

## *Belonging*

Architecture is always linked to questions of cultural identity. For what sense would discourses such as Critical Regionalism make unless they assumed some connection between identity and the built environment? Indeed, the implication that critical regionalism may contribute in some way to cultural identity is implied, at least, in one of the chapter titles used by Kenneth Frampton: 'Critical Regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity'.<sup>1</sup> And yet architectural theorists have seldom broached the question of how people actually identify with their environment. Instead they have been preoccupied almost exclusively with questions of form, as though cultural identity is somehow constituted by form alone. It is clear, however, that if theorists are to link architecture to cultural identity they must extend their analyses beyond any mere discourse of form to engage with subjective processes of identification. This has long been acknowledged by cultural theorists, who have developed a sophisticated understanding of the mechanisms by which culture operates. For them culture is constituted not by a system of objects alone, but by a discourse that imbues these objects with meaning. Cultural identity, therefore, emerges as a complex field of operations that engages with — but is not defined by — cultural artifacts such as architecture.

It is perhaps by following the notion of the nation as 'narration' — of identity as a kind of discourse — put forward by cultural theorist, Homi Bhabha, that we can grasp the importance of understanding form as being inscribed within a cultural discourse. The nation, for Bhabha, is enacted as a 'cultural elaboration'. To perceive the nation in this way in narrative terms is to highlight the discursive and contested nature of such identities: 'To study the nation through its narrative address does not merely draw attention to its language and rhetoric; it also attempts to alter the conceptual object itself. If the problematic 'closure' of textuality questions the 'totalization' of national culture, then its positive value lies in displaying the wide dissemination through which we construct the field of meanings and symbols associated with national life'.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, it would be wrong to reduce the nation to mere narration as though form were totally unimportant. Rather we have to recognise the nation as being defined within a dialectical tension. It is a tension, for Bhabha, between the 'object' and its accompanying narrative: 'signifying the people as an *a priori* historical presence, a pedagogical object; and the people constructed in the performance of narrative, its enunciatory 'present' marked in

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>Bhabha, 'Introduction' in Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 3.

the repetition and pulsation of the national sign'.<sup>3</sup> If then the nation is a kind of narration, it is never an abstract narration, but a contextualised narration in which certain objects are inscribed. And it is precisely here within this field of objects which have themselves become the focus of narrative attention that we must locate architecture, as a language of forms not only embedded within various cultural discourses, but also given meaning by those discourses.

This brings us close to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, as a non-conscious system of dispositions which derive from the subject's economic, cultural and symbolic capital. *Habitus*, for Bourdieu is a dynamic field of behaviour, of position-taking where individuals inherit the parameters of a given situation, and modify them into a new situation. As Derek Robbins explains: 'The *habitus* of every individual inscribes the inherited parameters of modification, of adjustment from situation to position which provides the legacy of a new situation.'<sup>4</sup> Such an approach supposes an interaction between social behaviour and a given objectified condition. It is here that we could perhaps locate the position of architecture in Bourdieu's discourse.

Architecture, in Bourdieu's terms, can be understood as a type of 'objectivated cultural capital'. Its value lies dormant and in permanent potential, but it has to be reactivated by social practices which will, as it were, 'revive' it. In this respect, architecture belongs to the same category as other cultural objects: 'Although objects — such as books or pictures — can be said to be the repositories of objectivated cultural capital, they have no value unless they are activated strategically in the present by those seeking to modify their incorporated cultural capital. All those objects on which cultural value has ever been bestowed lie perpetually dormant waiting to be revived, waiting for their old value to be used to establish new value in a new market situation.'<sup>5</sup> In other words, what Bourdieu highlights is the need for *praxis* to 'unlock' the meaning of an object. In a sense this comes close to the Wittgensteinian model of language wherein meaning is defined by use. Just as words can be understood by the manner in which they are used, so buildings can be grasped by the manner in which they are perceived — by the narratives of use in which they are inscribed.

This opens up a crucial problematic within an architectural discourse that has traditionally been premised almost solely on questions of form. It is as though narratives of treatment and use stand largely outside architectural concerns. Thus Critical Regionalism, for example, in investing form with such significance, does not recognise how the same form will take on

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<sup>3</sup>Bhabha, 'DissemiNation' in Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 298-299.

<sup>4</sup>Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture*, London: Sage, 2000, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture*, London: Sage, 2000, p. 35.

radically different connotations in different cultural milieus. The same concrete tower block — replicated in, say, New York, Hong Kong, Latin America and Eastern Europe — will effectively appear different as it is treated and used differently in each context. Furthermore, in standard architectural theory there is no accepted framework for exploring how people make sense of place and identify with it. Without this, the relation of architecture to cultural identity can hardly be addressed. In order for architecture to be understood in terms of cultural identity, some kind of identification with architecture must have taken place. But how exactly does this identification occur?

This article attempts to offer one model that might help to explain this process, and that might therefore address one of the crucial problems that exists within theories such as Critical Regionalism that restrict themselves to a discourse of form. It argues that a highly suggestive model for understanding the relationship between physical form and cultural identity — ‘belonging’ — can be drawn from Judith Butler’s work on ‘performativity’.

### **Butler and Performativity**

Judith Butler has elaborated a vision of identity which is based on the notion of ‘performativity’. It is an approach that allows her to perceive identity in a far more fluid and dynamic way than traditional approaches to the question. It is an approach, moreover, that recognises identity politics as a field of individual empowerment.

Butler is a theorist of gender politics — and more specifically lesbian politics. Her concern is to formulate a notion of identity that is not constrained by traditional heterosexual models and to offer a radical critique of essentialising modes of thinking. According to Butler, it is precisely our actions and behaviour that constitute our identity, and not out biological bodies. Gender, she argues, is not a given ontological condition, but it is performatively produced. It is ‘a construction that conceals its genesis,’ such that, ‘the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions.’<sup>6</sup>

We may effectively rearticulate our identities and reinvent ourselves through our performativities. Here it is important to note that identity is the effect of performance, and not vice versa. Performativity achieves its aims not through a singular performance — for performativity can never be reduced to performance — but through the accumulative

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<sup>6</sup>Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 140, as quoted in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 136.

iteration of certain practices. It is grounded in a form of citationality — of invocation and replication. As Judith Butler explains: 'Performativity is thus not a singular 'act', for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals and dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition.'<sup>7</sup>

Butler figures identity not as something interior — an essentialising 'given' — but rather as something exterior, a discursive external effect. It is borne of 'acts, gestures and enactments' that are 'performative,' as Butler puts it, 'in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer and institutes the 'integrity' of the subject.'<sup>8</sup> Importantly, this relates not just to lesbian sexuality, but to all sexualities, such that heterosexuality itself emerges as a socially transmitted construct that depends upon a behavioural norm being 'acted out'.

Here the connections between gender and 'mime' begin to emerge. Indeed Butler's whole discourse, it would appear, depends upon mime in general and the mimetic in particular. All behaviour is based on a kind of mimicry, including normative heterosexual behaviour that is thereby 'naturalised' and instantiated by the force of repetition: 'All gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation. . . the naturalistic effects of heterosexualised genders are produced through imitative strategies; what they imitate is a phantasmatic ideal of heterosexual identity, one that is produced by imitation as its effect.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Butler, *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 136, as quoted in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 136.

<sup>9</sup>Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in D Fuss (ed.), *Inside/Out: Lesbian and Gay Theories*, New York: Routledge, 1991, as quoted in Bell, p. 137. There are parallels here with Irigaray's use of mimesis in the constitution of gender: 'to play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself — in as much as she is on the side of the 'perceptible', of 'matter' — to 'ideas', in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make 'visible' by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover up of a possible operation of the feminine in language.' [Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is not One*, trans. C Porter and C Burke, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 76.] There is an important distinction, however, between Butler's and Irigaray's use of the term. For Irigaray mimesis is at work in feminine language and offers a means of resisting a dominant, masculine logic, while for Butler mimesis explains the manner in which gender of whatever kind is constituted. As Bell notes: 'For Irigaray, mimesis is on the level of strategy — one that reveals through its repetition of ideas about women — and not of constitution, as it is for Butler.' [Bell, p. 139.]

Cultural practices are governed by the hegemonic. They instantiate a certain order, and encourage acquiescence to that order. They are propagated through a desire to conform. This is particularly evident in the case of gender practices.<sup>10</sup> Normative gender practice is controlled by the logic of camouflage. To subscribe to the dominant cultural norm is to avoid conflict and to follow the behavioural systems of a naturalised, hegemonic order. And it is as a camouflage that gender can be understood as an 'effective' cultural *praxis*.

Gender, in this sense, approaches a notion of drag. It is a position that is 'assumed', and played out within the logic of conformity to some accepted norm. In making this claim, Butler destabilises the traditional authority of heterosexuality: 'To claim that all gender is like drag, or is drag, is to suggest that 'imitation' is at the heart of the *heterosexual* project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender, but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealisations.'<sup>11</sup>

Butler is concerned to challenge the hegemony of the given. Nothing is authentic in itself. Everything is authorised through repetition. Yet through its own repetition it begins to instantiate a certain norm. It is important to recognise, however, that any norm can be destabilised. And it is precisely the normative nature of received views on gender that Butler seeks to undermine. For Butler, gender should be seen not as a given state, but as a condition of 'becoming'. Echoing Deleuze she sees it as a rhizomatic condition, that is an active process: 'If gender is something that one becomes — but can never be — then gender is itself a kind of becoming or activity, and that gender ought not to be conceived as a noun or a substantial thing or a static cultural marker, but rather as an incessant and repeated action of some sort.'<sup>12</sup>

Butler's discourse is effectively an extension to Pierre Bourdieu's debate about *habitus* as a dynamic field of behaviour, of position-taking where individuals inherit the parameters of a

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<sup>10</sup>This leads to a certain pessimism in Butler's work. As Vikki Bell argues: 'The category of mimicry as Butler employs it in her work is one that I would argue carries with it a sense of sadness, both of forfeiting (possibilities of being otherwise) and of resignation to 'carrying on' under duress. There is no playful repetition here. Gender performance is regarded as a strategy of *survival*, formed within a heterosexual matrix which, while not compulsory, is hegemonic, such that the psychic structures it deploys are analogous to melancholia, in which the lost object is incorporated into psychic life as part of the ego, object of ambivalence, ie both loved and hated.' [Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 140.]

<sup>11</sup>Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 125.

<sup>12</sup>Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 112.

given situation, and modify them into a new situation.<sup>13</sup> But what Butler brings to that debate is the possibility of political agency, and of subverting received norms. It is through its repetitive citational nature that performativity has the power to question and subvert that which it cites. Whereas Bourdieu stresses the production of the subject through culture, for Butler, social structures have themselves been 'performed'. Hence performativity offers an obvious mode of challenging such structures. Imitation lies at the heart of all cultural practices. It is that which reinforces them, but — equally — that which potentially destabilises them.

This is a radical re-evaluation of the mechanics of cultural practice, that has ramifications for every aspect of cultural life. Without collapsing sexuality, class, race and ethnicity into the same category, all types of identity can also be interpreted as dependent upon performative constructs.<sup>14</sup> While each operates within its own individual paradigms, the general framework remains similar. Each depends upon the performative, each is citational in character, and each is 'effective'. This is not to overlook the significance of physical characteristics, but rather to challenge the notion that these characteristics are the sole determinants of identity.

According to such a view, the constitution of one's identity through performativity extends beyond questions of appearance into modalities of behaviour and modes of perception and expression. In the context of race, for example, we have to acknowledge how the process of 'racing' something or 'being raced' might operate. For performativity also operates in modes of perception, such as the 'gaze' which, as it were, 'colour' and frame our view of the world, but — importantly — also constitute it. To be 'black' is to view the world with a 'black' gaze.<sup>15</sup> What applies to the gaze also applies to other modes of perception or expression.

Butler importantly locates performativity at the heart of our cultural identity today. In an age increasingly colonised by 'fictional worlds', as Marc Augé has observed, where fantasy allows

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<sup>13</sup>As Derek Robbins explains: 'The *habitus* of every individual inscribes the inherited parameters of modification, of adjustment from situation to position which provides the legacy of a new situation.' Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture*, London: Sage, 2000, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Bell discusses the possibility of understanding Jewishness in this light in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999. See also Sneja Gunew, 'Performing Australian Ethnicity: "Helen Demidenko"', in W. Ommundsen and H. Rowley (eds.) *From a Distance: Australian Writers and Cultural Displacement*, Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1996, pp. 159-171.

<sup>15</sup>Butler herself has addressed this question: 'I do think that there is a performativity to the gaze that is not simply the transposition of a textual model onto a visual one; that when we see Rodney King, when we see that video we are also reading and we are also constituting, and that the reading is a certain conjuring and a certain construction. How do we describe that? It seems to me that that is a modality of performativity, that it is radicalization, that the kind of visual reading practice that goes into the viewing of the video is part of what I would understand as the performativity of what it is 'to race something' or to be 'raced' by it. So I suppose that I'm interested in the modalities of performativity that take it out of its purely textualist context.' [Judith Butler (interviewed by Vikki Bell), 'On Speech, Race and Melancholia', in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 169.]

identities to be assumed and discarded like fashion accessories, and where self-realisation often conforms to models drawn from Hollywood, the concept offers a more productive alternative to traditional understandings of the constitution of the self.<sup>16</sup> The whole notion of identity as some fixed and stable condition deserves to be re-interrogated in an age of theming, role-playing and identity politics, where identities must be perceived in the plural, as multiple and often seemingly contradictory modes of personal expression. Nor is this necessarily negative. Indeed such tactics can be analysed as a defensive mechanism that allows the individual to 'survive' within contemporary cultural conditions. Indeed, as Sherry Turkle has argued within the context of a proliferation of 'screen identities' as a result of the increasingly widespread use of the computer, multiple personality disorder can be seen less as a problematic symptom of an age of instability and depthlessness, and more as a strategy of survival — a kind of cultural camouflage — that enables individuals to operate productively in a variegated and multi-faceted world.<sup>17</sup>

## Politics and Space

The emphasis which Butler places on performativity does not undermine the underlying value of form. Indeed this is the main message in Butler's seminal work, *Bodies that Matter*.<sup>18</sup> Hers is an essentially corporeal philosophy of identity. Butler's discourse also serves, however, as a corrective to a certain positivistic theory of form that is still pervasive. Matter — in Butler's terms — does not exist outside of discourse. As Mariam Fraser observes, following Butler: 'Matter does not 'exist' in and of itself, outside or beyond discourse, but is rather repeatedly produced through performativity, which "brings into being or enacts that which it names".'<sup>19</sup>

This has obvious ramifications for any discourse of gender and space. Butler's incisive comments on gender — gender identity being defined not in biological terms, but in performative terms as an identity that is 'acted out' — can be profitably transposed to the realm of physical space. For if identity is performed, then the space in which that performativity takes place can be seen as a stage. After a certain number of performances that stage will no longer seem neutral. It will be imbued with associations of the activities that took place there, on the part of those who witnessed those activities. If identity is a performative construct — if it is acted out like some kind of 'filmscript' — then architecture could be understood as a kind of 'filmset'. But it is as a 'filmset' that it derives its meaning

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<sup>16</sup>Marc Augé, *A War of Dreams*, trans. Liz Heron, London: Pluto, 1999.

<sup>17</sup>Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

<sup>18</sup>Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, London: Routledge, 1993

<sup>19</sup>Mariam Fraser, 'Classing Queer' in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 111.

from the activities that have taken place there. Memories of associated activities haunt physical space like a ghost.

It is here that Butler's thinking can be deployed as a way of cutting through much confusion that exists on the question of the gendering of space. Too often there has been a simplistic collapsing of a particular political ideology on to a particular form, as though a political ideology can be conflated with an aesthetic ideology. This refers as much to politics in general as it does to the specific question of gender politics. According to this logic, certain forms are *in and of themselves* imbued with a certain content. Just as there are seen to be certain 'democratic' forms, so there are certain 'feminine' forms. It is this thinking that Fredric Jameson has sought to challenge. Form, for Jameson, is essentially 'inert' and whatever content is grafted on to it is 'allegorical' in character.<sup>20</sup> There is no intrinsic meaning or political potential to any form. Whilst there may indeed be certain forms that 'lend' themselves to democratic purposes rather than totalitarian ones, and — equally — no doubt certain forms that 'embody' a feminine sensibility, it is surely a mistake to map certain activities on to certain forms, *as though those activities were a consequence of those forms*.

What Butler's logic seems to suggest is that particular spaces are given meaning by the practices that take place there. The gendering of space, in other words, depends more on the performativities that are articulated there than the form itself. A space can only be gendered by association. Certain associations are 'projected' on to those spaces, but those associations are defined not by the material properties of those spaces, but by the activities that take place there. Moreover, they depend upon the memory of those associations being kept alive. In this sense, a space used for particular activities will accrue a certain character over time, but as new activities take over — and as memories of the former activities fade — the space will take on a different character. A 'masculine' space may invert into being a 'feminine' space. A 'fascist' space may turn into a 'democratic' space. And, by extension, a 'colonial' space can be turned into a 'post-colonial' space. Often these processes are charged with a sense of strategic reappropriation, and are set against the memory of previous associations. At other times they may be facilitated by conditions of amnesia or the repression of memory, factors which release a space from its previous associations.

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<sup>20</sup>I have come to think that no work of art or culture can set out to be political once and for all, no matter how ostentatiously it labels itself as such, for there can never be any guarantee that it will be used the way it demands. A great political art (Brecht) can be taken as a pure and apolitical art; art that seems to want to be merely aesthetic and decorative can be rewritten as political with energetic interpretation. The political rewriting or appropriation, then, the political use, must be allegorical; you have to know that this is what it is supposed to be or mean — in itself it is inert.' [Jameson, 'Is Space Political?', in Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp.258-59.]



## Identification with Place

Symbolic attachments may be grafted on to physical form. This opens up the possibility, as Vikki Bell has explored, of a discourse of performativity and 'belonging', where 'belonging' might be perceived as an identification with a certain place.<sup>21</sup> It suggests a way in which communities might colonise various territories through the literal 'performances' — the actions, ritualistic behaviour and so on — that are acted out within a given architectural stage, and through those performances achieve a certain attachment to place.

This is based on the idea that just as communities are 'imagined' communities, so the spaces of communities — the territories that they have claimed as their own — are also 'imagined'. 'Imagining a community', as Anne-Marie Fortier observes, 'is both that which is created as a common history, experience or culture of a group — a group's belongings — and about how the imagined community is attached to places — the location of culture.'<sup>22</sup> Fortier has explored how through ritualised repetition of symbolic acts, often conducted within an overtly religious context and performed within specific architectural spaces, these 'imagined' communities can 'make material the belongings they purport to describe.'<sup>23</sup>

Central to this sense of belonging is the principle of ritualistic repetition. This can be understood within the logic of psychoanalytic theory that posits repetition as a means of miming and thereby controlling trauma. Just as the child in Freud's famous example of the

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<sup>21</sup>Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999.

<sup>22</sup>Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Re-membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)', in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup>Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 3. Fortier's own study is of a specific Italian emigré community in London, whose ritualistic performances often bound to specific religious festivals, negotiated a sense of spatial belonging that was both part of an emigrant — and specifically Italian — community, but also quintessentially 'in Britain'. The study was based on a community and its association with a particular church — St Peter's — its rituals and forms of cultural expression. Her study relies heavily on Butler. As Fortier puts it: 'As I sat there in the pews, it seemed as if I was watching a re-run of part of an identity *in the making*: the 'stylised repetition of acts' reached into some deep-seated sense of selfhood that had sedimented into my body. The rituals, in turn, cultivated a sense of belonging. This short episode made me realize the extent to which cultural identity is embodied, and memories are incorporated, both as a result of iterated actions. And how these, in turn, are *lived as expressions* of a deeply felt sense of identity and belonging.' [Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Re-membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)', in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 48.] Fortier concludes: 'St Peter's is a place of re-membering. It is a place of collective memory, in which elements of the past are cobbled together to mould a communal body of belonging. It is a place where individual lives, present and past, are called upon to inhabit the present space, to 'member' it. Finally, it is a site where individual bodies circulate, come and go; where bodies are signifying actors in claims for, and practices of, the identity of St Peter's and former Little Italy. These bodies, in turn, are projected into a structure of meaning that precedes them and re-members them into gendered definitions of identity and becoming. Re-membering "The Hill" works through bodies that are ethnicized and gendered at once, while the circulation of these bodies that are ethnicizes and genders a space in the process of claiming it as an Italian (terrain of) belonging(s).' [Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Re-membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)', in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 59.]

*fort-da* game seeks to overcome the anxiety of being abandoned by the mother by acting out that process of departure and return in various games about 'loss' and 'retrieval', so repetition of certain spatial practices amounts to a kind of overcoming the alienation of abstract space, and a means of inscribing the self in the environment. Repetition leads to a normalisation and consequent familiarisation. When acted out within a particular context it may lead to an associative sense of belonging that effectively materializes this process of identification. 'The repetition,' Bell notes, 'sometimes ritualistic repetition, of these normalized codes makes material the belongings they purport to simply describe.'<sup>24</sup>

What then happens through these stylised spatial practices is that these spaces are 'demarcated' by certain groups by a kind of spatial appropriation. This is a visceral process of identification which depends upon bodily memories. Through the repetition of those rituals these spaces are 're-membered', such that those participating reinscribe themselves into the space, re-evoking corporeal memories of previous enactments. The space becomes a space of projection, as memories of previous experiences are 'projected' on to the material form of the space. At the same time, the body becomes the site of introjection, as a recording surface registering those previous spatial experiences. As a combined result of the echoing and reinforcement of these two sets of experiences — introjection and projection — over time, a sense of mirroring and consequent identification is achieved. Identification is always specular. It is always a question of recognising the self in the other. The rituals are naturalised through these corporeal memory acts, and the spaces in which they are enacted become spaces of belonging for those involved. These spaces are 'appropriated' through these rituals and become communal sites of embeddedness. As Fortier observes: 'Belongings refer to both 'possessions' and *appartenance*. That is, practices of group identity are about manufacturing cultural and historical belongings which mark out terrains of commonality that delineate the politics and social dynamics of 'fitting in'.'<sup>25</sup>

What is so suggestive about the concept of 'belonging' as a product of performativity is that it enables us to go beyond the limitations of simple narrative. It exceeds the ideas of Michel de Certeau for narrativising the city through spatial tactics that amount to types of 'pedestrian speech acts', as a means of 'making sense of' the city, to suggest a mechanism of identification. De Certeau, after all, although positing a theory of overcoming alienation, does not fully articulate a theory of identification. It also privileges the idea not of reading the environment, as though its meaning were there and simply waiting to be deciphered, but rather of giving meaning to the environment by collective or individual behaviour. 'Belonging'

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<sup>24</sup>Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup>Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Re-membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s)', in Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 42.

to place can therefore be understood as an aspect of territorialization, and out of that 'belonging' a sense of identity might be forged.

The attraction of the application of performativity to place is that it resists more static notions of 'dwelling' emanating from Heideggerian discourse that seem so ill at ease with a society of movement and travel. The increasing homogenisation of space within a world of global capital has indeed led to a predominant condition of 'non-place' — as Marc Augé has coined it. But this should not lead us back to old models of 'dwelling' as a way of resisting this condition, as though models formulated in the past will necessarily still be relevant in the present. Rather it encourages us to formulate new paradigms for understanding attachment to place that are in tune with contemporary modes of existence.

Indeed it could even be claimed that new types of attachment are a direct result of a cosmopolitan culture of 'non-places', in that place and non-place are locked into a dialectic of reciprocal presupposition. Just as globalisation leads to regionalisation — or even the hybrid manifestation of 'glocalisation' — so placelessness automatically encourages an attachment to place, as though the blurring of spatial boundaries leads to a corresponding increase in awareness of those boundaries.<sup>26</sup> This new condition, though, must be seen as a product of — and not a resistance to — the homogenising placelessness of global capitalism. Any theoretical formulation of new kinds of attachment must address the very mechanisms of late capitalism itself — its transiency, provisionality and ever-renegotiable field of operations — and not fall back on models formulated in different cultural conditions.

Equally, such understandings of 'belonging' should be inscribed within a context of 'non-belonging'. The very notion of 'belonging' contains within itself a certain sense of initial alienation. The possibility of forging an attachment necessarily follows hard upon the heels of the very act of detachment.<sup>27</sup> We might therefore posit 'belonging' as a form of attachment to place that operates as a *'gestalt'* formation, as a kind of 'figure-ground' relation between the self and the environment. It depends upon a certain differentiation of the self from the

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<sup>26</sup>This is in line with Foucault's thinking that transgression of the limit does not deny the limit, but rather illuminates it in the 'flash of its passage'. On this see Foucault. 'Preface to Transgression' in Donald Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (trans.), Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977, pp. 33-4.

<sup>27</sup>This echoes in part the discourse of identity that emerges from Lacan's formulation of the Mirror Stage. Significantly, Lacan refers to Caillois's earlier essay on 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia'. Caillois's concern is not for identification, but the horror of non-differentiation between the self and the environment. The condition is problematic because identity depends on the ability of an organism to *distinguish* itself from its surroundings. Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage' in Anthony Easthope (ed.), *Contemporary Film Theory*, London: Longman, 1993, p. 35; Roger Caillois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia', *October*, 84, pp. 16-32, reprinted in *October*, the First Decade, 1976-86, pp. 58-74.

environment, but that differentiation itself invites a reciprocal sense of attachment. Yet equally that sense of attachment presupposes a sense of differentiation.

What is being proposed here through the model of 'belonging' derived from Butler's thinking is not some discourse of fixed 'roots', but rather a more transitory and fluid discourse of territorialization — in the Deleuzian sense — which provides a complex and ever renegotiable model of spatial 'belongings'. The model is essentially a rhizomatic one of nomadic territorializations and deterritorializations. For territorialization belongs to the same logic as deterritorialization. It is precisely because of the 'deterritorialised' nature of much of contemporary existence that some sense of 'territorialisation' must be forged. But this very 'territorialisation' necessarily presupposes a consequent form of 'deterritorialisation'. What we find, then, is that the very provisionality of such territorializations colludes with the ephemerality of any sense of belonging. Just as territorializations are always shifting, so too identifications remain fleeting and transitory, while all the time leaving behind traces of their passage. In this sense 'belonging' comes close to the rhizomatic sense of 'becoming' described by Deleuze and Guattari in their evocative description of the interaction between the wasp and the orchid, where the wasp 'becomes' like the orchid, just as the orchid 'becomes' like the wasp.<sup>28</sup> And like 'becoming', 'belonging' remains an actative *process*, and not a given state. As Bell comments: 'The rhizome has been an important analogy here, conveying as it does an image of movement that can come to temporary rest in new places while maintaining ongoing connections elsewhere.'<sup>29</sup>

It is clear that, within the context of post-colonial studies, architectural theorists can profit from engaging with the theories of cultural identity emanating from the work of Homi Bhabha and Judith Butler. Not only will this open up a debate trapped within a discourse of form to engage with sophisticated discourses outside the discipline of architecture, but it will also introduce new and more subtle ways of understanding attachment to place. In this regard, Butler's work on 'performativity' and the consequent notion of 'belonging' are particularly productive.

It may well be that the concept of 'belonging' — an ever provisional, rhizomatic model of attachment to place — offers us a viable paradigm to replace the now somewhat outmoded model of 'dwelling' that once so dominated architectural discourse. For just as identity itself is today no longer a fixed condition, but a continually re-negotiable site of individual expression, so 'belonging' offers an equally flexible concept that can accommodate the transitory nature of contemporary existence. In a realm whose paradigmatic figures include

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<sup>28</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, London: Athlone, 1988, p. 10 and *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> Vikki Bell (ed.), *Performativity and Belonging*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 9.

the 'wanderer', 'migrant', 'refugee' and 'exile', the notion of 'belonging' offers a more sympathetic framework for understanding contemporary modes of identification with place.

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