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Live. Work. Emplace.: An Ethnography of New Town as Spatial Performance

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Live. Work. Emplace.
An Ethnography of New Town as Spatial Performance

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in **Anthropology** from
The College of William and Mary

by

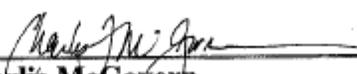
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Accepted for High Honors
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)



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May 6, 2009

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Historicizing New Town	5
Space, culture, and New Town: a preliminary overview	10
Space as performed material relationality	16
Socio-spatial trajectories	22
<i>The New Towner</i> as a spacemaking device	25
The space of event planning in New Town	33
Moving to New Town	42
Conclusion	49
References	55

Introduction

Inhabiting New Town entails, at some point, confronting its vision. From the third-floor office of William and Mary's economic development department, unfinished and surrounded by dirt, the department head put the New Town vision in terms of land sales. People who buy parcels of mixed-use land from New Town Associates—the company formed between the College and the family who owns the land, just west of the William & Mary campus—develop it themselves. He explained:

Many places that are all built at the same time by one developer and they do all the vertical construction, they'll be architecturally extremely consistent, and an extreme, boringly consistent. It's all pre-, sort of, planned, integrated, everything's the same. And that's very efficient to construct. Which is why it happens. But this was intentionally done, we just sold the land and then the architecture building over there is designed by those architects, so as you walk around—now some people think it's kind of—they would like all the architecture to look more similar, so it looks more coherent, but towns aren't architecturally consistent because they evolved over long periods of time, so they'll have federal buildings and other style buildings next to each other. Just that towns don't evolve like—the idea is that this is a town, not a cookie cutter.

New Town bears a peculiar relationship to its own representation. People I interviewed—architects, management company executives, developers—referred to a New Town “vision,” an ideology which splices tenets of New Urbanism with estimations of, in varying degrees, quaintness and “convenience.”¹ The people who involve themselves with an ideology of New Town do not merely draft a represented, abstract space from a remote office. Since James City County had zoned New Town as mixed-use, that is, residences adjoin offices and offices adjoin shops, the material setting within which these architects, planners, and administrators produce and propagate the vision of New Town exists within the (rough) boundaries of the very space they represent.

¹ Convenience here wears scare-quotes because of its fraughtness: real estate experts used the term more technically than perhaps residents, associating it with time-distance ratios and mathematical models. Meanwhile, residents apply a more penumbral meaning, entering the semantic reaches of walkability or accessibility. The use, complexities, and genealogy of “convenience” could encompass a study of its own. Some glimmers of a hypothesis: New Towners I talked to often drove to restaurants outside New Town, and even lumped these unwalkable restaurants with New Town locations when describing their regular eating places. The evening of one Wine and Dine at a townhouse, the sky suggested rain, and fellow guests felt little compunction towards driving up the street to the restaurant for the second half of the event. Was driving in this case *in-convenient*?

Here, three aspects of New Town as a quotidian lived space emerge. First, any analysis of spatial life in New Town will collapse unless it accounts for “New Town” the concept, something normatively and discursively operant. Second, from this preliminary toe-dip, it becomes clear that some principal nexuses in the spatialization of New Town, the offices, Internet-ready computer stations, and company personnel producing narratives of what it is to be “a town,” are themselves bound to everyday understandings of New Town, not just top-down impositions, the imaginings and calculations of planners and architects (which nevertheless plays a role!). From the Discovery buildings near Ironbound Rd. to the New Town Associates office in the SunTrust building, the actors in this process are *vantaged*, with disparate access to resources and fellow people, assembling different relationships, and, perhaps, arriving at different ways of knowing New Town. Here, social position is concretely topological. Certain understandings of New Town flow from one center and not from others. The simultaneity of *knowing* and *making* space in New Town becomes a function of this mottled positionality. As lived space, New Town owes itself to the political.

Third, as a concentration of clothing and home décor stores, restaurants, and a movie theater, New Town might resemble to a newcomer an outdoor shopping mall. Of the people who act in New Town, many are visitors, coming to consume, rather than to live or work. Such people may encounter the processes of spatialization briefly introduced above, but not continuously, as an aspect of the everyday. A Williamsburg resident living outside of New Town may catch a film at New Town Cinemas and return home without once hearing about New Urbanism. A description of the way space is understood in New Town must, then, account for a great deal of *porosity*: anyone can

visit New Town, tour its stores, eat its food. According to a realtor's estimate, ten percent of homebuyers in New Town own a second home elsewhere. A few of the people who work in New Town also live there, but given prevailing housing prices during my time in New Town, most commuted. Some developers and stores represent national corporations. Spatiality in New Town, then, does not develop as a closed intersubjective system, but withstands at every point an inseverable connection to an indeterminate influx.

What is intersubjective about the way New Town is understood as a social space? What can be shared, negotiated, or communicated? Intersubjectivity becomes a tricky object of analysis here. The configuration of subjects under consideration is, first, unconstrained, conducting processes that traverse, rather than begin or end in New Town (among them: tourist travel and communication along corporate managerial structures). Second, it is rather nascent, with few residents I met having lived in New Town for over a year, and most businesses having operated for under four years. Accounts of spatial understanding of New Town, then, cannot generate conclusions in the manner of, "the New Towners understand space as x ," or "given common value y of New Towners, z is a probable interpretation of spatial practice in New Town." This study follows Rodman (1992) in considering spatial understanding as *multilocal*, contingent upon one subject or other's relationship to identity-political configurations such as age and gender.

I approach this question by setting New Town against previous anthropological approaches to social space, lived space, and similar worries. First, let us sketch an image of New Town as a historical object, the next of just over a decade of conversations among local government officials, architects, real estate consultants, landowners, and college administrators.

Historicizing New Town: the administrative vantage

The conversations between planners, architects, and real estate developers which would ultimately engender New Town began amid an influx of retirees from the Midwest into Williamsburg, the first stop for people en route to ocean retirement communities. At the same time, James City County had begun a master planning process, planning an overhaul to the road system. As I interviewed participants in these conversations, their stories about New Town assumed similar forms. Two events, these stories go, sparked the movement to build what is known in real-estate development discourse as a hundred-percent retail location. In the late-nineties, the Virginia Department of Transportation extended Route 199 towards John Tyler Highway, Jamestown Road, and the Lightfoot neighborhood of Williamsburg. Meanwhile, residential developments sprang up, including Ford's Colony, Governor's Landing. The result was dense infill property. Anticipating this, and at odds with the citizenry over transforming Route 5 from a scenic highway into a four-lane divided highway, the Virginia Department of Transportation abandoned its plans to intersect Monticello Ave. and Route 199 at a rural, at-grade intersection, and instead build an urban, grade-separated intersection with an overpass.

As plans for the Route 199 extension advanced, the courthouse which served both Williamsburg and James City-County had become decrepit, and officials of Williamsburg and James City County assembled a search team to find a replacement location. The team considered a host of possible sites for a new courthouse, but no site satisfied representatives of both the city and the county. As they prepared to "just stick it in a cornfield someplace," as a former development manager said, the impending extension of Route 199 and Monticello Ave seemed poised for a developmental efflorescence. The

search team, believing that the 199-Monticello intersection would grant the growing county unparalleled access to the courthouse, began talks with the owners of the newly-bisected land, the Casey family.²

Meanwhile, the impending construction acquired urgency. James City County officials began, as the development manager said, to receive “feelers in from the private land community for really terrible things [...], just suburban schlock if we didn’t do something different.” The search team talked to the JCC Board of Supervisors about their interest in building the courthouse on the Casey family land, and the two parties reached an agreement: the Board of Supervisors would invest in the courthouse, but only if the search team ensured that the Caseys would make the courthouse contribute to, as several participants in the process told me, “the urban fabric” of the area, that is, the College and the City of Williamsburg. As the discussions with the Caseys lengthened, the value of their land only climbed. Discussion participants mulled the options, and one Board of Supervisors member, who also worked as an architect, vouched for a New Urban design that would incorporate commercial, retail, office, and residential land, including affordable housing units.

The discussion turned towards the form of the New Town project. The architect on the Board of Supervisors proposed a design competition for the development of the land around the courthouse, managed by a third party. JCC and the Caseys sponsored the competition. Then the Caseys approached the county: If the design competition is good enough for the county, they said, then why is it not good enough for the courthouse? The county agreed, and hired a pair of design competition experts from the University of

² I have kept original names unaltered if they are publicly accessible online in the context in which I present them. In this case, the name of the former New Town property owner can be found on the New Town website.

Wisconsin-Milwaukee to select jurors and structure the competition, based on the county's desire for a mixed-use plan. They adopted as a criterion the things people could visit in five minutes of walking. The competition managers advertised internationally in major architecture magazines for applicants, as well as tapped their own lists of contacts, receiving hundreds of submissions for the courthouse and the New Town master plan as separate projects, and about ninety-nine for both sites combined. The College displayed the submittals for the community to observe. During the design evaluation, parking became an issue: "nicer-looking" designs lost favor to a plan which sacrificed some pedestrian-friendliness to include appropriate parking counts.

Three architects from Cooper, Robertson and Partners in New York City won the competition. Afterwards, they drafted a set of design guidelines, eschewing a more publicly digestible pattern book such as that published for Celebration, Florida. Since the New Town land sat in an agricultural zone, the Caseys submitted a re-zoning proposal to James City County's Development Management staff, then to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, giving them the legal authority to build. The county re-zoned the land piece by piece. While the process was complete for New Town by the time I arrived, JCC continued to rezone Casey land in the summer of 2008. With the rezoning process came a new Design Review Board, which approves proposed building designs on the basis of the design guidelines before architects can submit plans to the county.

James City County approved the master plan for New Town on December 22, 1997, a date inscribed on the sign at the entrance to the community. The Caseys hoped to pay for the project through tax-exempt bonds issued by the Board of Supervisors and financed by a surtax, but the newly elected Republican majority decided against it. Faced

with paying ordinary income taxes on profits from land development, the Caseys had to find a partner, ensuring that they would only pay capital gains taxes to Williamsburg.

Back at the College, administrators worried that the intersection of Route 199 and Monticello Ave would beckon big-box stores and strip malls. The appeal of the College depended on retaining recent graduates, they felt, and these projects would only hasten the evacuation of alumni from Williamsburg. As one administrator put it, “we either were going to be passive bystanders and let them develop, or we were potentially going to get involved in some capacity and in ways in which the College had not been involved before.” In 1996, the College hired for the first time a director of economic development.

James City County, the City of Williamsburg, Eastern State Hospital, the Casey Family, Thomas Nelson Community College, Colonial Williamsburg, and other major institutions interested in the area discussed the local economy. Over the summer of 1996, current College president Tim Sullivan hired consultants Andrew Reamer and Associates from Massachusetts to identify development opportunities, producing the first Community at a Crossroads report in April 1997. The following year, William McDonough + Partners, an architecture firm at the University of Virginia, conducted a workshop with community leaders towards a design for the Casey property, propounding New Urbanism.

In 2000, the College decided to invest in the New Town property. The result was New Town Associates, LLC, a partnership between the Casey family and the William and Mary Endowment. They split the New Town master plan into sections and began selling the land, section by section. Building began as a trickle: the SunTrust building and neighboring buildings on Courthouse St. came up in 2002. Then Developers Realty

bought the movie theater and Main St. land. Townhouses, made available in groups of 30 or 40, sold out almost immediately. By 2004, New Town became for many business owners an exigent opportunity, a question of if, not when. The downtown area filled out quickly, and New Town Associates focused on developing the office buildings along Discovery Park Boulevard.

By the time I arrived, New Town Associates had begun to transition from a land developer into a town management firm, a period which should end in five or ten years, when there is no more land to sell. New Town Associates will work with residents and businesses to fledge New Town's residential and commercial associations, to which property owners belong on the basis of their land deeds.

In the foregoing discussion, New Town sits rather firmly in economic development discourse. Here, scalar terms like "James City County" assume a rather specific, agential meaning, a governing body which acts in specific sorts of ways. Other narratives of New Town could supplant it, then make way for others still. Take, for example, the experiences of residents who move to New Town from nearby gated communities, and of business owners from previous storefronts in Williamsburg Crossing. Alternately, and following the people and practices we did before, New Town could be situated within a broader process of economic development in the city and county, a means to an end. The "New Town" to be historicized, along with the way this history is understood, thus becomes a function of the socially organizing processes under consideration. "New Town" the signifier, and as we will see, New Town the built and lived community, is unstable, and must be made, remade, and maintained. How might we

make sense of spatial understanding given the peculiarities of New Town? Let us turn to the vast and variegated anthropological literature on space and culture.

Space, culture, and New Town: a preliminary overview

Space as an anthropological object extends rather readily from anthropology in general. Here, methodological difference arises over what space is as *a thing to be studied*, its ontological and empirical claims about space and culture. As the following cases illustrate, these constructs map unsuccessfully onto the social life of New Town.

Concluded in the early 20th century, Mauss' work with the Eskimo (1979) approaches space as an aspect of *social morphology*, a substratal, ever-present (though dynamic) determinant of cultural practice, a relatively stable basis for cultural life. Mauss sets social morphology against another ever-present substratum, *geography*, which he argues has occluded all other factors (21). Here he introduces social morphology, the "material substratum of societies," including population volume and density, distribution, as well as residence patterns and "the entire range of objects that serve as a focus for collective life" (19). In Mauss' ethnography of the Eskimo, social space becomes a sort of qualitative independent variable, its variations compared to concomitant cultural shifts. Paralleling geography, social morphology exists prior to, while inseparable from, everyday practice.

The social morphology template allows Mauss to make the following moves. He posits the *settlement* as the irreducible territorial unit of Eskimo life, a bounded localization with a stable name (23-28). The material form of this localization shifts seasonally, from, in the summer, dispersed tents housing a man, his wife (or wives), as

well as their unmarried children to, in the winter, sturdy, capacious houses enclosing multiple families. Mauss proposes a relationship between this seasonality and elements of a granulated, Tylor-esque “complex whole”: religious life, jural life, the family, and property regulations (53-75). In the case of religious life, for example, the private, domestic rituals of the summer yield to intense, collective spiritual practice in the winter (37-38), in which even minor transgression becomes spectacle.

New Town might supply an interesting social morphology for this sort of analysis. We could ask, How does some social morphology of New Town, perhaps the assemblage of people into buyers and sellers of goods and services within the constraints of New Town’s built environment, affect the cultural life of these buyers and sellers? This line of thought encounters two impasses. First, the components of New Town—and this of course presupposes a static and passive signifier, “New Town”—which we would isolate as the substratum for other such components is unclear. As we will see, much of the organization of bodies and buildings in New Town is subject to negotiation, revision, and renovation. Also, the things which are relatively immutable among aspects of New Town life, capitalist relations of production, for example, do not operate exclusively in New Town. Why, we would ask, do these social morphological conditions affect New Town, and not James City County? Pointing to social morphology would, due to this seepage from an indeterminate analytical scope, answer nothing.

Second, for this analytical Mausestrap to trigger, it must hold social space constant. As an unstable signifier, New Town cannot serve such a role. For the purpose of this research, the social morphological approach would take as the explanans what ought to be the explanandum, New Town’s shifting, ever-becoming spatiality.

At the other end of the century, Augé (1995) explores the notion of *non-place*, and Feld and Basso published their edited volume-cum-manifesto *Senses of Place* (Feld and Basso 1996). Augé describes a specific sort of spatial reality, evident in shopping malls, airports, and subway trains, which he calls *non-place*. Anthropological place, he says, constitutes individual identity (a person becomes *of* a place), situates people in relation to one another, and finally, situates its inhabitants in history. Non-place, then, is place which lacks these identity-conferring, relational, and historicizing properties. The break between place and non-place occurs at the level of the individual, knowing subject. Non-places are defined “partly by the words and texts they offer us: their ‘instructions for use,’” the shopping mall directory, signs guiding an airline passenger from terminal to gate, and so on (95), calling attention to the landscape without drawing it into experience, textualizing it. Identity in a non-place is temporary: through their interactions and insinuations into a textual environment, inhabitants of non-places become ATM-users, airline passengers, and motorists. The experience of the non-place is not one of history, but of the “urgency of the present moment” (104). Commercial airline pilots provide constant updates, terse news headlines stream into train cars, and supermarkets greet the visitor with an array of current periodicals.

As Coleman and Crang (2002) observe, Augé analyzes non-place on the level of the “occurrent,” that is, “intended and designed environments made available for a particular and limited use” (2). This aspect of Augé’s formulation reveals its use in understanding New Town, but also its limitations. New Town may exhibit aspects of non-place, such the possible centrality of text in the experience of its inhabitants (signs above shops and in front of circumscribed residential developments, for example), as well

as its concentration of shopping outlets neighbored by dwellings. The fact that people live in New Town, however, immediately guts Augé's elucidative potential. In terms of understanding, how much, we wonder, is New Town like a shopping mall? How much is it like a place to live? Augé's occurrent formulation fixes place as pre-subjective, conditioning aspects of personhood without itself being conditioned. This or that place is extant, presupposed. How, then, we wonder, do non-places come about?

Senses of Places takes this, the coming-to-be of place, as its problem. This volume follows a burst of discussion within cultural anthropology and cultural geography, which it aims to supply with accounts of "cultural processes and practices through which places are rendered meaningful—through which, one might say, places are actively sensed" (Feld and Basso 1996, 7). An opening essay by Edward Casey (Casey 1996) unpacks this notion of *sensing* phenomenologically. First, human experience is always already emplaced (21). Through its manifold sensory dimensions, appendages, and so, on the lived body "insinuates itself subtly and multiply into encompassing regions" (21). Second, places *gather*, configuring people, experiences, thoughts, and things (24), "allowing us to return to it again and again as *the same place* and not just the same position or site" (26). Consequently, each bodily configuration of place becomes a unique *event* (26).

The embodiedness of place allows it to be intersubjectively understood. Casey borrows from Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty (34), noting that, as it has "incorporated cultural patterns into its basic actions" (34), the body's insinuation as and into place itself becomes a cultural process. Additionally, through its inhabitation, bodies come to *know* place, and this knowledge is "inseparable from what they know is culture as it imbues

and shapes particular places” (34). Here, intersubjective place arises as a coalescence of two cultural processes: cultural knowledge expressed creatively through place, and encultured bodies inhabiting that place.

Notably, the essays in *Senses of Place* privilege *place* as their ethnographic object, contrasting it with space. For Casey, as with the whole of experience, space—assumed in the Cartesian sense, empty, neutral, geometrical, as in Euclidian spatial relations—is experienced in place (37).

The ethnographies which follow Casey’s essay examine the ways in which place is made commonly intelligible. Basso, for instance, accounts for understandings among Western Apache horsepeople of their east-central Arizonan landscape. The people he consults understand place, he writes, through stories about places and their names. These stories, embedded within the lived landscape, anchor moral lessons. The sensing of place, he concludes, is “a kind of imaginative experience, a species of involvement with the natural and social environment, a way of *appropriating* portions of the earth” (83).

Feld, meanwhile, considers sound as a way of knowing place among the Kaluli people of Bosavi, Papua New Guinea, a rainforest environment in which dense foliage obscures visual cues. As someone familiar with the impenetrable density of the forest might expect, a sense of place comes aurally, through song. Songs evoke connections between place-names, as well as place and identity. Additionally, Kaluli people understand song as coextensive with the water that pervades the landscape, and “[c]omposing a song is said to be like the way a waterfall flows into a waterpool” (132). Emplacement is not simply perception, Feld concludes, but *expression*, such that “places

make sense in good part because of how they are made sensual and how they are sensually voiced” (134).

In *Senses of Place*, ethnographers attribute placemaking practices to fairly discrete collectives, *the* Western Apache horsepeople, or *the* Kaluli. While not necessarily ossified, bounded “cultures,” these groups express a rich accretion of intersubjective knowledge—songs, stories, place-names, memories of places—such that each group may be construed as, in the singular, *doing* a particular practice. Feld and Basso do not rule out the possibility of negotiation and contestation. One Kaluli woman who sang for Feld had composed a song in a predominantly masculine idiom, shocking her contemporaries when they heard a recording (Feld 1996, 128). Here, these acts reinterpret an extant, defined body of knowledge, an intersubjective repository of sorts. If such a body of knowledge exists at all among people who live and work in New Town, it is still, like much of the community, under (social) construction. How, we wonder, did the Kaluli and the Apache amass these resources for knowing and doing place? Perhaps the *materiality* of the place, into which the knowing body insinuates as in Casey’s preamble, has something to do with it. For Feld and Basso, this materiality has been subsumed into, and interacts with, an enculturating idiom. How would the formulation of emplacement change given the sheer multiplicity of modes in which people engage with New Town, as national corporate employees, second homebuyers, and tourists, in addition to people who work in New Town and live elsewhere, or vice versa? The following discussion aims to craft such a lens.

Space as performed material relationality

The conception of social space which guides this study must incorporate not only the circulating *perceptual* scheme by which the lived body insinuates into place, but the materiality of this emplacement, the way embodied subjects structure place, and place organizes embodied subjects. In other words, this research preserves a part of Casey's formulation—experience is always already *emplaced*—and expands from it, examining the way spaces in which bodies insinuate are configured so as to make possible Casey's account of perception. Additionally, this conception of space³ in New Town must shift, at times, from the body to the desk. A “vision” operates in New Town, and since that vision clearly plays some role in the understanding of place, incorporating into this lens the way narrative, discourse, normativity, ideology, those negotiated, talked out aspects of daily life, make space and are themselves made spatial.

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre (1991) proposes an oft-cited (examples in Munn 1996, Wells 2007), trifurcated model of social space. First, he describes *spatial practice*. Social space, for Lefebvre, is at the core a social *product* in the Marxian sense (Lefebvre 1991, 26). Spatial practice, then, is the production of space, that is, it “propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it” (38). Spatial practice *does* space. The space that is practiced *is* the bodily operations, the material configurations which constitute it. Second, *representations of space* are conceptualized and discursive, the “space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers,” who “identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (38).

³ Note the sudden shift from “place” to “space.” Since my theoretical lens is no longer strictly perceptual-phenomenological, as in Casey's formulation, I use more broadly applicable vocabulary. Space, as the discussion of Lefebvre below reveals, is something perceived, but also produced and projected.

Representations of space are imagined *conceptions*, mental maps, plans, designs to be implemented. Finally, *representational spaces* are the ways in which space is passively experienced (39), the schemata of spatial consciousness. Mapping this rubric across *Senses of Place*, we might say that the Kaluli representational space interprets the world as spatial through its aural qualities. In other words, Lefebvre indicates, the way space is *perceived* is insinuated within cultural process, something mutable and constructed. To illustrate the relationship between representations of space, spatial practice, and representational spaces, Lefebvre points to the body, something practiced (lived in), perceived as it articulates into its environment, and conceived through, say, medical discourse. Casey's model, perhaps, conflates the first and the third, muting the second.

This distinction lends itself to a more materialist approach towards social space and cultural process, arising out of relationships while making those relationships concrete. Ideology becomes spatialized, and "only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking on body therein." He asks, "What would remain of the Church if there were no churches?" (44)

Ideology operates through spatial substrata, Lefebvre says, because of space's *relational* quality. Like Marx's notion of exchange, the circulation of material goods, space assumes the form of a *concrete abstraction* (100). Exchange, for Marx, develops from contrasts in value (use value, exchange value) and collects as understanding, then seeps into social practice through money, labor, and so on. Also a concrete abstraction, space demands content but can be conceived without it. While exchange assumes a *bipolar* form, shifting between instance and abstraction, social space becomes *radial*, implying "actual or potential assembly at a single point, or around that point" (101), of

signs, objects, and living things. As with exchange, he continues, social space leaps from form to content through *practice*. Social space is “a materialization of ‘social being’” (102), embodying social relationships, “not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)” (83).

How do the social relations that constitute space come about? As Lefebvre notes, bodies produce space by means of ritualized gestures, associating disparate spatial segments and generating them as spaces *for* something: corridors and eating places, for example. Gesture anchors cosmology to space, a moment Lefebvre illustrates with the cloister, in which “Columns, capitals, sculptures [...] are semantic differentials which mark off the route followed (and laid down) by the steps of the monks” (217), thereby tethering the infinite to the everyday.

What are the mechanisms for this production of space through material, embodied relations? Here, Latour’s summation of Actor-Network Theory in *Reassembling the Social* becomes useful (Latour 2005). Along with Lefebvre, Latour concerns himself with the objectification⁴ and subsequent stabilization of social relations. First, Latour argues that groups are not *ostensive*, self-evident and circumscribed, but *performative* (34-36), such that “if you stop making and remaking groups, you stop having groups” (35). Ostensive group definitions, for Latour, only occlude the necessary work of maintaining the group. To become durable, fleeting group performances require concrete *things*: “It is always things—and I now mean this last word literally—which, in practice, lend their ‘steely quality to the hapless ‘society’” (68).

⁴ I use this term as Miller (2001) does, loosely following Hegel in examining the transformations of norms and values into things and practice. Objectification here is not objectivity; it does not demand any sort of perfect intersubjectivity, and instead points to the ideas and relations which produce the material world.

Latour's account of social action makes this clearer. In this view, objects, taken as *actors*, participate in the realization of an action (71). Between determining action or merely backgrounding it, "things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on" (72). Here, Latour does not simply grant ontological equality to humans and nonhumans, but prescribes a methodology: social science can teach us more about what is "social" by removing strictly epistemic barriers between, say, "nature" and "culture," and accommodating all of the things which operate in the intersubjective lived world (76). Taken this way, objects become *matters of concern*. A sociology of science veteran, Latour points to disputed ontologies, facts that must be *made* meaningful. "Genes were supposed to transport information coding for the proteins, but they are also considered as competing with one another for food," for instance, "or at least this is what is now *disputed* among some geneticists" (116). Importantly, here, "what the *real* world is *really* like" becomes a problem, requiring configuration.

Latour uses this ontology to envision social action as a sort of network, in which nodes, that is, actors, condition one another, subjectifying persons (207-212) and lending ontological presence to things. Actor-networks do not harbor omnipotent, world-shaping super-agents, nor do they expose a supine and inert human vessel to the vagaries of material determinism. Instead, the actor-network metaphor depicts things as *relational*. "Network" here refers to "the *summing up* of interactions through various kinds of devices, inscriptions, forms and formulae, into a very local, very practical, very tiny locus" (Latour 1999, 17). Nodes are not endpoints, junctions in a process that could

assume discrete, alternate paths, but *transformations*, continuing the trajectories which make actors actual, extensions of processes.

Once arranged into Latour's framework and undergirded with Lefebvre's observations, the concept of social space can be used to examine the way people who live and work in New Town understand, produce, and negotiate their built environment. First, at an ontological level, understandings of space cannot be extricated—perhaps even distinguished—from the materiality of space. Ideology configures its own space, and subsists on that space. Even unrealized representations of space, unfinished sketches, are made material, in presentations, manuscripts, notes, the discipline of the urban planner spatialized in the office. Scale, too, is spatialized, made material. Latour explains:

[T]he social is a certain type of circulation that can travel endlessly *without* ever encountering micro-level—there is never an interaction that is not framed—or the macro-level—there are only local summing up which produce either local totalities ('oligoptica') or total localities (agencies). [Latour 1999, 19]

To get from individual objects to conceptions of locality, region, and so on, something (some *thing!*) must circulate traceably. That thing is not alone, though, but operant within a commonly ontologizing network, traceable through its materiality. This study, then, will examine these things and their trajectories.

Second, space is *performed* and *political*. As a set of relations of production, space must be a making, the result of manifold contribution of which some become more efficacious than others. From Lefebvre, representations of space are constituted materially through spatial practice, representation requiring its own space (at least, we might say, a space to think, to draw diagrams). Given the subjectifying role of matters of concern within an actor network, this performance of spatialized representations occurs through the assembling of things. Here, what is gathered as a certain sort of place

requires the exclusion of alternate configurations, as well as negotiation among participants over the meaning of matters of concern. This process outlines the task of the ethnographer: identify *which* actants are associated, how this proceeds, and why this configuration has succeeded or failed.

Socio-spatial Trajectories

Let us return to the original question: How does New Town become intersubjectively understood as a social space, and how is negotiation or reconfiguration of this understanding possible? A conceptual rubric which borrows insights from Lefebvre and actor-network theorists may offer an answer. As it moves from this rubric to some kind of empirical statement about spatialization in (and of) New Town, this analysis must become diachronic, concern conditions for (as opposed to the specific form of) understandings of space in New Town, and commence from an arbitrary point.

First, the meaning of a given object, perhaps the objectification of a given meaning, remains subject to interpretation. As matters of concern, material things may shift in ontological content, contingent upon the political processes through which meaning becomes stabilized or unsettled. This account of the ethnographic data on New Town, then, will become historical, a *trajectory* rather than a picture, observing change when it enters the ethnographic record, or the conditions for the possibility of change when it does not.

Second, the performed, assembled quality of spatialization in New Town all but precludes a comprehensive account of a unique, total mode of spatialization, a “way New Town is understood as space.” Associations which furnish and enact spatiality may break or swap parts as soon as they form. While spatialities seem more “real” than mere epiphenomena or superstructure, they cannot be separated from the productive processes which make such understandings possible. This discussion, then, will examine the *grounds* for spatialization within New Town, the actors, subjectifications, and objectifications at play in making New Town intelligible as space.

Finally, this investigation must trace its trajectories from some point. Given the multiplicity of operant and potential actors and the unfinished quality of assembled space, the trajectories in which associations form are open-ended, rather than bounded and discrete.⁵ This discussion embarks, then, from three points which I have defined, remaining as faithful as I could to departure points which New Towners might recognize. From this, we may abstract the grounds for spatialization as such in New Town.

The empirical data on the spatial life of New Town comes from four months of participant observation over the summer of 2008. I subleased a room behind the Green Leaf bar from a William and Mary student through the College's online classifieds page, and spent my days taking walks, hanging out in bars, coffeehouses, and people's homes, attending book club meetings, going to Residential Association and Commercial Association events, borrowing things from neighbors, and otherwise insinuating myself into the social contours of the built environment. Since many people involved in the spatialization of New Town worked in offices for most of the day, I conducted 35 formal interviews with business owners, county administrators, town managers, architects, Residential Association leaders, and others. During this time, I collected and scanned primary documents, such as copies of *The New Towner* newsletter, the original design guidelines, reports from design charets, and emails sent among association members.

⁵ This is not to say that trajectories may not *seem* enclosed, insulated, or separated from antecedents. It should not imply that, given the way trajectories organize actors and actions, externalities become cut off from the rest of a network. It depends on the actors themselves. Latour (2005) offers this methodological directive about contested meaning: "The task of defining and ordering the social should be left to the actors themselves, not taken up by the analyst. This is why, to regain some sense of order, the best solution is to trace connections *between* the controversies themselves rather than try to decide how to settle any given controversy" (23).

The first trajectory: The New Towner as a spacemaking device

The advertising firm Collins, Waters and Bridgman publishes *The New Towner* every two months, distributing seventy percent of the issues throughout New Town, and the remaining thirty to frequently visited locations in Williamsburg, including Ukrops grocery store, a nearby Starbucks coffee house, doctors' offices, and the Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce building. As much work following the conventions of actor-network theory has shown, texts configure relationships between an unmatched array of subjects and objects, and play an integral role in constituting actors. Callon's (1986) sociology of scallop collection around St. Brieuc Bay documents the work of three biologists in comparing the anchoring mechanisms of a scallop species in the bay with those of a species off the coast of Japan. Callon traces the development of an actor-network among the scallops, fisherpeople, and researchers, observing that the researchers used written reports to, first, *define the actors involved*, their intentions, goals, and so on, and second, to define the researchers as an indispensable link between the components of the network. At the end of the research process, the biologists used text—the materials of a presentation before scientific colleagues—to *mobilize* actors, a process by which complex hosts of actors are taken as constituents of a single representative through a series of intermediary displacements. Anchoring scallops *translated* to the conference room from the bay, for example, as their relations to the researchers and fisherpeople displaced them from larvae, to raw data, to tables and curves reproducible on paper. By way of translation, actors become operant in situations they would not enter alone.

Text also constitutes scale. Latour (2005) posits the *panorama*, a device which projects a "Big Picture," providing a view of everything (187). Panoramas "nicely solve

the question of staging the totality, of ordering the ups and downs, of nesting ‘micro’, ‘meso’, and ‘macro’ into one another” (188) by providing a seemingly coherent abundance of intelligibility. Texts, such as newspaper editorials on the “whole situation” (187), may act as panoramas.

Since texts bind together actor-networks, actor-networks may become clear through texts. In his analysis of a laboratory, Law (1986b) notes a staggering juxtapositional capability, in which the text “boxes in and regulates the points of contact between clinicians and researchers, patients and fund-raisers, polymers and livers, laboratories and diseases” (Law 1986b 49), translating diffuse actors and actions into legible co-presence. The heterogeneous bits of an actor-network lay before the gaze of the reader, conjoined on a single plane and revealing a structure. Additionally, the internal progression of a text *interests* the reader by severing externalities which may challenge the juxtapositions presented in the text, that is, potential incentives for the reader to look elsewhere (Rip 1986, Law 1986c). This section will thus consider the *things* which are juxtaposed and the *manner* of this juxtaposition.

I considered issues of *The New Towner* dating between November 2007 and October 2008. When I asked Renee, the editor of *The New Towner* and an employee at Collins, Waters and Bridgman to describe the newsletter, she told me that it is best explained by a slogan beneath the masthead, “A NEWSLETTER FOR AND ABOUT NEW TOWN IN WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA,” that is, in terms of its aims. She continues:

It’s really to keep everybody educated because it’s such a new area as to what’s coming and going. I mean there’s businesses that are opening constantly in New Town, and people are—you know—don’t really know. And there are events going on, like we’ve got the Farmer’s Market right now, and we’re having a car show, and it kind of just keeps people informed as to what’s happening.

The first issue of *The New Towner* ran about two and a half years ago. It began as a marketing tool, spanning four pages with no advertisements, “to announce to everybody ‘Hey, Collins, Waters and Bridgman advertising is in Williamsburg,’ and we put some articles in there.” Later, CWB determined⁶ “that we wanted to make it a more profitable publication as well as a good marketing tool for CWB, so we started selling advertising,” and expanded the newsletter to twelve pages. Over the summer of 2008, CWB considered expanding it to sixteen. As something that is *done*, then, *The New Towner* (1) educates an abstract, incoming population about New Town, (2) advertises CWB, and (3) makes a profit, each in varying degrees as CWB publishes new issues.

Renee guesses what readers of *The New Towner* might want to read (“There are some businesses that—it just wouldn’t interest people if I wrote a story about them”), and selects stories to pursue with variety as a guiding principle. She tries to “keep it light, keep it interesting, not too heavy. It’s not a medical publication or a health publication.”

The New Towner thus emerges from some scheme of exclusion, conceptions of interest and lightness, that allows her to develop some stories and not others. Together, the elements that survive the editing process constitute New Town as a totality, if only for the time it takes to flip through an issue, equipping representations of space and interpellating⁷ subjectivity as a certain representational space.

⁶ Because I was not present at the decision-making process, and heard about it by interviewing the editor of *The New Towner*, the advertising firm itself, like New Town Associates and James City County in Part I, attains a reified sort of agency.

⁷ Here I borrow Althusser’s (2001[1971]) term, a necessary property of ideology through which individuals recognize themselves as particular sorts of subjects, that particular declarations are addressed to an individual *as* a subject, and that the individual really is that person (118). In Lefebvre’s terms, then, the interpellation of subjects furnishes a representational space, a way of interpreting the lived world, which in turn conditions representations of space.

Three groups of elements within *The New Towner*, its major articles on New Town residents, businesses, and events; its advertisements; and its condensed, stripped-down lists, in directories, and “Power Points”; illuminate the *interessement*⁸ at work in *The New Towner*, the actors it juxtaposes and the panorama of New Town that results.

The articles in *The New Towner* between November 2007 and October 2008 brim with mentions of “you,” the regarded reader. *New Towner* articles end frequently with a suggestion to act in a certain way. Before this final command, it must guide the reader from a general claim about some indicated scale or other, to a connection between that claim and some notion of utility with respect to “you,” to, finally, a recommendation that takes this utility as its content, its reason.

Let us illustrate this progression. In the July-August 2008 issue, an article on Shutters and Décor, a shop along Main St, takes the headline, “Shutters and Décor: Windows and your World,” and begins with this passage.

While windows may let the world in, shutters keep the world out. That makes New Town’s new shop, Shutters and Décor, your one stop for controlling the privacy of your interior environment, at the same time enhancing your exterior ... and the value of your home. [*The New Towner*, July-August 2008, 6]

This passage, in fact, executes this progression within one sentence, moving from a claim about the elements of architecture and interior decorating to an instantiation of an implied scale, “New Town,” to an implication of utility with respect to the reader, “your interior environment,” “your exterior,” “your home.” This article next introduces a new element, a description of the owners and their decision to move to New Town, which “will give them a lot more exposure and will attract a new customer base.” This description then orients towards utility: “With 2,000 square feet of display area, Pat and Ron can

⁸ For Callon (1986, 207-208), *interessement* is “the group of actions by which an entity [...] attempts to impose and stabilize the identity of the other actors it defines.” As Law (1986c) analyzes it in text, *interessement* occurs relationally, such that the text interests the reader on its own terms, *as a reader*.

showcase their entire line of window treatments,” listing the inventory of the store, and the assistance its employees provide with selecting it. The suggestion which concludes the article is not strictly imperative, but the action implied is unmistakable.

So this year the word in home décor is “personalize.” From plantation shutters to Raku accents, your home can take on a completely new and exciting personality by Shutters and Décor. And after all, you do want to spend a lot of time in a beautiful home.

By the way, Shutters and Décor offers a 10 percent discount to all who live or work in New Town. That should tempt you even more. [*The New Towner*, July-August 2008, 7]

An article on real estate in New Town (January-February 2008) begins *about* New Town. Scale becomes not a necessary grounds for the coherence of the paragraph, but its *explicit content*.

There must be a bubble over New Town. It seems protected in some way from all the gloom and doom we hear about the housing market, because the news about real estate sales in New Town is good. Actually, excellent! Mike Youngblood of Twiddy Realty points out that an impressive 79 residences in New Town were sold in 2007. [*The New Towner*, January-February 2008, 1]

What connects this general discussion of real estate markets to utility vis-à-vis the reader, and then finishes as a segue into action, is the *New Town vision*. The first paragraph continues.

According to Youngblood, “New Town has outperformed the general market because of its mixed-use concept. People like a whole community, a lifestyle, not just a home. When people take up residence in New Town, it’s complete with restaurants, a movie theater, shops, boutiques, services such as banks and doctors. It’s a complete package, and it works!” [*The New Towner*, January-February 2008, 1]

Here, the *concept* of New Town achieves a sort of efficacy that the buildings themselves lack. Not only scale, a community, results panoramically from this passage, but a reified *idea* about that community. The article moves from this idea to a mention of New Town’s variety, an aspect of the mixed-use concept, and then to a survey of real estate offerings: “For the first-time buyer to the down-sizer, New Town has something for everyone.” It concludes:

So now your feet may hurt but your mind is swirling with new and affordable ideas and a new lifestyle. The New Town lifestyle. We suggest you rest your feet in one of New Town’s many

restaurants, cafes or eateries. The point is this: life is fleeting. Don't postpone it. Get moving now to New Town. [*The New Towner*, January-February 2008, 2]

Articles in *The New Towner*, then, guide the reader from claims about the world—a world which it *constitutes* as an implied first condition—to suggestions for future action, moving from the declarative to the interrogative along a pathway constructed from appeals to consumptive utility, the way this or that store, event, or person might interest a discerning shopper of New Town experiences.

Advertisements, occupying thirds and halves of pages, as well as the back cover of each issue, accompany the articles. Most businesses advertised recurrently between November 2007 and October 2008, often in the same location within the newsletter. The steak restaurant Opus 9, for instance, bought a horizontal advertisement on one third of page 3 in the November-December 2007 issue, listing its hours of operation, address, and contact information. On page 5 of the next issue, the restaurant includes a vertical, one-third page advertisement. It doubles as a coupon. A third Opus 9 advertisement—a photo of the restaurant interior, with the text, “steak a table”—then appears on the bottom third of page 7 in the March-April 2008 and May-June 2008 issues, page 5 of the July-August 2008 issue, and the middle third of page 2 in the September-October 2008 issue.

Similarly, an advertisement for Harbour Coffee first appears on the lower third of page 5 in the March-April 2008 issue, and appears there again in the next issue. It climbs to the top third of page 8 in the July-August issue, then drops to the bottom third of page 2 for September and October. Like the Opus 9 ads, these echo the structure of *New Towner* articles, implying scale (“New Town’s first REAL coffeehouse @ the intersection of casey & discovery [sic],” the later ads read) and, in the earlier ads, regarding the reader as a potential user of “your community coffeehouse.”

Frequent features of *The New Towner* condense this structure—hail the reader as a user, install this usership into a projection of scale—into brief, organized elements. Each of the issues I considered, for instance, contains a “POWER POINTS” section, three columns of short paragraphs announcing store openings and events,⁹ and aspects of New Town everyday life that people might not know, such as this one.

In case you’re wondering, the melodious chimes you’re hearing throughout New Town are not church bells. They’re from New Town’s brand new clock in the Foundation Square Building! Whether you’re shopping, strolling or just lazing in a café, you can’t miss this beautiful new addition to the New Town experience. The chimes are other-worldly. [*The New Towner*, July-August 2008]

Beginning with the March-April 2008 issue and continuing until the September-October 2008 issue, *The New Towner* included a map and directory between pages 6-7. The insert is a pamphlet published for other purposes by the New Town Commercial Association, which advertises with CWB. The inserted pamphlet inscribes scale in perhaps its most concrete form among the pages of *The New Towner*. All businesses in New Town become names on a numbered list, corresponding to numbers on a map, its representations of buildings color-coded by use: retail, professional, multi-use, and residential. The title of the map, “New Town, Williamsburg,” sets boundaries; *this* is New Town, it says. The map, however, prefigures expansion: the “future residential” buildings depicted at the bottom left corner extend beyond the page. To the right of the map, the New Town “vision” exists as text and image, a slogan, “All in one place, all in New Town,” accompanying an explanation, below a series of images, of a man supporting a child on his shoulders, of a man in a suit, and of two women examining a

⁹ Note that the occasion of a store opening is not itself an event. The term “event” as it concerns New Town has a particular, if implicit, meaning for the people who used during the summer of 2008. See the second case study for further discussion of New Town events.

dress from a rack. Above this is the slogan for New Town, part of CWB's advertising strategy: "Live.Work.Play." Sometimes, this is shown as "Live.Work.Shop."

As the reader navigates¹⁰ through this passage, here not only an expanse of text, but a *passageway*, a corridor with constraints, she confronts certain possibilities. Insofar as the reader progresses from opening paragraph to the body, and then to the conclusion, and comprehends its meaning, she engages with the usefulness of a mixed-use environment. Insofar as the reader recognizes herself in the text, she enters for its duration the subjectivity of consumption. *The New Towner* constitutes New Town, and it constitutes New Towners.

Through *The New Towner*, New Town greets the reader as a sort of lived menu. The diffuse operations of maintaining a business or holding an event become translated together through the space of *The New Towner*, mobilizing Shutters and Décor, Twiddy Realty, and so on, together on the page as things to be considered and sampled. The real estate office may have nothing to do with the interior design shop, but through the scheme of *The New Towner*, someone sitting in a particular house in Abbey Commons may, first, appraise these buildings and operations as *possible actions*, and second, do so with the understanding that these options exist within a broader scale, New Town. The newsletter, then, enables an experience of space as-such.

Such a juxtaposition, however, is not perfect. Not all ads promote businesses in New Town. Each *New Towner* I considered, in fact, includes a full page of ads for retail

¹⁰ For another way of understanding the phenomenal succession through *The New Towner*, we might consider de Certeau's discussion of the *tour* (de Certeau 1984, 119-121). Here, narratives relate configurations of position (place) to *procedures* for enacting, intersecting, evading, in other words, temporalizing, these configurations, action de Certeau calls *space*. The tour mobilizes places into space, and situates space in place, as in this example: "If you turn to the right, you will see the movie theater, at which point you cross the street and pass the entrance to reach the bike shop."

stores in Port Warwick, a mixed-use community in Newport News indicated through address listings on the bottom of each ad. Additionally, as Law (1986a) notes in his study of Portuguese colonialism, the durability of a text across space and time requires proper disciplining of its readers; texts do not *make* people do things. Instead, relationalities between documents and people create reliable arteries through which long-distance control can succeed. The full extent of CWB's trajectory, the sets of relations it enters with people, businesses, maps, text, and so on, thus requires further research.

The second trajectory: the space of event planning in New Town

At the end of June, one member of the Residential Association hosted a Wine and Dine, serving drinks and snacks at her townhouse and reserving a table at Bonefish Grill. During the dinner, one of my tablemates asked me if I had been to "the dog show." I asked him what he meant, and he clarified, whetting the sarcasm in his tone: "Oh, when I went, I thought it was a dog show." He meant this: the Farmer's Market, which Town Management had scheduled for nearly every Thursday in the summer, had become an opportunity for dog owners to flaunt their pets, including heavier, more irritating ones.

My tablemate's quip illustrates one aspect of lived space in New Town. Aside from working day jobs and encountering one another accidentally while strolling, the New Town residents who helped me with my research attended events. At any point in the summer, people could plan to attend some event or other on the former Casey property. After the Residential Association's "Spring into Summer Beach Party," someone could visit TowneBank for "Women with a Cause," a celebration of community leadership, the Farmer's Market, or a Town Management-hosted Cruise-In at which

people parked their cars and showed them off for a modest fee. Then they could sit in on one of a few interior design class at Norwalk furniture.

In each case, an email from Town Management, a vinyl banner draped over the gazebo at the foot of Main St., or perhaps a window-mounted flier or newspaper advertisement had named the event, listed a date and time in which it would occur, and included sufficient imagery or description that a prospective visitor would know what to expect at that place and time. When my tablemate quipped about the Farmer's Market, then, he took something *finished* and *objectified*, which could be represented through text and image and put in advertisements, and appraised it as a bounded, complete *thing*, something that someone may then decide to attend (or not).

The Wine and Dine was such an event, advertised through emails to Residential Association (NTRA) members. As the Wine and Dine proceeded, people asked one another about the *next*, still unplanned, NTRA event. A kindergarten teacher who participated in community theater suggested that a group of residents travel to the next Williamsburg Players production, and the organizer of the NTRA Activities Committee liked the idea. The next few times I saw either resident, she mentioned the potential outing. Nothing ever came of it.

As this co-occurrence of event judgment and event planning demonstrates, some process must span these two statuses, *being* made and *having been* made, such that an event can be experienced apart from the processes which *produce* it. Recalling Lefebvre and Latour, space is something *practiced* as well as represented and passively experienced. The durability of social space depends on the actors, the matters of concern, which are assembled in relation to one another. By constituting objects, cultural process

becomes spatialized. As a project towards durability, securing a given time and location *for* a fixed (the event planners might hope) assortment of occurrences, event planning in New Town must have something to do with the production of social space.

Some New Town residents, in fact, articulated the relationship between spatiality and events in New Town rather explicitly, as when one New Town resident, a first-time home buyer, described her initial involvement with the Activities Committee.

Earlier this year there was just a general call put out to anyone interested in *fostering community around New Town* and organizing some social events and stuff, so, I went to that meeting and it seemed like a fun thing to get involved in, and I had lived here for probably eight months at that point but not really met neighbors. I mean, people I had come across were friendly, and everyone seemed nice, and it didn't seem like there were problems, but I hadn't really gotten to meet people, hang out with them, that kind of thing. [emphasis added]

A successfully planned event for the Activities Committee, then, would amount to a new sort of relationship between New Town and New Towners, more interactions between neighbors, a more present *sense* of this connection between people and place. Efforts to foster community, meanwhile, enact the socio-spatial conditions of that very community. Event planning takes its own space, such that the production of events enacts a certain understanding of New Town even before event advertisements reach email lists.

In other words, as residents in New Town convened to plan events, social space was performed as an *assemblage*: the built environment they delineated as a meeting place; the produced, objective *event plan* which resulted from this and later discussions; and the clustering of standpoints and plans within the meeting. Mol and Law (1994) describe the relationship between *networks* and *regions* in constituting spaces in their study of anemia diagnosis among Dutch doctors at clinics in “the tropics” of Africa. In *regions*, “objects are clustered together and boundaries are drawn around each cluster” (643). Diagnoses of anemia cluster: the doctors Mol and Law interview refer to anemia in the Netherlands as “oh well,” while anemia in Africa is “a very concrete problem” (646).

Differences within regions become minimized, or relegated to a “complicated and ever-present backdrop” (647).

These exclusive inside/outside, here/elsewhere divisions, Mol and Law say, are generated through *networks*, in which “distance is a function of the relations between the elements and difference a matter of relational variety” (643). These relations are semiotic: “Places with *a similar set of elements and similar relations between them* are close to one another, and those with different elements or relations are far apart” (649, emphasis in original). The two regions of anemia diagnosis Mol and Law recount depend on a network of laboratory machinery, guidebooks, nurses, and other heterogeneous elements. These actors and relations generate regions through the spread of *immutable mobiles*, entities which remain stable wherever they go (649). In the case of anemia detection, the devices which detect the disease must endure movement between or within regions, stabilizing the meaning of a diagnosis. The result is that “The laws of inoculation are the same in a farm in Pouilly le Fort as they are in the École Normale Supérieure in Paris so long as the farm is turned into a research laboratory” (652). For the “oh well” and a “very concrete problem” regions of anemia detection to arise from networks of diagnostic devices and people, certain aspects of this network must be made durable.

One Activities Committee meeting in mid-July at an Abbey Commons townhouse clustered a host of heterogeneous elements, performing a space from which events could be announced. The final, transportable results of the meeting reflects the positioning of these elements—actors and the attitudes, beliefs, identities, etc. that they express—with respect to one another.

Six of us sat in couches and armchairs in an open room just to the right of the front door. Martha¹¹ and Sue passed around copies of the committee's budget, and reported the costs and proceeds of beach-themed party held in May at Legacy Hall. They talked funding. Herb, a 14-year resident of the Ford's Colony gated community, recalled the way the social committee in his old neighborhood received funds from advertisements in a newsletter. Martha noted that no one had spoken up when the Homeowner's Association¹² increased its dues. When Martha mentioned a Homeowner's Association, Wallace and Beverly expressed puzzlement. They wondered, How many homeowner's associations were there? Did they even belong in the meeting? Sue told them that they belong to the Commercial Association, and Herb noted that they got the email about the meeting anyway. Martha wondered whether association fees could enter a miscellaneous fund for social events. Next, members asserted that, regardless of whether people lived in a condo or a house, they are "all neighbors." Martha said, "We're here to live, love, laugh, or whatever the motto is." "All residents, all families share in the social umbrella," Herb said.

Later in the meeting, Sue asked the attendees if they would be interested in contra dancing, or some other event at Legacy Hall. Wallace told her to put him on a contact list. He received emails about events, but not Residential Association newsletters. Sue remarked that a porter delivered newsletters, but only to Residential Association members. At this point, Martha remarked that a lot of homeowners probably did not realize this. Wallace argued that they should solve the conundrum by approaching

¹¹ The first names used here are pseudonyms.

¹² This was her usage. Town Management employees referred to a division between a commercial and residential association. Residents living in houses and in condominium units nevertheless referred to the associations to which they belonged as homeowner's associations, blurring JCC's boundary between condominium and residential associations.

businesses and professionals, and Martha responded that the only way they could solicit was by attending the Retail Association meeting, and that she would contact Town Management.

This cluster, then, grouped actors and speech-acts, Wallace and Beverly's puzzlement about associational structures with Martha and Sue's connection to Town Management, as well as Herb's standpoint as a former resident of Ford's Colony.

Another sort of regional ordering occurred at the meeting. After meeting-goers deliberated about associations, Herb announced that Town Management had begun to develop a plan through which New Town residents and businesses would respond to emergencies. A committee would work on the disaster preparedness plan. To staff it, Herb needed to find a representative of each residential area, that is, Chelsea Green, Savanna Square, Abbey Commons, and the apartments in Oxford New Town ("because those are people, not businesses"), as well as representatives of condominium associations and James City County. These representatives would meet three or four times over six or seven weeks. Sue said she was busy, and Herb asked her to find someone in her area who could serve on the committee. Since Wallace and Beverly could not pick out their proper association, Herb told them he would determine the next day whether they would represent businesses or residents.

At the end of the meeting, Wallace made his own announcement. He wanted Martha to run for Vice President of the New Town Lions Club, which had poised to apply for an international charter. He told her that most of the administrative work fell with the secretary, and that Martha could delegate her tasks to other Lions. Martha

suggested that Wallace approach Lisa to fill the secretary position. Wallace, it turned out, had already found someone.

The Activities Committee meeting, then, proceeded without a previously agreed-upon structure. The content of the meeting was a function not of some rubric which governed the things people would say, the issues they would raise, but of *which actors were assembled*. The meeting acted as a spatial center around which bodies oriented. Once situated in the plush side room of Martha's house, the projects of each meeting-goer could be voiced, made public towards that center, accessible by other centripetally oriented actors. Meeting-goers *engaged* with one another, each conditioning what the other would say, the usefulness of their position with respect to the meeting. The region, then, configured the social space of people and projects. Wallace and Beverly's associational bewilderment prompted the other members to reassert the Committee's *raison d'etre* with respect to New Town, resulting in a plan to contact Town Management. Meanwhile, Wallace and Herb attempted to enrol¹³ people and neighborhoods within the formation of a Lions Club chapter and a disaster preparedness plan.

What the meeting *did*, then, emerged from its regionality, its conjunction of certain sorts of actors configuring one another in certain ways. At the close of the meeting, Martha agreed to contact Town Management, Wallace had one more candidate for a Lions Club position, and Herb laid a communicative channel through which people

¹³ Callon (1986, 211) defines *enrolment* as "the device by which a set of interrelated roles is defined and attributed to actors who accept them." Callon means "device" quite literally: in his account of scallop research in St. Brieuc Bay, biologists must enrol scallops as actors within a study of anchoring mechanisms. To be enrolled, that is, to produce data on anchoring, scallops must be protected from predation through sufficiently engineered nets.

could respond in particular ways, with recommendations for emergency response committee members.

If would-be event-goers first encounter events in New Town as distilled, simplified imagery in advertisements, this unified representation would not come easily from the Activities Committee meeting I attended: the meeting produced no complete event plan! How, then, might the messiness of gathering actors into a centered region translate into advertisements for meetings? As shown above, the meeting *did something* by linking the actors in this region to other actors and other regions. Martha agreed to approach Town Management. Herb addressed people in such a way that their response would create or fail to create a connection between real estate communities and the emergency response committee. Wallace performed a similar enrolment, hailing Martha as a possible Lions Club officer. One region alone, then, cannot account for the univocality of an advertised event: event planning occurs as a *network* of regions, connecting to the Lions Club, the disaster preparedness committee, and Legacy Hall. Recall that for Mol and Law (1994), networks can interpenetrate regions by use of certain devices, *immutable mobiles*.

Action regarding New Town events occurred in some cases through email. One Town Management employee, Lisa, maintains a list of email addresses, mostly of Residential Association members, to which she sends updates. A June 26 email said, in large, bold letters, “June Wine and Dine,” followed by the address and phone number of the event’s host. Two months later, another email listed two events—a concert at the nearby Lake Matoaka Amphitheater, and excursions with Martha on her pontoon boat—

along with the concert's website URL and Martha's email address. In each case, email moved from a region (or regions) of event planning to the position of the email reader.

Regions of event planning thus become nodes in a broader actor-network. *Event planning performs its own space*. Two issues remain before we may produce a complete picture of the performance of space through event planning in New Town. First, How do the texts of emails *about* events emerge from event planning meetings? Event ideas proposed at this meeting arrived with a sort of tag. Sue suggested contra-dancing, and other meeting-goers had some familiarity with the Wine & Dine format after having lived in Ford's Colony. Perhaps, then, events become email-ready even *before* actors have determined what they comprise. In fact, one email from Town Management in October 2008 advertised a "Chili Cook Off," and three days later, another email announced that the event was cancelled due to a dearth of RSVPs. Here, the *signifier* "Chili Cook Off" persisted even while logistical maneuverings precipitated its cancellation. In fact, another Chili Cook Off had been held months before, and Sue had announced at the Activities Committee meeting that the Residential Association would put on a soup and stew contest at Legacy Hall in October. This early emergence of event signifiers perhaps allows emails to link unstable planning spaces with possible attendees.

Second, this section has so far described one kind of event planning space. This was the only Activities Committee Meeting for which I had received an email, and others had certainly preceded it. Whether all event planning meetings function in the same, loosely regional way requires further research. More rigid meeting examples, for instance, might permit less heterogeneity among the actors enrolled within the configuration of the region.

The third trajectory: moving to New Town

So far, we have considered the sorts of devices and material forms which *perform* spatialities of New Town. *The New Towner* assembles various social configurations—business operation, event planning, settling into one’s home—into a portable object. “New Town” becomes an intelligible thing, an array of options clustered like a menu and organized through a presumption of scale. The Activities Committee, meanwhile, assembled its own sort of social space, a region that juxtaposed projects and standpoints, lending content to an event label which could then be made objective and external through email and other printed forms.

Here, spatiality emerges from situatedness. Ideology, culture as something “had,” interpretive schemes, and Lefebvre’s representational spaces—that is, consciousness *prior to* concrete spatialization—remain mostly out of the picture. Since the bulk of New Town’s residential developments arrived within two years of my fieldwork period, the residents I met shared stories about coming to New Town, moving into a house, leaving their old house or alternating between buildings. These residents decide to leave *some place* and enter *another place*. These objects, the endpoints of this movement, are not pre-given, but must be constituted. The thing that people move to differs between residents and situations. This section considers representations of New Town, as ways of conceiving and interpreting the space remotely, when the subject is not participating in its performance.

Ideology plays a role in mediating spatiality, fixing spatial practices. As Miller (2001) demonstrates from his work in a North London street, “[t]he relationship to the physical environment of local shops is mediated by a fundamental ideological

commitment to an imagination of sociality” (105). Middle-class residents of the street defend small, local shops against supermarkets during interviews through a discourse of close-knit community, but avoid the stores in their neighborhood. Instead, they visit a quaintly themed shopping center which better objectifies this discourse (90).

Narratives of movement to New Town, then, reveal the ideology at work in New Town’s spatial life. These narratives take as their object total scales: people move *to New Town*, a centered, demarcated thing. The ways residents understand New Town semantically, prior to any performance, become present as they create narratives about New Town. Further, transitions from, say, Ford’s Colony to New Town potentiate *evaluations* of each location. In explaining why they move, New Town residents and business owners disclose values, embedded within spatiality, possibly revealing the way such values enter spatial performances.

As an object constituted in movement narratives, New Town shifts from reality to reality. First, just as architects, developers, JCC officials, and so on conceived of New Town as a realization of the New Urban/mixed use ethos, an *idea* refined through a design competition and objectified in a master plan and the rulings of the Design Review Board, New Town residents I interviewed often mentioned the “concept” of New Town. Clinton,¹⁴ the vice president of a local bank which financed the first buildings in New Town, explained the role of the New Town concept in the bank’s financial decision making.

Paul: You talked earlier about what you saw in New Town that led [the bank] to back some of these developments. Could you talk a little bit more about what the bank saw in New Town?

Clinton: If you go back a few years ago, when all you had was a bunch of land, a gravel pit or whatever, some woods, dirt, when SunTrust was the first building in there, and that’s all that was there. The next facility that was built was the Corner Pocket, and we financed that, and that was

¹⁴ As in the previous section, all names of research participants are pseudonymous.

our first project in New Town. It was one of these—it was a vision thing. The vision that this was going to be the new happening place where this mixed use as they call it, the combination of commercial and retail and residential and recreation and restaurants and office buildings, all in walking distance, is going to work.

With few concrete buildings in New Town, Clinton projected New Town as an abstraction, rooted in the idea of a mixed-use development, a way of acting in space inseparable from the idea of the space itself. Similarly, Chris, an architect in New Town, explained his decision to move in part from a sort of experiential autochthony, a “living situation” or “lifestyle.” Space here *includes* certain ways of acting, such that as regions are circumscribed and delineated, so are “lifestyles.”

We wanted to move here and see if we liked the lifestyle and kind of, the living situation, and then with the thought that we might actually build a sustainable house in the single family portion for the back, so when that opens up, so that’s still a possibly for us. But we like that if having all the amenities close may cut the commute time in half for my wife and cut it down to almost nothing for me and our girls are—one’s in college and one has one more year of high school, so we didn’t need as big a house.

Susan, a manager at one location of a major retail chain, also roots a mode of action in the *concept* of New Town, and adds a further aesthetic component. The delineation of place simultaneously delineates modes of action.

Paul: Since you have been in other [store] locations, how would you compare New Town’s to other ones?

Susan: I like the concept of New Town, this multi-use center where you have businesses, you have residential, you have entertainment, and of course in this day and age with watching your gas usage and filling up the air with ozone—or pollutants that damage the ozone. I like the concept that you can live or work and shop in a very—it’s the old town look, it’s just what it was fifty years ago when you didn’t have sixty million cars. You walk to the grocery store, you walk to, you know, the mailbox, that kind of thing.

She continues, indicating the *source* in which she encountered the New Town concept.

I like the concept, and that’s what they’re building in Hampton. Peninsula Town Center—it’s the same concept. It is the trend. I read a lot of trade journals about retail, and they’re going away from malls. Malls are too expensive to run as a unit. They take a lot of maintenance. And most malls in the country are pushing thirty and forty years old and they’ve becoming a maintenance nightmare.

Susan’s account of New Town unfolds as abstraction. New Town is an *instance* of a “multi-use center,” and subsequently grouped with other such centers. The *concept*

includes entertainment, businesses, and residential units, the practice of walking to the grocery store. In fact, the first grocery store which people would recognize as “in” New Town, Trader Joe’s, was not yet built.

Rachel, the owner of a pool hall, moved her business to New Town from another shopping center while New Town comprised only one other building. She also invokes the concept of New Town, but only cursorily.

Paul: Why did you decide to move to New Town?

Rachel: Well number one I believed in the concept. Number two, I figured even if the concept didn’t work out, the worst case scenario is that I would own a piece of property one block off of Monticello. And one of my favorite restaurants in town, in Williamsburg, was forced to close because they lost their lease. [...] They were great guys and they ran a great restaurant and they lost their lease. So from that time I started looking for property because you’re just so vulnerable if you don’t own your building.

For Rachel, the New Town concept is something that can work out—or not, a pattern of living and dwelling that may or may not become actual. While the New Town concept operates here, Rachel’s narrative divorces ways of living from a demarcated region: if the concept fails, she can run a successful business in the same location.

What it means to be *in New Town*, then, leaps between accounts. One involves an instance of a concept: New Urbanism, but in Williamsburg. The other proceeds in terms of particular configurations: of built environments, of property structures, of business expectations, and so on. This second sort of account projects the subject into an imaginary everyday consciousness, in which she contends with the exigencies of running a business and satisfying desire.

As Rachel’s narrative begins in one mode and assumes the other as she communicated *reasons* to move to New Town, other such accounts adopt this sort of lived imagination in the course of recalling events which precipitated a move. New Town residents invoke a concept, but they also invoke floor plans. David, an executive at the

Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce, moved to New Town after comparing it to a neighboring, up-and-coming mixed-use development. He moved from another neighborhood in Williamsburg in April 2007.

Paul: Did you look anywhere else?

David: Yes, to answer your question, simply yes. We looked at the floor plans for High Street and just didn't like them, plus they were at that particular point a lot further behind than New Town was coming out of the ground and you could pretty much see what you were getting. Even the condo units still in High Street have not yet been built. We wanted to be--I realize there were other condo units out and about but we liked the idea of them being there in a pedestrian—in the urban center so to speak. We did look at some of the townhouses in the New Town area but just didn't like the floor plans on the townhouses. When we saw the condo floor plan, just really fell in love with it.

David and his wife liked that they “could stand in the kitchen, and we could see every room in the unit except the master bathroom.” This spatial imagination proceeds wholly apart from a “concept” of New Town. Rather than considering an object that is both spatialized and temporalized, *things people do here*, David imagines his emplaced body within the floor plan¹⁵ of townhouses and condos. The description occurs as depictions of ambient stimuli, what he sees. This involves a different scale, a network (Mol and Law 1994) of floor plans intercutting the regions of developments.

While Clinton's bank financed projects in New Town on the basis of “the vision,” he decided to move to New Town himself through a more immediate imagination, placing himself with respect to his workplace, his places of travel.

Moved there one year ago, last year, actually. It was for me an opportunity to downsize. I sold a home, moved there. The location to me was ideal in that, oh my gosh, what am I, three miles, two miles from work? This is where my office is. I'm on the road a lot. I do a lot of travelling to the branches, I oversee the branches in Gloucester and our headquarters up in Kilmarnock so I'll head up there. But being right next to 199, being close to everything, and Williamsburg's a great central location, no doubt about that. Then the idea of being able to walk to things was appealing.

¹⁵ It is unclear here whether David refers to a diagram provided in a real estate office, an image on a website, the space of a townhouse performed and made intelligible through a tour, or something else entirely.

Chris's architecture firm moved to New Town in 2006 from three miles away. Like Clinton and David, he described this move in terms of an imagined situatedness, this time positioning potential employees within the experienced social and material configuration of New Town.

A couple of reasons we did that. One was that we just needed more space. Another reason was we really felt like we wanted to be here and we thought that the kind of mix of things that New Town offered was an attractive thing, partly for us trying to attract employees to work for us, and also just being able to go to lunch and kind of interact with people here. It just felt like for many reasons it was a good move.

When these New Town residents consider floor plans, nearby restaurants, the distance between townhouse and offices, the concept leaves the picture. In these narratives, comparison and evaluation assume a particular semantic axis, a domain of meaning which determines the possibilities that a decision will realize or exclude. David's narrative, for example, expressed certain expectations and desires for the openness of a floor plan, as well as the construction progress of his immediate surroundings. Both evaluations emplace his body imaginarily. Clinton deployed two axes, one of proximity, another of floor space.

Ideology is critical to an understanding of spatiality in New Town. These residents and business owners decided to move after making evaluations and decisions which took as their content an imagination of New Town as a space, abstract and extant as well as engaged with a particular subject. People imagine New Town differently, though, as their narratives acquire new evaluative domains. Clinton had faith in the New Town "vision," but his own decision to live in New Town proceeded on the basis of geometry. He imagined an array of possible living places as measurements from various geographic points. Rachel believed in the concept, but imagined her emplacement on Monticello Ave in ways that render the concept irrelevant, "a piece of property."

While New Town residents' representations of space assume narrative ideological content, then, pre-practical ideology alone cannot account for the spatialization of New Town. Since spatial imaginings of New Town weave in and out of semantic domains, and this shift in meaning affects decision making about New Town, an understanding of space in New Town cannot simply *be* this or that ideology *about* New Town. Experienced space is also performed space.

Conclusion

Let us attempt to answer our initial question. How does New Town become spatialized? What associations of things make spatiality in New Town stable or contestable? What does reading *The New Towner*, planning events, and moving from one house to another tell us about ways of doing and understanding New Town spatially? Given Lefebvre's declaration that social space is a social product, and Latour's insights about the performance of space through configurations of objects with culturally negotiated ontologies, we might answer this question by way of broad claims about the relations and mutual positions of people and things. The actors people regard and the way they assemble reveal the grounds for the spatiality of New Town.

The three case studies suggest one form of spatiality for New Town. What becomes assembled are *possibilities*, ways of acting which implore a subject, who in turn acts as a consumer of New Town experiences. Negotiations concern and create panoramic (cf. Latour 2005) objects, enabling certain imaginations. As they engage in this framework of objects and actions, residents and workers in New Town perform a kind of menu-gazing.

Consider *The New Towner*. The editor takes calls from business owners hoping for free publicity, contacts residents through their real estate offices, and receives news about events from Town Management. Another employee in her advertising firm writes articles. A series of objects arrays together in the newsletter, flattened on the page, organized laterally, all elements visible before the reader. These things are representations, but in the sense Callon (1986) uses, that is, the sense of a politician representing voters. One thing represents other things in so far as, by interacting with the

representative, a subject interacts with the constituents. Shops, restaurants, events, and residents become representatives as *The New Towner* mobilizes them.

The things represented in *The New Towner* draw more closely to the reader. She may engage these things—deciding to take action towards them, making some evaluation about them, and so on—at the moment of reading the newsletter. Static buildings and the operations they enclose gain relationships through *The New Towner*. These objects relate to *you*, the subject they interpellate. The articles, advertisements, interviews, and “Power Points” items make suggestions of *you*, to visit this restaurant, attend that event, or be aware of this ringing bell from that condominium. These objects relate to one another. A suggestion from a coffee shop resides on the page next to a suggestion from an event across the community. Both seem to want *your* attention, and *you* can decide among them.

The New Towner makes another move. Objects array not only as options, but as possibilities for *living in New Town*. The things compiled in *The New Towner* are not isolated entities, but constituents of a named community. The title of the newsletter implies scale rather overtly. CWB disseminates most copies to locations in New Town. Within the pages, articles often begin and end with a general statement about New Town, and small news items constrain a domain of activity of things that happen *somewhere*.

The operations of the Residential Association’s Activities Committee reveal one way in which events are constituted as objects. The work of the Committee becomes externalized through emails to a list of addresses. If successful, an email announcing an event would convey another option to a subject interpellated as a New Towner, perhaps a

homeowner, or an apartment dweller, anyone who responds to the email and attends the event.

The event planning for the Residential Association in part lent content to a signifier, working out the meaning of, say, “Chili Cook-Off.” Committee members propose and respond to such signifiers (“contra dancing?” “making stew?”), then discuss the people they will contact, the things they will bring, the venue they will secure to make the event happen. At some point in the process, a Town Management employee emails the list, announcing the newly filled signifier.

Additionally, the meeting I consider in Part II becomes a *region*, clustering people around a center. As bodies associate, so do projects. Two meeting participants puzzled about institutional boundaries. Another wanted to gather members for an emergency response committee. Two more wanted to review a budget and deliberate about the next use of Legacy Hall. The meeting proceeded along these lines, co-locating projects, making them commonly available, and thus organizing them so that they might condition one another: at the end of the meeting, one of the people who wanted to deliberate about Legacy Hall had decided to contact Town Management about institutional boundaries. The meeting, then, operated, acted upon New Town, through its regionality, its ability to organize actors whose projects may ordinarily have nothing to do with one another.

Residents and business owners’ narratives of leaving one location and arriving in New Town complicate this form of spatiality. When discussing their reasons for moving to New Town, these people compose narratives of *options*, things which New Town has but other spaces lack, such as a certain floor plan, or walkability. New Town in these narratives is represented as possibility. The possibilities mentioned include the sorts of

things *The New Towner* would advertise: a concept of New Urbanism and all it entails in the everyday, an available array of restaurants, or an assertion of proximity. One *New Towner* article even enumerates the amenities of various residential developments in New Town.

There is thus some congruence between, first, a spatiality performed through event planning and the assemblage of *The New Towner*, and second, the spatiality represented through narratives of arrival. But is there a relationship between them? This requires more research, a more thorough investigation into the devices which operate as people decide to move to New Town. Participants in this study consisted of people with residences or jobs *already* in New Town.

There may, of course, be no relationship at all between the content of these narratives, which does indeed shift between total abstraction and particular description of circumstance, and the performed space of consumptive possibility. Perhaps, though, there is a representational space at work among prospective New Town residents or business owners, in which the experience of place transpires as an experience of consumptive possibility, an experience of potential experience. As people arrived in New Town, then, they would bring this representational space into their calls to the editor of *The New Towner* and their experience of sociality as a slate of events which they then must plan.

Instead, perhaps life “in” New Town, that is, engagement with devices such as *The New Towner* or invitations to New Town events, perhaps the events themselves, involves continuous interpellation of subjects as disinterested appraisers of options. Some people I met, in fact, told me that they had trouble getting to know their neighbors before they attended and organized Residential Association events. Sociality, then, would install

a resident within actor-network relationships, particular inter-constitutions of subjects and objects. People must attend events to become familiar with others, but they must also decide *which* event to attend. *The New Towner* offers advice in this regard. Perhaps, then, would-be residents and business owners of New Town participate in these actor-networks as they visit, tour, and consider New Town. ■

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