighborhood feeling. Liam also notes that there is a green area to this community, but unfortunately, it's "where the joyriders come and dump their cars."

For Zoe, desirable is what she is accustomed to or familiar terrain: "To be honest though, everything up to here from Woodhouse is desirable because I live there." Anna says something similar: "Because it's familiar, then it's desirable in my mind, anyway. Don't know if that's necessarily right, but if I know [a place], then I feel more comfortable. All the pubs and stuff that are along there are similar to pubs that I have back home." Zoe admits that if she were more established with a "permanent job and I could afford to live where I wanted to, I wouldn't live in Woodhouse because it's a student area . . . a happening place but I wouldn't want to live [laughs] in a street full of students if I'm about forty." She names Alwoodley as a "really posh" place, but she wouldn't want to live there now because there wouldn't be other students surrounding her. Elaine is also quick to point out that she suspects her notions of desirable places will change as she gets older. For now, however, desirable means a vibrant area (Zoe's term) or a hustley-bustley place: Anna likes Kirkstall because of the cinema, "which is always a bit hustley-bustley anyway so you feel quite, you know, happy there as well."

As with the no-go category, places designated as desirable tend to have messy boundaries and a slippery status. For example, Mitchell tries to find

desirability somewhere in the between: "A nice area to live would be just near the university but away from student houses. I suppose if you see an area as being half desirable but very convenient, in a good location, then it becomes even more desirable." Anna, too, sees the city center as neither/nor: "All around the city center, I wouldn't say it was no-go, but I wouldn't say it was desirable. It is no-go if you're in a certain situation, like it's late at night or you're by yourself." Liam's comments about the city center also illustrate how a place can have more than one status or designation, or that perceptions of it can vary according to time of day or past experiences. While Liam and most of the others definitely mark the city center (downtown) as quite a desirable area they feel comfortable in, Liam also identifies the rail station as "a bit unsavory":

- L: Round the station actually—behind the station, yeah I'm going to mark the station, just sort of behind it, 'cause I know it's quite a no-go area—
I: Okay, and do you think that because you've been there?
L: That's being there at night and seeing the people that hang around there at night. There's a lot of . . . undesirable people walking around there when I've been there at night coming back from a club or whatever, and it's just a bit unsavory . . . and again that's specifically around the station area.

These students' desires, in general, influenced their judgments about what areas around Leeds were desirable: how did they see themselves as university graduates, as older members of middle England? There were definitely areas of Leeds where these students felt threatened or uncomfortable, but they also felt extremely empowered in the familiar areas of "student land" as well as in the green, large-garden neighborhoods of their imagined futures.

These mental maps of Leeds illustrate that movement through the spatial world hinges upon contested places, geographies of exclusion, and (sometimes invisible) markers of boundaries. The images we carry around in our heads, even those that come from the reports of others, affect our willingness to explore or our choices of residential areas. Even if people move through certain areas or neighborhoods without fear of physical harm, they may feel uncomfortable or they may have minor confrontations about "who belongs there."

Investigating the "imageability" (Lynch) of cities or areas contributes much to our understanding of the social production of space and people's experiences in space, and these are the forms of mapping that I want to claim as spatial practices of the everyday that can help us to re-imagine acts of writing as material and visual. In *Writing Women and Space*, Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose claim that mapping "is a distinctive form of spatial repre-

sentation because it can be interpreted as visual and/or textual. . . . the spatial imagery of mapping can expose tensions between the dynamics of the visual and the written" (10). I would add, however, that mental mapping, where the real and the imagined or the physical and the emotional come together, adds yet another layer to mapping and its representations.

Mapping, then, in all of its overlapping forms, contributes to geographic rhetorics by insisting upon the real and imagined production of space and more complex ways of representing places and spaces. Along with walking—forms of *flânerie*—and dwelling—the subject of the final chapter—mapping forms part of the techne for geographic rhetorics, those that focus on moving through the world, encountering the rub of differences, the fissures and gaps in discourse, the borders and fault lines. Maps work metaphorically, but they also do rhetorical work: they provide information that influences action; they persuade users to try a new route or stick with the old one; and they communicate an image of a place that may or may not hold up. Maps, like all texts, function in the between of metaphor and materiality: cartography is a useful and profitable "skill" done with tools, but mental mapping is a swirl of memory and experience related to race, class, gender, sexuality, age, or abilities. A geographical rhetoric, then, would not ignore longitude or latitude but would try to capture the layers of meaning and the *feelings* of residents or visitors or trespassers.¹² Contested places like Hyde Park in Leeds are not easily "mapped," but as rhetoricians and educators, it is our responsibility to understand not only where our students come from but also what forms of fear or reluctance keep students locked in place.

Students' highly charged responses to certain places in Leeds and their reluctance to explore neighborhoods beyond "student land" highlights how difficult it is to move learners to have a meaningful encounter with difference. The next chapter turns to the cultural geography method of "streetwork" to show how walking and mapping can help us to understand the complex ways in which space hides consequences from us and the ways in which one's "sense of place" is constructed. Like forms of mental mapping, streetwork exposes the workings of geographies of exclusion: how the landscape, the built environment, the inhabitants, or the force of their own preconceptions and expectations can make people feel excluded or alienated from certain places. This bodes ill, I argue, for composition's growing enthusiasm for service learning and literacy projects if such project designs do not include an awareness of the sociospatial construction of difference.

3. But see Merrifield's account of how Lefebvre's work was initially ignored, at least by Althusserian Marxists ("Henri Lefebvre" 167-70).

4. For examples of embodied rhetorics see Selzer and Crowley's volume *Rhetorical Bodies*.

5. As Lester Faigley points out in *Fragments*, it's perhaps easiest to contrast modernism and postmodernism through architecture (4-5).

6. This perceived loss contributes, in part, to the desire for substitute—i.e., electronic—spaces, in on-line environments and through satellite communications.

2. Reading Landscapes and Walking the Streets: Geography and the Visual

1. On the discourse of crisis, precipitated by such outcries as Newsweek's 1975 piece "Why Johnny Can't Write" (Sheils), see Faigley's chapter 2 in *Fragments of Rationality* and Trimbur's "Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis."

2. So what happens for those who cannot see? I'm intrigued by the tension in geography studies between 1) an expanding literature on geographies of disabilities; and 2) the continued persistence of the visual epistemology of geography. I cannot adequately address here the contributions that visually impaired people can make to geography and cultural studies, but "learning to see" is not entirely dependent on 20/20 vision; it draws on all the senses, on a type of embodiment or inhabitation. For example, Tom, the cultural geography lecturer mentioned "smellscapes" when introducing the streetwork project to students (see chapter 4).

3. Cultural geography is also being mined for its connections to literary studies. Writing in *American Literary History*, Sara Blair surveys "the common ground between Americanist literary studies and the new geography" (550) and speculates about what literary critics and historians might contribute "to new understandings of spatial practices, of the production of spatial and social differences, and of space, time, and nature as material frames for everyday life" (549). She finds, as I do, that "each field of inquiry . . . encompasses habits, histories, a mode of attention, from which the other can richly profit" (545). The new models and vocabularies of cultural geography can lead to a remapping of not just American studies but also other fields interested in the social. "In a very real sense, the new geography constitutes a powerful expressive form, giving voice to the effects of dislocation, disembodiment, and localization that constitute contemporary social orders" (Blair 545).

4. What would an abstract notion of culture be? The idea that culture is generally "good for people" or makes them civilized, or a dictionary definition not grounded in place.

5. By paying good money for the images, geographers can download onto their GIS systems images of a particular forest or town, for example, and can track changes in the environment or population. This data is very expensive, but if professors can get a cloud-free image of the New Forest, they'll "buy it" because so many of their students work in/on the New Forest, and "somebody's grant" can pay for it. But who's selling it?

6. Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death* provides one example of this type of criticism: "embedded in the surrealistic frame of a television news show is a theory of anticommunication, featuring a type of discourse that abandons logic, reason, sequence and rules of contradiction" (105).

7. "What Is a Visual Argument, and What Is It Doing in a Writing Class?" CCCC, Chicago, 2002. As an example of a powerful visual argument, she also shared the "upside down map," reproduced here in chapter 3. See George for a published version of this presentation.

8. Featherstone says, though this is just one of many points, that flânerie is a method for reading texts, for reading the traces of the city. It is also a method of writing, of producing and constructing texts.

9. The use of the masculine pronoun is tough for me, or I'm very much aware of the "he," thus my use of forms of *flânerie*. Although I have no objection to *flâneuse* (Wilson's term), it's also important to recognize the sex and sexuality of the *flâneur*, who's often read as a dandy and coded as gay. Theoretical work on the *flâneur* tends to front this issue and tries to maintain levels of ambiguity or encourages foraging (see Munt on the lesbian *flâneur*).

10. Because they cannot give in to unstructured time or undirected rambling, Americans, White says, are "particularly ill-suited to be flâneurs" and would rather follow guidebooks, intent on self-improvement (40).

11. I'm using "composing" in the sense that Peter Smagorinsky outlines—where composing doesn't stand in for an act of writing but represents "constructing meaning across the curriculum" (164). He argues against letting any single medium dominate learning or teaching and challenges the assumption that writing is the best tool for every student learner in every situation. This definition of composing—bigger than just writing—encompasses visual arguments, oral presentations, and streetwork.

3. Maps of the Everyday: Habitual Pathways and Contested Places

1. This episode was broadcast 28 February 2001 on NBC, titled "Big Block of Cheese Day."

2. As Susan Miller wrote to me in an e-mail, at the very beginning of this project, "you have to know which way is up to read a map." And she's right: as attractive as mapping is for all kinds of projects, reading or following maps requires a specialized form of literacy.

3. Readers of postmodern theory will recognize the term *cognitive mapping* as Fredric Jameson's. In an essay of the same name, he borrows Kevin Lynch's model from *The Image of the City* and tries to synthesize it with Althusser's formulation of ideology, which

has the great merit of stressing the gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated . . . this ideology, as such, attempts to span or coordinate, to map, by means of conscious and unconscious representations. (353)

In attempting to extrapolate Lynch's spatial analysis to class relations and social structure, Jameson also claims that "the incapacity to map socially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience" (353).

4. Leeds is a growing city of over 700,000 residents, and Leeds-Bradford makes up the largest metropolitan area of West Yorkshire. The University of Leeds, just half a mile from the thriving city center, has a student enrollment of 21,000. Because of a serious shortage of on-campus housing, most of these students live off-campus, in the areas of Headingley (where I also lived), Hyde Park, Woodhouse, and Meanwood.

5. For research and context regarding mental maps, I relied upon Gould and White and Wiegand and Stiell. To ensure that my interviews were methodologically sound, I reviewed the work of qualitative researchers in my own field (Gesa Kirsch, Ruth Ray, Jennie Nelson) and took the opportunity to learn from some new ones (Robert Burgess, Sara Delamont, Gill Valentine). I can't really say, however, that I have side-stepped the criticisms Soja levels at mental mapping, but since he doesn't really define thirdspace epistemologies (choosing to "leave the discussion . . . radically open" [*Thirdspace* 82]), researchers have to depend on secondspace methods for understanding how people interact with the sociospatial world.

6. I have edited these passages considerably, with readers in mind, to sharpen the speaker's point or to eliminate what I considered to be distracting wordiness. Single periods mean a full stop. Ellipses mean I have eliminated words, but if ellipses appear in brackets [. . .] that means I have cut out whole lines. I added marks of punctuation, in particular, and eliminated most of the "ums" or other fillers because my purpose here is not discourse analysis as a sociolinguist might perform. Instead, my purpose is to illustrate, through students' own words, contested relationships to place and space.

7. Students recognized, however, that the term *no-go* is quite specific in social geography as places where the police refuse to go (a term that evolved from Northern Ireland—see Keith).

8. Although I'm a bit uncomfortable using the blanket term "Asians," it is the term that students used. More specifically, however, this area is populated by Pakistanis, and Hyde Park does have one of the largest concentrations of ethnic minorities in Leeds—much smaller, however, than areas of Bradford. Widely recognized to have the largest ethnic minority population in the north, and just a few miles from Leeds, Bradford has a 15.60 percent population from minority groups, according to the 1991 census.

9. It's well known among students that Headingley is just a bit more posh than Hyde Park. Zoe notes: "I wouldn't be able to afford to live in Headingley though, because it's sort of popular to live there—the housing is just too expensive. The cheapest you can get is probably about £45 a week which is too much for me."

10. Anna also identifies Chestnut Avenue as particularly Asian, a street that also holds the title, according to Anna, of being the most burgled street in England.

11. Bodington Hall is a large expanse of "green" land, sports pitches and the like, and a huge residential hall—the home of many first-year students. Located four miles from the campus, built in this location because there was simply no room nearer to the city and university, students rely on the bus to get back and forth between the campus and Bodington Hall.

12. I can imagine some readers wondering why I didn't work also with Asians in the neighborhoods of Headingley or Hyde Park. A seven-month stay, in university housing and possible only through university connections, made me feel uncomfortable about asking Asian residents to participate in this study when I'm not sure I could have argued or articulated what's in it for them. If I could have stayed longer, maybe, but I would have had to think very carefully about how to get access as well as make the interaction somehow reciprocal.

4. Streetwork: Seeing Difference Geographically

1. See, for example, Zukin.

2. But Edensor also romanticizes the Indian street in problematic ways, ignoring, for example the politics of gender.

3. But certainly women's experiences in the street differ by class, race, or abilities.

4. Ric Burns's documentary *New York City* and the film "Wonderland" make a good pairing for classes studying urban "renewal" or urban geographies, sense of place, or the politics of space in city planning.

5. I don't mean to imply that I think all SL or CSL projects ask students only to observe differences; I know that some are quite demanding and methodologically sophisticated, tightly linked to critical pedagogy, and that the number and range of projects vary considerably.

6. As I need to emphasize, this project out of cultural geography is not and doesn't claim to be "reciprocal" in the way that community service learning projects do strive to be. I suspect that cultural geographers advocating streetwork might soon need to confront or acknowledge this lack of reciprocity, and they would certainly find arguments in composition to help them think through these issues (see, for example, Cushman).

7. Students in the cultural geography seminar in which I was a participant observer were third-year students. Required in the second year was a course I also observed on research methods. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were covered, and students had to complete group projects practicing each type. The instructor for the third-year course in cultural geography, therefore, did not "re-teach" research methods, e.g., interviewing, but built on students' second-year experiences with the research methods course and offered quick reviews or referred to students to sources.

8. At the beginning of the term, I had gained access and met with the instructor, whom I call Tom. At the beginning of the second lecture, he gave me two minutes to introduce myself to the class of forty-six students and to prepare them for my presence, particularly my observation, chronic note taking, and occasional