The Schizoid Presentation of Self in Everyday Life:
A Phenomenological Analysis of Dundonald Park

by

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of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

In, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (2000), Michael Gardiner articulates a critical counter-tradition within everyday life sociology. I take up the challenge posed by Gardiner's theorizing by applying it to my empirical research: to elevate everyday life to a critical knowledge, and to become aware of the transformative aspects in the everyday. Methodologically this requires a researcher who is willing to be a 'public character' and a willingness to engage in self-analysis. Questioning the purpose of public places led to a phenomenological analysis of a small urban park. Through exploring the 'essence' of a park I was able to determine that individual citizens exercise citizenship rights in unexpected ways. Civic participation is part of 'becoming' and ultimately part of a transcendent utopian moment: where the dialectical process of imagining a better life, or better park leads to the action necessary to create change - leading to an awareness of the transformative aspects in everyday life.

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Introduction

The location of this study, Dundonald Park, 512 Somerset St. West, Ottawa, Ontario, consists of about two acres in Centretown. Dundonald Park is bounded on the north by Somerset St., south by MacLaren St., west by Bay St., and east by Lyon St. The western portion consists of a fenced-off children's play area. The eastern portion is grass. The perimeter consists of large trees, benches and walkways. The centre also contains trees, three flowerbeds, a drinking fountain, benches and chess/checker board tables with small stools. The centre is accessed by pathways, on the diagonal. This location is highly significant for me. I have resided across the street from this park for the past eleven years. I have been restoring the abandoned flowerbeds there for ten years.

The longer I was involved with the space the more interested I became in uncovering the purpose of public places; the space in the middle of Dundonald Park became a case study. Based upon my repeated observations of the space I looked for patterns and commonality in the behaviour of people using the park. I adopted this approach given the unsettling issues (for me) of epistemic privacy and the latent aspects of organizations. The application and analysis of systematic data collection led to notions of what seems to be happening in the space (transformations) and what is the role of the gardens in this process (facilitator). This method could best be described as the combination of participant observation of place with Bakhtin's phenomenology of 'practical doing' (Gardiner 2000: 49).

For Bakhtin, the self must be understood as a dynamic, embodied and restlessly creative entity that strives to attribute meaning and value to its life and surroundings. We are forced to make certain choices and value-judgements with respect to our Being-in-the-world, to transform the

proffered ‘givenness’, the objective facticity of our environment, into a coherent ‘world-for-me’. In making the world a meaningful place, one that is steeped in personal values, the subject actively engages with and alters its lived situation; and, in so doing, continuously transforms itself (Gardiner 2000: 49).

Ultimately, I explored issues concerned with what constitutes the ‘essence’ of the park, how individual citizens exercise their citizenship rights by civic participation, and sought to create a critical and dialectical understanding of the role of the City in the relationship between individual citizens and public space. In this instance ‘the City’ refers to the corporate, bureaucratic entity, the City of Ottawa. The schizophrenic elements of the study refer to myself as both researcher and researched, my committing a private act in a public place, and the split personality of an urban park—its public and private functions.

A literature review of theoretical material related to sociology of everyday life was undertaken in Chapter I. The literature review addresses the sociological topics of phenomenology and the role of place in everyday life sociology. At a more abstract level, consideration will be given to the notion that utopias need a location and that location is the park. It is in the work of Michael Gardiner (2000) where we find the possibility of a fleeting transcendent utopian moment¹. That moment may require space and time (Heidegger 1962; Lefebvre 1947; Marcuse 1964) and it may only be available to the marginalized: those that have time and a different access to space. While trying to determine the purpose of the park we will keep in mind the admonishment of Jane Jacobs, "Parks are not automatically anything, and least of all are these volatile elements

¹ A transcendent utopian moment is a glimpse of the possibility of dialectical change in everyday life. A more complete definition is found on page 37.

stabilizers of values or of their neighborhoods and districts" (Jacobs in Seymour 1969: 45).

The public nature of parks, their historic development, and the contested nature of their purpose create difficulties for municipal policy makers (Cranz 1982). Notions of citizenship and community are played out in the public arena of parks (Cranz 1982; Staeheli and Thompson 1997). Cranz believes that democracy requires a location and that the place for democracy is in parks (Cranz 1982: 213). Access to public space provides understanding of the differences between those considered full citizens, with the ability to move through public space and, those that have restricted use of public space and are excluded from full citizenship (Staeheli and Thompson 1997; Cavanagh and Ware 1990; Cooper, Law, Maltus and Wood 2000; Goodsell 1988; Mitchell 1995). The relationship between parks and civic participation more fully illuminates the significance of my findings.

The substantive literature about parks provides the context for the study. A review of the literature on urban parks and their design was undertaken. A history of the various park movements (Cranz 1982) seems to indicate that Dundonald Park has elements of both the 'neighborhood park' and 'city beautiful park' of the reform park era (1900-1930). A later park movement, concerned with urban renewal and the war on poverty (Guggenheimer 1969; Seymour 1969) influenced the development of a vest-pocket park system² in the same neighborhood. Archival research at City Hall was undertaken to determine if Dundonald Park was considered part of the same park movement when it was redesigned in 1978. The role of gardens/flowers influencing social interaction was

² The Vest-pocket park movement began in New York City, in the 1960s. Small parks were created out of tiny vacant City owned lots that were being used for dumping grounds. These small parks are also referred to as 'living rooms'.

also considered as well as gardening for personal development. This chapter also includes the definitions of the key concepts used throughout the study.

Chapter II deals with the methodology employed. There is a discussion of the sources of information and the processes involved. Also included is a discussion of how I resolved my concerns over my own personal involvement in the study, as both participant and observer, since I was never neutral in the space – I intended to change the space by restoring the flowerbeds and on a personal level I was attempting to challenge power structures.

Chapter III presents my findings within the five themes that emerged: The Friends of Dundonald Park; Design Elements/elements of design; The Social Qualities of Flowers; Self-Analysis; Transcendent Utopian Moments and Civic Participation. A discussion of the findings is contained in each section.

Chapter IV contains the conclusions and implications. I hope to contribute to the understanding of everyday lived experience; to the understanding of the use/purpose of public places; and to understanding of civic participation (concepts that are meaningless outside of a spatial context). Advancement of knowledge in social science assumes a benefit to the public – too often, this is not the case: “Sociologists’ intentions may be as oppositional and as progressive as any of us could wish, but if they work with standard methods of thinking and inquiry, they import the relations of ruling into the texts they produce” (Smith 1992: 91).

I hope to show that a researcher who is willing to be a ‘public character’ can be an agent of change without being the ‘expert’ conducting research in a community, or by conducting participatory action research for a community. Public space provides

opportunities for personal development through civic participation. The forms of civic participation are not limited to membership in community organizations, charitable giving, and volunteering.

Michael Gardiner argues convincingly, in *Critiques of Everyday Life* (2000), that there is a critical counter-tradition within everyday life sociology. I have attempted to take up the challenge posed by Gardiner's theorizing by applying it to my empirical research: to elevate everyday life to a critical knowledge, and to become aware of the transformative aspects in the everyday.

Research Question

What is the purpose of public places?

Theoretical arguments suggest that the purpose of public space/place (e.g., a park) is to provide opportunities for social contact and interaction to occur. If, as I believe, civic participation is part of 'becoming' and ultimately part of a transcendent utopian moment what is an individual citizen to do when the city cannot accommodate individual initiatives. Does the city limit or somehow restrict citizenship rights by interfering with the dialectical process of imagining a better city and then going about creating it.

Working Thesis

A phenomenological study of Dundonald Park may increase understanding of the purpose of public places.

Revealing the essence of Dundonald Park will assist in understanding the purpose of public places. In this specific case I am suggesting that through phenomenological analysis we will see that the Dundonald Park provides opportunities for transcendent utopian moments. In addition, Dundonald Park provides opportunities to become aware of the transformative aspects in everyday life.

Chapter I: Theoretical Traditions in Everyday Life

When I began restoring the flowerbeds, in 1993, I was aware of the various reasons I had for undertaking this major project, none of which had anything to do with the requirements of a Master of Art thesis in Sociology. Many of the reasons were of a personal nature, they included the therapeutic effect gardening has upon me, a desire to create a new life based upon how I envisioned life could be living across the street from a park with beautiful gardens in it, as well as the creative outlet the space provides. While my new home did not have the space required for the types of gardens I had in British Columbia, the park did have the necessary space and it was going unused.

Beyond the personal, I felt I was engaged in a political struggle with the City of Ottawa. I wanted them to take care of their property and if they were not going to then I was going to take part of it over, by occupying it – and do what I wanted with it. I certainly was not going to comply with City's position that I join a community group and lobby the City for changes in park policies and budget allocations, nor did I see myself as a 'volunteer' in partnership with the City. I did not see my labour as the solution to the City allowing their properties to become rundown, nor did I see myself as an 'engaged' citizen. I was frustrated and confused over living across the street from a park that had ugly, abandoned flowerbeds, without flowers in them.

The community based reasons I had for restoring the flowerbeds involved my belief that the source of most of the 'problems'³ in the park were the result of mistaken

³ The park was constantly being referred to as a problem (and/or some of the park users were seen as the problem) by my neighbours (who live directly across the street from the park) several of whom had lived there for many years. In addition, local residents from the wider neighbourhood, the city councilor for Somerset Ward - 14, city staff, City of Ottawa Police Services staff, park users, the Centretown Citizens

perceptions of the space, how it was being used, and by whom it was being used.

Admittedly, without flowers in the planters the place did look shabby. If the planters had been removed instead of abandoned, and the areas covered in grass or asphalt (depending on their location) the park would have appeared better maintained. The location of The Beer Store across the street from the park seemed to contribute to negative views about the park. Again, my neighbours, local residents from the wider neighbourhood area, the city councilor for Somerset Ward, city staff, City of Ottawa Police Services staff, and park users all voiced strong opinions about the undesirable aspects of The Beer Store location. Some park observers could not help but notice that the lack of public toilets contributed to the park having an unsavory reputation. While other park observers felt the addition of public toilets would increase the amount of inappropriate and/or illegal behaviours occurring there (as in Humphreys 1970). The issue of public toilets does arise in discussions about providing access to public space in an urban setting, and in theories of citizenship (Wright 1960; Cavanagh & Ware 1990; Cooper et al. 2000; Cranz 1982).

There was also a structural element to my actions. While recognizing my own powerlessness, I realized I was engaged in power struggles at various levels in my life. I wanted to challenge these structures⁴; I wanted control over my life. On the one hand, I was trying to fight city hall over their neglect of the park; on the other, I was involved in

Community Association (CCCA), and the Somerset Heights Business Improvement Association, all referred to the park and/or some park users as being a problem. When talking, to anyone from the wider community, they tended not to know the name of the park but referred to it as the beer store park, rubbie park, or druggie park – and described the types of activities they were certain occurred in the park: prostitution, drug dealing and drug consumption, alcohol consumption leading to public drunkenness and associated problems.

⁴ I was engaged in power struggles with the institution of the family that led to legal, economic, and political challenges that involved the jurisdictions of the municipal, provincial, and federal governments. At the personal level, within the structure of my specific family, the abuse of power in my former marriage had led to power struggles over such basic rights as freedom of religion, and freedom to participate in the wider community i.e., economically, and through association. I was also prevented from pursuing my educational goals.

a legal battle over how and where I could lead my life, and over the custody of my children. Their father felt that if I wished to end our marriage, I should have to live with our children - in a car. Federal, provincial and local government systems all seemed to agree with his position. Yet, I envisioned a life across the street from a park with beautiful flower gardens, far away from the unhealthy, unhappy life I chose to leave behind.

Somehow, all these differing aspects of my life came together in the creation of a private garden in a public place. My vision of how I wanted to live my life, my awareness of my political powerlessness, combined with my unwillingness to join or create a group to lobby for changes in the park at the municipal level led me to explore the possibilities of what can occur when an individual commits a single repetitive act, over time (Gardiner 2000: 47-52). This raises existential and moral issues that involve the creating of something outside of the self, as part of the process of creating the self. Theoretically, this interest is in opposition to the literature on identity construction through consumption (Shields 1992). However, it is related to theoretical discussions of some of the conditions necessary for transformative social change to occur.

While I was employing naturalistic observation techniques in the park, I became more interested in notions of attachment to place and meanings of place and less interested in the people whom I encountered in the park. That is, I became curious about their attachment/use of the park as a way to explore transcendent utopian moments and dialectical change, but less concerned with the possible structural elements that led to issues such as un/underemployment, housing concerns, and poverty. Nor was I interested in analyzing any of those problems, in their own right. Ultimately, I was left with my

own experience of transforming the space in the center of the park, with gardens, and trying to understand how that transformed me. In my analysis, attempts to understand that process were aided by including the actions of the other park users.

This study of how the center of an urban park is used, theoretically lends itself to phenomenology of place. The literature review will begin with the sociological topics of phenomenology, the sociology of everyday life, and the role of place in sociology. My interest in the activities that take place in the park led me to a theoretical examination of a critical sociology of everyday life, as articulated through the work of Michael Gardiner (2000). Gardiner's work is concerned with increasing awareness of the possibility of transcendent utopian moments, in everyday life. In this case, imagining a better park with flowers in it and then creating it. In addition, an appraisal of the literature on civic participation/engagement more fully illuminates the significance of my findings.

A substantive literature review in the area of urban parks and their design was undertaken. The public nature of parks, their historic development, and contested natures is explored, as well as the role of gardens/flowers for social interaction.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology provides the philosophical basis for my research study, as well as useful concepts for explaining and understanding my research findings. As Psathas (1989: 1) points out, "Phenomenology is philosophy, method, and approach."

Accordingly, that statement provides the structure of the literature review. We will begin with the philosophical underpinnings, as they relate to sociology, address the methodological implications, and conclude with how to approach an empirical study.

This discussion will be limited to how other sociologists, in similar situations have used, or not used phenomenology, finishing with a summary of how I apply my understanding of it.

Philosophy

Aspects of European existential and phenomenological philosophies enter sociology through the work of Alfred Schütz. His work was aimed at “uncovering, describing, and analyzing the essential features of the world of everyday life – a philosophy of mundane reality, or, in more formal language, a phenomenology of the natural attitude” (Natanson in Schütz 1962: xxv). According to Schütz, phenomenology takes as its starting point, the “world of daily life”:

“World of daily life” shall mean the inter-subjective world which existed long before our birth, experienced and interpreted by others, our predecessors, as an organized world. Now it is given to our experience and interpretation. All interpretation of this world is based upon a stock of previous experiences of it, our own experiences and those handed down to us by our parents and teachers, which in the form of “knowledge at hand” function as a scheme of reference (Schütz 1945: 533-34).

The impact of philosophical phenomenology, for sociologists, was to discourage positivist methods, and to encourage the attribution of human motives to action (over structural explanations). Several micro-sociologies developed, under the umbrella of ‘everyday life sociology’: dramaturgy, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and existential and phenomenological sociology (Goffman 1959; Blumer 1969; Garfinkel 1967; Douglas 1977; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Douglas 1970).

A social phenomenology that focuses on description, favouring immediate and direct experiences cannot reveal potential for change, or challenge existing power structures (Gardiner 2000: 64). Schütz's phenomenology ignores social structure. His conceptualization of the world of daily life leads to an acceptance of the *status quo*, limited opportunities for social change, and the perception that the inter-subjective is ahistorical and tradition bound. The intersubjective world, for Schutz, "is not my private one but common to all of us. . . and within this world there exist fellow-men with whom I am connected by manifold social relationships" (1945: 542). The nature of this world also limits the possibility of personal transformation.

In a phenomenological analysis of the knowledge appropriate to the sociology of knowledge, Berger and Luckmann argue that:

. . . commonsense "knowledge" rather than "ideas" must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this "knowledge" that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 14).

They consider phenomenological analysis the best method to "clarify the foundations of knowledge in everyday life" (1966: 20). It provides the framework for exploring the meaning attached to human actions – the social construction of reality.

The basis for this knowledge is twofold, it is individualistic and allows for multiple realities:

The reality of everyday life is organized around the "here" of my body and the "now" of my present. This "here and now" is the focus of attention to the reality of everyday life. . . . I experience everyday life in terms of differing degrees of closeness and remoteness, both spatially and temporally. Closest to me is the zone of everyday life that is directly accessible to my bodily manipulation. This zone contains the world within my reach, the world in which I act so as to modify its reality, or the world in which I work. In this world of working my consciousness is dominated by the pragmatic motive, that is, my attention to this world is

mainly determined by what I am doing, have done or plan to do in it. In this way it is *my* world par excellence (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 22).

This view of knowledge does not resort to nihilism since it is also embedded in the social, “The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others” (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 22). Knowledge is creatively produced by individuals in concert with the accumulated weight of institutionalized knowledge produced by others.

Their theoretical formulation deals with the criticisms directed at everyday life sociology for not addressing social structure, by arguing that social structure is a social construction. They also address the potential for social change, in everyday life, “The important principle for our general consideration is that the relationship between knowledge and its social base is a dialectical one, that is, knowledge is a social product *and* knowledge is a factor in social change” (1966: 81). They raise the possibility of a more change oriented approach to everyday life, but it remains undeveloped.

Method

Phenomenological analysis aims to show how the everyday world is constituted, while acknowledging that the nature of everyday knowledge is its taken for granted quality. An appropriate method for uncovering the nature of lived experience is one that is "given over to some quest, a true task, a deep questioning of something that restores an original sense of what it means to be a thinker, researcher, a theorist" (Van Manen 1990: 31). The method would also search out the meaning of the phenomenon.

Originally, the distinctive feature of the phenomenological movement lay in its claim to seek knowledge directly through immediate, intuitive apprehension of human experience, free from the impurities of scientific conceptualization. This method of seeking original knowledge involves the “bracketing” of preconceptions, as Edmund Husserl would put it, or the “reduction” of concepts to a point where the observer can obtain a pure apprehension of reality (Bruyn 1966: 90).

In a phenomenological social analysis, researchers suspend judgment, or “bracket” their judgments about social structure. The aim of this methodological exercise is to reveal the essence, which derives from the existence of the phenomenon, rather than structural concepts:

Essence suggests a quality of social or cultural life which underlies and basically defines the particular phenomenon being studied. It suggests a quality which is permanent and necessary to the existence of the phenomenon, a quality which is intrinsic and primary to its being. . . . At a more concrete level, essence could be interpreted as an underlying quality of social life that is inherent in a particular cultural setting which the participant observer is studying. . . . The process by which one arrives at the essence of a phenomenon is synthetic, involving bringing disparate elements of experience together intelligently and intuitively (Bruyn 1966: 94-95).

Methodologically speaking, researchers are required to base their analysis on their personal involvement in the site, while also developing an awareness of the other modes of being in the site.

On the one hand, it means that phenomenological research requires of the researcher that he or she stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations. On the other hand it means that the researcher actively explores the category of lived experience in all its modalities and aspects (Van Manen 1990: 32).

Van Manen has developed a framework for hermeneutic phenomenological research that involves a methodological structure based on the interaction of six research activities (1990: 30-31):

(1) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;

- (2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
- (3) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- (4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
- (5) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- (6) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

The logical underpinnings of the proposed methodological framework appear to be sound and relevant for exploring meanings as opposed to the necessary methods for exploring causal or instrumental relationships. The incorporation of the researcher into the analysis would necessarily involve a serious interest and commitment to the phenomenon – leading to an investigation of lived experience that raises questions about the essence of the phenomenon. Indeed, I found this to be consistent with my experience of gardening in the park – which led me to question the purpose or meaning of the park and the role of the City in facilitating or limiting that purpose. The writing process aids interpretation. Writing field notes and coding them was part of the analytical process that resulted in the findings. The writing of the literature review and methodology sections contributed to the process of making sense of the findings. The writing process also served the pedagogical aspect of the inquiry. Not only did I intend to learn from my experiences in the park, I actively sought out opportunities to pass on those teachings. The final product aims to strike the appropriate synthesis between the parts and the whole. The methodological elements of a phenomenological analysis are addressed, at greater length, in Chapter II.

Approach

Empirical studies of everyday life are ideally suited to participant observation. Taking its methodological cue from anthropology the naturalistic researcher sets out to document details of the participants' lives. This is achieved by establishing the geographic field, occupying it in time and space, and then producing their "own story" (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 19). Nevertheless, 'being there' goes beyond the setting, it requires the researcher to gain access to the participants' worlds (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 24). Gaining access is not the same as being an insider. By turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world, and investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it, we can not help but be part of the study. There is a distinction to be made between an inquiry that engages and incorporates the actions of the researcher and those that do not (or pretend they do not). This approach can lead to the emotions of the researcher becoming part of the study.

The work of the classic naturalistic ethnographies did not involve exploring the emotions of the researcher. However, they did draw on their social reform efforts aimed at improving a 'problem area'. William Foote Whyte identifies himself as a social reformer in *Street Corner Society: the Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (Whyte 1943/1993: 280-288). Elliot Liebow discusses his opinion of social problems related to poverty and race in *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men* (Liebow 1967: 222-231). Sherri Cavan identifies her concern over the risks associated with 'time-out' behaviour endangering the identities of patrons in cocktail lounges in *Liquor License: An Ethnography of Bar Behavior* (Cavan 1966).

The authors of urban ethnographies might reveal emotional content that informants provide. It is questionable whether the researcher is able to gain access to the emotions of the participants. Indeed, Whyte's informant, Doc says to him, "You don't know how it feels to grow up in a district like this" (Whyte 1943/1993: 276). In the sense that invisible and subjective aspects of a life are inaccessible to researchers, Doc is correct. Yet, some degree of understanding may arise through the employment of empathy. This situation may be a troubling issue for some researchers based on their ontological positions. However, in the world of emotionalism it is the ideal. That the researcher should gain such a depth to their understanding that they empathize with the subject of the study indicates a successful project.

The recognition of the social scientist as embedded in the research project is indicative of emotionalism as well. 'Existential' or emotional methods have varying sources in qualitative research. Many different traditions have approached the interior life of the subject (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 57-59). Simply put, "The emotionalist program emphasizes the depths of experience. While this often implies the need for intimacy with research subjects, it also calls for researchers to reflect upon their own lives" (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 58). This interior work can extend as far as psychoanalysis and poetry writing being undertaken by the researcher.

The realism that Becker's writings propose is more about making public what seems to be private, a realism that makes sociology more like what Becker describes his classes on writing to be, that is, something resembling the "new California therapies," "which rely on people revealing their psyches or bodies in public and discovering that the revelation . . . does not kill" (Clough 1992: 5).

The translation of a deeply lived experience into an academic text poses special challenges to the emotionalist (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 104) for, "Expressing

something inexpressible is a practical challenge to everyday actors and an analytic and representational challenge to emotionalist researchers” (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 197).

Emotional realism allows sociology to collapse the “inside” and the “outside,” making sociological what is first described as psychological or private. It allows sociology to promote itself by eliciting a compulsive extroversion of interiority. Therefore, the clear and concise writing that Becker urges is not so much about the narrative construction of a totalizing viewpoint as it is about privileging the ordinary by bringing out in public(ation) the ordinariness of people’s private lives—a melodrama of ordinary interiority (Clough 1992: 63).

Sociological writing remains an unresolved conundrum for the emotionalist researcher. New forms of sociological writing are being experimented with (Richardson 1999; St.Pierre 1997). Sociology is embracing its underdeveloped side, literature (Ellis and Bochner 1996: 21; Richardson 2000: 253). Autobiographical writing is occurring in auto-ethnographies (Smith 1999; Ellingson 1998), and in self-narratives (Bochner 2000). These works can include the use of photography, memoirs, and poetry (Ellis and Bochner 1996). Richardson suggests, “by settling words together in new configurations, the relations created through echo, repetition, rhythm, rhyme let us hear and see the world in a new dimension. Poetry thus suggests a way out of the numbing, disaffective, disembodied, schizoid sensibilities characteristic of phallocentric social science” (Richardson 1997: 166).

Those less poetic social scientists among us may be heartened when they consider that this unrepresentable aspect of their methodology coincides with the idealist and critical realist views of reality: as shifting and not completely knowable. The obdurate character of the symbolic interactionist’s world is also satisfied by the use of emotionalism. Misunderstanding or being wrong is part of the reality of the real world.

Exploring our own inner workings may prove useful in providing some insight in to the area under investigation. Whether we are qualified to delve into another's interior world is another issue. An ethical concern arises over the possibility of creating distress for the research subject. Moreover, why would we take such a risk considering our inability to adequately represent another's emotions? Perception of the external world has its own set of problems. Among them,

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled (Berger 1972: 7).

Since external perception and its relationship to language is problematic how much more so is the internal, invisible world of another.

If I were poetic, I would be able to offer an alternative to the realist narrative; structures with beginning, middle, and end. If I was more of a risk taker, I could delve deeper into my psyche and expose the depth of my previous despair. It is not that the risk or the exposure is inhibiting, but how much time do you really want to give despair. Do you want it to be the focus of your academic life? I do not. While autoethnographic writing of personal conditions, illness and 'problems' are reported to help create understanding and provide a benefit to those similarly afflicted (Smith 1999; Ellingson 1998; Frank 1995), the doing of it raises concerns over self-indulgence and narcissism, in addition to ethical issues.

In qualitative research, 'bracketing' has come to mean that researchers set aside their feelings. Sharing my feelings, during the research process, contributed to revealing the essence of the park. To be a researcher is not to be inhuman: "Bracketing my feelings

runs against the human grain” (Ceglowski 2000: 101). To “stand in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations” (Van Manen 1990: 32) implies a reciprocal relationship between researcher and participants. Including my feelings, memories, and experiences of gardening in a public park has helped me to understand the purpose of the park. Incorporating and acknowledging my emotional responses to events related to restoring the flowerbeds provides another dimension to the analysis without reducing it to self-analysis. I believe an appropriate balance has been achieved with this approach; one that is compatible with the philosophical underpinnings and methodological implications of a social phenomenological analysis.

Place in Everyday Life Sociology

The role/idea of place in sociology is often overlooked. Several of the most well known and influential ethnographies are strongly identified with a location i.e., Anderson’s *A Place On the Corner* (1976), Liebow’s *Tallys’s Corner: A Study of Negro Street Corner Men* (1967), Whyte’s *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of An Italian Slum* (1943/1993), Wirth’s *The Ghetto* (1928), Cressey’s *The Taxi-Dance Hall* (1932), Duneier’s *Sidewalk* (1999), yet there is very little, if any analysis of the location – mere description – they all, for the most part take place in ‘public’ – again, with little discussion of what makes a place, what makes it public, or what are the purposes of public places.

Sense of place is first of all an innate faculty, possessed in some degree by everyone, that connects us to the world. It is an integral part of all our environmental experiences and it is only because we are first in places that we can then develop abstract arguments about environment, economy, or

politics. . . for geographers, places are aspects of human life that carry with them all the hopes, accomplishments, ambiguities, and even horrors of existence. They see sense of place as a thread that ties each of us to our surroundings, and as a learned way for understanding somewhere on its own terms. As a form of environmental connection, sense of place is existential and political (Relph 1997: 208).

Without suggesting that the study of social relations/interaction is reducible to a geographic location, it is difficult to understand the divorce of a sense of place from the ‘sociological imagination’. In his phenomenological study of place, Relph, notes the lack of academic discussion of place. He suggests that, “Place and sense of place do not lend themselves to scientific analysis for they are inextricably bound up with all the hopes, frustrations, and confusions of life, and possibly because of this social scientists have avoided these topics” (1976: i). Agnew and Duncan (1989) put together a collection of essays to “examine why recourse to the concept of place has been both infrequent and idiosyncratic within the confines of normal social science and history” (preface not numbered). Agnew then goes on to claim that the concepts of community and class have overshadowed the development of place, as a concept (1989: 9). Shields, also claims sociologists neglect the geographical (1996: 283).

Lyn Lofland, argues, in *The Public Realm: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory*, that sociologists have approached studies/analyses of cities as the epicenter of social ills, or as a dependent variable. She proposes the inclusion of the ‘public realm’ in the analysis. She develops the concept of the public realm as an “equivalent term for ‘urban public space.’ . . . think of urban public space or the public realm as a kind of kingdom, one that is inhabited importantly, though not entirely, by persons who are unacquainted with one another: a ‘world of strangers’ as it were” (Lofland 1998: xi).

Gieryn (2000) however, argues that there are numerous sociological studies sensitive to place, but no “sociology of place,” – something he believes would lead to ghettoizing the subject. He claims that “sociologists have a stake in place no matter what they analyze, or how” (463). Certainly, “place matters for politics and identity, history and futures, inequality and community. Is there anything sociological not touched by place?” (482). He suggests sociological studies incorporate a sense of place by exploring how places come into being, and what they accomplish (468). That most researchers do not consider place/space in their analysis, or their methodology results in the very ghettoizing he is trying to avoid.

Berger and Luckmann, in their treatise on the sociology of knowledge expend very little effort on the environment, or the social construction of space/place:

The world of everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally. The spatial structure is quite peripheral to our present considerations. Suffice it to point out that it, too, has a social dimension by virtue of the fact that my manipulatory zone intersects with that of others. More important for our present purpose is the temporal structure of everyday life (1966: 25-6).

Their position follows that of Schütz:

All the other manifold social relationships are derived from the originary [sic] experiencing of the totality of the other's self in the community of time and space. Any theoretical analysis of the notion of “environment”—one of the least clarified terms used in present social sciences –would have to start from the face-to-face relation as a basic structure of the world of daily life (Schütz 1945: 544).

It seems that there is space for place in sociological studies of everyday life, and for whatever reasons, this has been underdeveloped. Place is taken for granted within ‘everyday life’.

We live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, yet at the same time we seem to have a meager understanding of the constitution of places and the ways in which we experience them. . . . If places are indeed a fundamental aspect of man's existence in the world, if they are sources of security and identity for individuals and for groups of people, then it is important that the means of experiencing, creating and maintaining significant places are not lost. Moreover there are many signs that these very means are disappearing and that 'placelessness'—the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places—is now a dominant force (Relph 1976: 6).

A phenomenological approach aimed at uncovering the essence or meaning of a location could take us beyond Relph's lament to an awareness of the purpose of a location. I am not speaking of the purpose of a location for its own sake but what the purpose of a location is in our lives. When we consider places as not only physical but also experiential, what role does the experience of any place play in our existential development? Is it possible that the purpose of a public park, for example, is to provide an opportunity for a brief transcendent utopian moment to occur; where we can imagine a better park or city and go about creating it.

Everyday life sociology is criticized for its trivial topics, being purely descriptive with very little empirical application, and neglecting notions of social structure. A critical sociology of everyday life moves beyond the trivial and descriptive in an attempt to identify aspects or conditions within everyday life that have the potential for leading to social change. In order to see the transformative aspects in everyday life we have to elevate the everyday to a critical knowledge.

By taking place as a multifaceted phenomenon of experience and examining the various properties of place, such as location, landscape, and personal involvement, some assessment can be made of the degree to which these are essential to our experience and sense of place. In this way the sources of meaning, or essence of place can be revealed (Relph 1976: 29).

Looking beyond descriptive accounts of the everyday and including the experience of place within an analysis will contribute to understanding the purpose of a place, and how that purpose creates opportunities for personal and social change. This thesis is experimental in nature as it attempts to test the empirical application of critical everyday life sociology by combining it with ‘standpoint’ to bring the role of institutions into the analysis. The goal is to become aware of the transformative aspects in everyday life.

Critical Sociology of Everyday Life

Michael Gardiner has articulated an argument in defense of the usefulness of everyday life sociology –by developing it into a critical knowledge. He identifies a critical counter-tradition within everyday life sociology. A tradition that has not yet made it into the mainstream practices of the discipline. He chronicles the relevance of Dada, Surrealism, and the Situationist International movements and the impact of specific theorists: Mikhail Bakhtin, Henri Lefebvre, Agnes Heller, Michel de Certeau, and Dorothy Smith. Given the time and space constraints of the Master’s thesis, we will place an over reliance on Gardiner’s interpretation of these theorists – rather than turning to the original works. That said, given the use of standpoint, more attention will be paid to the work of Smith.

I do not intend to suggest that these are the only relevant strains of critical thinking going through everyday life sociology; only that Gardiner’s linking together of these intellectual threads provides a useful starting point. His theoretical position presents itself as a challenge: to test the utility of a critical sociology of everyday life within an

empirical study, with the goal of becoming aware of the transformative aspects in everyday life. It is this challenge that is of particular significance since it has been taken up and forms the basis of this research project.

Another thinker, beyond Gardiner's purview, who does incorporate a phenomenology of place in concert with critical analysis, is Jane Jacobs.

Planning for vitality must stimulate and catalyze the greatest possible range and quantity of diversity among uses and among people throughout each district of a big city (Jacobs 1964, p. 408). This conclusion was reached in large measure from her everyday experience of her own street in New York, the daily performance of a Hudson Street "ballet", the comings and goings of neighbors and strangers, whose diversity and varied time—space rhythms defined a distinctive "ecology and phenomenology of the sidewalks" (Berman 1982, p.322). This radical penetration of everyday life into a planning prospectus formed the focus of her critique of modernism. Ontologically it revealed the existence of a meeting of people and place that had been obscured from the detached decision-makers; epistemologically it showed a new appreciation of the strength of folk and personal knowledge; and politically it advocated a participatory method which established direct communication between everyday life and planning practice (Ley 1989: 56).

Not only does Jacobs's work provide support for our methodological and theoretical position, but the work itself, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), has been extremely influential in city planning, and how we understand streets/sidewalks, neighbourhoods, and parks. We will return to Jacobs's work in our analysis of what is going on in the park, to assist us in gaining insight into the purpose of the park. At this juncture we will explore the two aspects of critical sociology of everyday life that hold the most significance for us: the elevation of everyday life sociology to a critical knowledge, and becoming aware of the transformative aspects in everyday life.

Everyday Critical Knowledge & Transcendence

The concept of 'everyday life' remains a purely descriptive or analytical concept. Questions about intersubjective ethics or the ideological structuring of everyday consciousness, for instance, do not figure prominently, insofar as actors are held simply to engage in routines and justify them performatively in an *a posteriori* manner (Gardiner 2000: 5).

Hegel presents an idealistic intellectual challenge—the creation of a utopian society. He viewed the nature of the world as being made up of things that contain contradictions within themselves. The relationship between these opposing internal forces results in change or 'transcendence'. It involves a change in form so "what is" more closely approximates "what can be" or the essence of the thing. By applying our mind, or reason to the subject we can then go about creating it, once we know through thought what it is (Hegel 1910/1967). Gardiner presents us with a similar intellectual challenge: to elevate everyday life sociology to a critical knowledge. Where mainstream everyday life sociology transcends itself to become what it has the potential to become.

. . . one of the primary goals of the theorists discussed here is to *problematize* everyday life, to expose its contradictions and tease out its hidden potentialities, and to raise our understanding of the prosaic to the level of critical knowledge. Whereas the mainstream interpretive approaches the everyday is the realm of the ordinary, the alternative pursued here is to treat it as a domain that is potentially *extraordinary*. The ordinary can become extraordinary not by eclipsing the everyday, or imagining we can arbitrarily leap beyond it to some 'higher' level of cognition or action, but by fully appropriating and activating the possibilities that lie hidden, and typically repressed, within it (Gardiner 2000: 6).

It does not seem possible to discuss elevating everyday life to a critical knowledge without discussing transcendence. Indeed, this has created an almost insurmountable problem in writing this section of the thesis: the two aspects are so

intertwined/inseparable they cannot be discussed in two distinct sections, as planned. An attempt will be made to discuss identifying transformative aspects within everyday life, in the following section. This separation marks the distinction between the theoretical and the applied.

In Hegelian terminology the 'form' of a thing is what you see with the eye or know with the senses. It is considered real. The most important aspect of human knowledge for Hegel is what you know with the mind or imagination. The 'essence' of something is the unseen aspect of the thing, or the world beyond the form. It involves a notion of what is contained within the form, or the universal principle. The awareness of the essence is what allows you to go beyond the present and create historical movement. This change is 'dialectical movement' and it occurs because of the nature of a thing, not because of an external force. The mind applies criticism to the external world again and the process keeps repeating while self-awareness increases with each attempt to improve the world. This historical process is striving toward a level of self-awareness achievable when we all know freedom is necessary for all. Then we will have created the perfect or utopian society through our imagination of the perfect society, by the alienated labour of our hands. Thus, for Hegel, history is a gradual process towards freedom. The purpose of this process is to realize the essence of rational order, achieved when the absolute spirit or truth prevails (Hegel 1910/1967).

In, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1964) Marx is working on the intellectual challenge of Hegel, the creation of a utopia. Unlike Hegel, he is attempting to formulate a critical theoretical understanding of capitalist society. While

Hegel began with the abstract activity of the mind, Marx starts with the worker in capitalist society.

Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. Those who adopt the first method of approach begin with consciousness, regarded as the living individual; those who adopt the second, which corresponds with real life, begin with the real living individuals themselves, and consider consciousness only as *their* consciousness (Marx 1961: 90).

Marx is dealing with the conditions of the real worker in the real material world as opposed to Hegel's abstract world of the imagination and ideas.

Marx's view of labour as the externalization of the product, separate from the self and belonging to an antagonist is in sharp contrast to Hegel's view of labour fulfilling the human capacity for self-awareness. The objects of labour for Marx become hostile forces that oppress us:

So much does labor's realization appear as loss of realization that the worker loses realization to the point of starving to death. So much does objectification appear as loss of the object that the worker is robbed of the objects most necessary not only for his life but for his work (Marx 1964: 108).

For Hegel the process of creation of external objects after their conception in the mind was part of the process towards the essence and condition of freedom. But for Marx "the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the more objects the worker produces the less he can possess and the more he falls under the sway of his product, capital" (Marx 1964: 108).

While Hegel and Marx provided the basic conceptual framework for a critical sociology that sought out the transcendent, it was only applied at the structural level. The interpretive conceptual frameworks (as discussed in the approach to phenomenology section) while considering the everyday did not employ a critical

stance. Gardiner has pulled both strands together for a critical approach to everyday life, in an attempt to do sociology without dichotomies. This sociology acknowledges agency and structure while reflectively filtering structure through experience.

The perspectives examined here lie on the cusp between a phenomenology that takes the ‘fine grain’ of everyday life seriously as an integral starting-point of inquiry, and an analysis of wider social and historical developments motivated ultimately by what Jurgen Habermas calls an ‘emancipatory interest’. Such a critical approach to the theorization of everyday life strives to overcome the pervasive dichotomy in social science between the objectivism of structuralist approaches and the subjectivistic tendencies of more conventional interpretive theories (Gardiner 2000: 3).

Dorothy Smith *problematizes* the everyday and begins sociological inquiry with an embodied knower (Smith 1987; 1992):

The knowing subject is always located in a particular spatial and temporal site, a particular configuration of the everyday/everynight world. Inquiry is directed towards exploring and explicating what she does not know—the social relations and organization pervading her world but invisible in it (Smith 1992: 91).

Standpoint, as a method of inquiry, can begin from any experience and does not privilege text-mediated discourses, or the knower, but the place where the enquiry begins.

Beginning with actual people engaged in actual activities puts us inside knowledge creation and develops our consciousness of how society works (Smith 1999: 49). How abstractions become part of the practice of sociology, and how the social relations of knowledge become a part of everyday life results in the everyday world becoming problematic.

This type of knowledge generation has implications for gaining awareness of the transformative aspects in everyday life. Removing yourself from the “professional

sociological discourse aligned with the society's ruling institutions" (Grahame 1998: 347) provides opportunities for exposing how everyday activities are organized, coordinated, and regulated by society's dominant institutions (Smith 1987; Grahame 1998). By increasing understanding of how things are organized, we can begin to imagine how to improve or change things – even in the everyday, which is resistant to commonsense understanding (Grahame 1998: 351).

Transformative Aspects of Everyday Life/utopian moments

Rather than working towards transforming all of society, we can look for transformative moments in everyday life. These moments may not even be concerned with transforming anything in everyday life – but may be about transforming aspects of ourselves or increasing understanding/awareness of self. "Blanchot suggests, the everyday constitutes 'a utopia, and an Idea, without which one would not know how to get at either the hidden present, or the discoverable future of manifest beings'" (1987: 13 in Gardiner 2000: 16).

Rather, the utopian moment is emblematic of a longing for a different, and better way of living, a reconciliation of thought and life, desire and the real, in a manner that critiques the *status quo* without projecting a full-blown image of what a future society should look like. In this sense, utopianism is a sensibility that is oriented towards futurity and cognizant of the possibilities of social change as these are inscribed within the fabric of daily life: '*we are all utopians*', as Lefebvre asserts, 'as soon as we wish for something different' (1984: 75; also Gardiner 1995; Levitas 1993 in Gardiner 2000: 17-18).

Gardiner claims, following Warf, that everyday life must go beyond describing situated activities but must also include an analysis of the impact of the power exercised by bureaucracies or institutions (Gardiner 2000: 7).

Derber suggests that attention is a basic need yet the market governs its allocation; attention allocation mirrors the basic structure of society (1979: 88). To transform society self-interest must be replaced with collectivism. He attributes self-interest and private property to an individualism that pursues the acquisition of attention. Poverty is linked to invisibility (1979: 17) and he specifically mentions groundskeepers as receiving minimal attention (1979: 80). While he was operating within assumptions of community-level institutions creating interdependence and reducing self-interest, his argument has some applicability for an individual engaged in challenging power structures and transforming themselves.

An individual performing a repetitive act not only creates an opportunity for gaining attention without paying for it, but is also engaged in a process of attaching meaning and value to their life and environment (Gardiner 2000: 49). Bakhtin's phenomenology of 'practical doing' involves "making the world a meaningful place, one that is steeped in personal values, the subject actively engages with and alters its lived situation; and, in so doing, continuously transforms itself" (Gardiner 2000: 49). By participating in thought and action, in the everyday, we are able to access the existential and ethical implications of our acts, reflexively (Gardiner 2000: 50). The body becomes the focal point of resistance, "the possibility of a radical dis-alienation and full 'humanization' of social life" . . . is possible "through acts of individual and collective self-realization" (Gardiner 2000: 16-7).

Being consciously engaged in the dialectical process of creating myself by imagining a better life took me outside of myself and outside my home. The commitment made to restore and maintain the flowerbeds in the park removed the distinctions between private/public and work/leisure. The commitment to the flowerbeds also involved the dialectical process of imagining a better park, one with beautiful flower gardens, and going outside of myself and outside my home to create it. In concert, these processes contribute to creating a better way of doing sociology:

Adherents of the critical approach to the study of everyday life therefore take an explicit ethico-political stance, and place considerable stress on the potential for individual and collective agency to transform existing social conditions, a strategy that is anathema to practitioners of mainstream social science no less than the more co-opted and compromised versions of postmodernism (Gardiner 2000: 9).

Substantive Theories

Civic Participation/engagement

The work of other theorists provides useful concepts for explaining what I am doing at the park. For Hannah Arendt, to avoid marginalization one must be present in public, for it is in the “world of appearances” that one has the “right to have rights” (Arendt 1959).

The importance of public space for those concerned with representation is not contact in a limited liberal sense, but being an active part of “the public” in a political sense. The individual alone and in private is unrepresented, hence without political power (Kilian 2000: 57).

Being in public is inadequate without action. Citizenship rights are exercised through the use of public places.

. . . action has the closest connection with the human condition of natality; the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. In this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities. Moreover, since action is the political activity par excellence, natality, and not mortality, may be the central category of political, as distinguished from metaphysical, thought (Arendt 1959: 10-11).

Dijkstra claims, democracy needs a place: “Having truly public spaces is necessary for a democracy . . .” (2000: 2). Cranz makes a more specific claim; that parks provide a place for democracy (Cranz 1982: 213).

Public places need to provide opportunities for contact and representation. Jacobs (1961) argued that poorly planned places were destroying public life. Her argument was essentially social in that complex social relationships served to maintain places as sites of contact. When discussing successful urban design/life she claimed that,

The social structure of sidewalk life hangs partly on what can be called self-appointed public characters. A public character is anyone who is in frequent contact with a wide circle of people and who is sufficiently interested to make himself a public character. . . his main qualification is that he *is* public, that he talks to lots of different people (Jacobs 1961: 68).

The same applies to parks. Designs need to be based on interaction and diversity of use/users. Sennett (1977) connects the loss of contact with the decline of public life, which results in empty, boring and dangerous streets.

There appears to be a strong connection between civic participation and contact in public places, yet civic participation is typically viewed as involving membership in groups or associations, charitable contributions, and volunteering – all somewhat hidden activities that allow for anonymity, discretion, privacy and the ability to limit contact to like-minded individuals. There is potentially a great deal of invisible civic participation occurring. Increased awareness of opportunities could have significant implications for

social integration and social cohesion. Parks in particular, are an urban asset, resource, and space of potential that could contribute to urban well-being (Cranz 1982: 222).

Gardens, specifically, may serve to illustrate the Marxist idea that when we interact with nature we change nature and create the possibility of changing ourselves (Dickens 1992: 194-5).

Parks & Design Issues & Gardens

Parks provide a useful opportunity to explore what happens in public places.

From the point of view of understanding society they are an excellent example of how social forces shape and are shaped by the physical world. Social, economic, political, and psychological processes influenced park location, size, shape, composition, and equipment and landscaping. Once these features were fixed, they both limited and stimulated the options available for human interaction (Cranz 1982: xii).

A history of various park movements (Cranz 1982) seems to indicate that Dundonald Park has elements of both the neighborhood park and city beautiful park of the “reform park era” (1900-1930). The public park movement, within the context of the larger social reform movements had rather large social goals/purposes for urban parks that included: improved public health, improved mental health, and instilling the necessary values for good citizenship. A goal of the reform park movement was to “restore sense of community to urban living itself, so that people would no longer need breaks from urbanity” (Cranz 1982: 232-3). A later park movement, concerned with urban renewal and the war on poverty (Guggenheimer 1969; Seymour 1969) influenced the development of a vest-pocket park system.

In almost all the densely crowded neighborhoods there are vacant lots which are used as dumping grounds and garbage heaps. In the last few years there have been experiments in developing these into so-called vest pocket parks or "outdoor living rooms" (Guggenheimer 1969: 59).

Parks are a public place and as such are dependent on the city to care for them and to articulate a vision or purpose for them, the "... function of parks will largely derive from some vision of the city ... " (Cranz 1982: 240). A problem arises for decision makers when the city lacks a definition or vision for parks. Parks become boring as the number of functions they perform declines, the public loses interest, and budgets are reduced (249). Parks need to perform a variety of functions, for a variety of users.

A generalized neighborhood park that is not headquarters for the leisured indigent can become populated naturally and casually only by being situated very close indeed to where active and different currents of life and function come to a focus. If downtown, it must get shoppers, visitors and strollers as well as downtown workers (Jacobs 1961: 101).

Parks have been identified as sites of struggle where the oppressed have become powerless in the use of public space (Mitchell 1995). Conflicts over park space have contributed to an exclusionary view of citizenship (Mitchell 1995; Staeheli and Thompson 1997). The success of a park ultimately rests on its users: "people do confer use on parks and make them successes—or else withhold use and doom parks to rejection and failure" (Jacobs 1961: 89).

In the design of public places, the emphasis is often on safety. Wilson and Kelling applied the 'broken windows theory' that, if a broken window is not repaired other windows will be broken, to social behavior: "... serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behavior goes unchecked. The unchecked panhandler is, in effect, the first broken window" (Wilson and Kelling 1982: 8). The application of ideas about

physical disorder to social disorder had design implications, for public places (Whyte 1980; Project for Public Spaces 2004). These notions seem to be misapplied by planners and designers when they assume certain social outcomes can be achieved while ignoring the ways public life forms space (Jacobs 1961; Newman 1973, 1996).

Bhatti and Church (2000, 2001) focus on the home garden as a gendered leisure site, and the role gardens play in homemaking. They cite the tendency to approach gardening as a chore, a part of maintaining or improving the value of your home, and typically a male domain. While they are not addressing the rather unusual act of having a private garden in a public park, aspects of their argument are applicable: “Leisure in the garden and the process of gardening cannot simply be understood by the leisure and non-leisure activities taking place but must be interpreted as part of a wider process of social change” (Bhatti and Church 2000: 194).

Definitions of Key Concepts

There are problems with many of the definitions of the concepts used through out this thesis. Many are inadequately defined, in the literature, so confusion abounds. Often the same word will be used in different ways, or different words will be used for what appears to be the same concept. Resolving these difficulties is beyond the scope of this work and I have had to adopt rather uninspired definitions and usage of the key concepts. I offer these definitions of the key concepts employed with the *caveat* that their usefulness is limited to this specific study.

- Place: “Places are physical locations imbued with human meaning. This is not to say that they have to be inhabited, merely that they must possess significance for people.” (Cosgrove 1989: 104). I refer to Dundonald Park as being a place.
- Space: When I use the term space I am usually referring to area such as I needed space for a garden, there was unused space in Dundonald Park (a place). The space I used for a garden becomes a place. Confusion could arise over what appears to be the misuse of the terms place/space – I hope this is limited to citations from the literature and has not been created by me.
- Public place: refers to a physical location imbued with human meaning that is ‘owned’ or held in trust by a public institution such as the City of Ottawa. The institution is responsible for the care/maintenance of the public place.
- Private place: refers to a physical location imbued with human meaning that is ‘owned’ or used by an individual. My home is a private place and I am responsible for maintaining it. My garden at the park is private while it is located within a public place.
- Transcendent utopian moments: are fleeting glimpses of the sphere within everyday life that “contains resistant or counter-hegemonic qualities that point towards the possibility of a radical dis-alienation and full ‘humanization’ of social life . . . through acts of individual and collective self-realization. . . the utopian

moment is emblematic of a longing for a different, and better way of living, a reconciliation of thought and life, desire and the real, in a manner that critiques the *status quo* without projecting a full-blown image of what a future society should look like” (Gardiner 2000: 17).

- Civic participation: is not limited to the notions of volunteering, membership in groups and/or associations, and charitable donations but includes activities/opportunities for engagement. I believe civic participation requires public spaces/places to occur in.
- The City: in this instance refers to the corporate, bureaucratic entity, the City of Ottawa.
- Flowerbed(s), garden(s): the delimited spaces at Dundonald Park that are defined by wooden borders (planters) are flowerbeds even when they did not have flowers planted in them. After I began restoring them, I found I referred to them as my ‘gardens’. The terms become interchangeable after flowers are added.
- Flowers: I lump everything I grow or have grown at the park into the single category of flowers – but this includes perennials, some annuals, some biannuals, fruits, vegetables, herbs, and shrubs. I tend to grow the edible plants for their flower or foliage so I treat them like flowers. I do not advocate eating anything that is grown at the park because of all the urinating that goes on there.

Chapter II: Methodological Traditions in Everyday Life

The Setting

My interest in my thesis topic stems from the location of my house – across the street from Dundonald Park. I'm originally from Victoria, British Columbia and moved to Ottawa from Vancouver Island. I had left a home with a large garden, and a community that could never get away with removing flowers from parks. I ended up in a row house in Centertown, without a garden and across the street from a city park that had its three flowerbeds abandoned through budget cuts, a few years before my arrival in 1992.

I formed a fake group, “The Friends of Dundonald Park”, and received permission from the City to garden in the park. While I did not want to spend any of my time or energy on joining a group or going to meetings, I did want to be kept informed of any major projects that might occur in the park. I thought my time and energy would be better spent working on the gardens. I also wanted to fight city hall; by shaming them into taking better care of their property.

The park has two small flowerbeds and one large one. I only worked on two of them and when anyone asked me if I worked for the City (which frequently happened) I would say no: I do these two gardens – and the other one is how the City thinks the park should look.

Dundonald Park is located at 512 Somerset Street West, Ottawa, Ontario. The park consists of about two acres (one block) in Centretown. It is named after Major-General the Earl of Dundonald, the last British officer to command the Militia of Canada (1902-

1904) (Commanders and Heroes Index 2000). Bay Street forms the western border of the park. The western portion holds a fenced-off children's play area: the equipment being suitable for toddlers to 8 year olds. The eastern border of the park is Lyon Street. The eastern portion is grass. MacLaren Street is the southern border and Somerset Street W, forms the northern border.

The perimeter consists of large trees, benches and asphalt walkways. The center also contains trees, a large flowerbed, two smaller flowerbeds, a drinking fountain, a notice board, benches and chess/checker board tables with small stools. The center is accessed by pathways, on the diagonal, and by one straight path directly across the street from The Beer Store. Lampposts and garbage cans are scattered throughout the area. There are no built structures or facilities, and the City of Ottawa, Parks and Recreation Department offers no programming.

Participant Observation & Grounded Theory Methodology

Problems arise over the use of public space by opposing interests. When space is at a premium, in an urban core, different strategies are employed, aimed at restricting the use of the space. In the case of parks, local movements may form around the removal of homeless people (Mitchell 1995); security may be heightened through design (Newman 1973; Whyte 1980); a lack of amenities may be directed at discouraging loitering or controlling access to the space (Cooper et al. 2000). Much of the conflict over the use of public parks seems guided by distinctions between what is considered appropriate public and private behaviors.

Numerous sociological studies have been undertaken that explore the ‘problems’ of vagrancy, homelessness, panhandling, alcohol addiction and drug abuse, and delinquency. An initial foray into a city park could conceivably lead to a study that *problematizes* the use of the space by, for example, people that consume alcohol in the park. But, as Liebow has pointed out, “dealing exclusively or even principally with those who are most visible and accessible raises important questions of methodology and analysis . . .” (Liebow 1967: 8). I have attempted to reduce the threat of introducing the biases associated with *problematizing* the more visible/accessible park users by concentrating my attention on the use of the place rather than the users.

I hope to develop a fuller understanding of how the place is used by a multitude of different users. I was drawn to notions of what lay beneath the obvious visible differences in the park users. I was interested in looking for similarities between them. Did they share views on the purpose of public places: what did they think this park was for? It is my intent to make a contribution to the understanding of the purpose of public places through an exploration of how a small urban park is used. I hope to achieve this in my thesis by examining how the space within the park is used, how that use has changed over time, as well as my role in the space.

Several local studies have been undertaken that are of a quantitative nature either in that they measure park use by activity and time-of-day, or are demographic studies to meet the needs of urban planners (Ottawa-Carleton 1992; Rugg 1974). The present study is a qualitative analysis of the space in the center of a public place - Dundonald Park.

Given my prior involvement with the space and easy access to the site, and my on-going relationships with elected city officials, city staff, park users and residents of the

neighbourhood – I realized I was in an ideal situation to employ the research style of participant observation. Participant observation provided the research style because it allows for a number of methods and techniques to be used in the collection of the data. The data were collected by naturalistic observation in the park and during public meetings. My own participation in the space and interaction with park users, neighbours, city staff and city officials was also included in the analysis. Key informant interviews and semi-structured respondent interviews with local residents were undertaken. Literature was reviewed; documents and policy statements were analyzed. Archival research was undertaken to determine the official view of the purpose of parks, and the history of this particular park.

The intellectual goal I had set for myself had as its core, the same objective of participant observation: to “obtain analytic description of complex social organizations” (McCall and Simmons 1969: 3). By analytic description McCall and Simmons:

Mean something much more than a journalistic description: An analytic description (1) employs the concepts, propositions, and empirical generalizations of a body of scientific theory as the basic guides in analysis and reporting, (2) employs thorough and systematic collection, classification, and reporting of facts, and (3) generates new empirical generalizations (and perhaps concepts and propositions as well) based on these data (1969: 3).

Observation must be employed directly by the social scientist because aspects of complex organizations are considered latent or unknown to the members themselves, making it impossible for members to report all the necessary information. Social scientists are not blessed with x-ray vision or superior awareness, but with the tools of their discipline: analytic description based upon observation, is only made possible with the thorough and systematic collection, classification, and reporting of facts (McCall and

Simmons 1969: 3). This complexity is amplified in studies of public parks: they are part of multiple organizations. While it is an asset of the City, and administered by that complex organization, the park is also part of a neighbourhood or community, and has different purposes or meanings for different users.

Most of the data was collected between September 2000 and September 2001. I also draw on my memories of being involved with the space since 1992. This was prior to taking any field notes, just as Fred Davis (1959) based his article, “The Cabdriver and His fare: Facets of a Fleeting Relationship” on his experiences driving a cab, long after the events and without having taken field notes (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 252). I attempted to adhere to the principals of grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss 1967): there was no research design; there was no theory verification. An attempt was made to inductively generate theory from comparative analysis of “data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser and Strauss: 2). The method requires data collection, coding, and analysis be preformed together while maintaining a vision of theory as process (Glaser and Strauss: 43).

My own actions, as a gardener in the park, made me part of the study and contributed to my understanding of the purpose of public space by exploring my own use of the park. The attempt to capture lived experience led to a blending of social phenomenology with grounded theory methods. Social phenomenology, with its emphasis on lived experience, everyday life and uncovering meanings of the taken for granted aspects of life make it compatible with the methods of participant observation and grounded theory methodology. When discussing the process of generating theory from data, Glaser and Strauss assert, “. . . our position is not logical; it is phenomenological” (1967: 6). While

they did not elaborate on this statement it is clear from the rest of the text that they are referring to the doctrine that phenomenon which are perceived through the senses or the mind are the objects of knowledge: “In field work, however, general relations are often discovered *in vivo*; that is, the field worker literally sees them occur” (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 40), and are not referring to social phenomenology *per se*. Indeed, Strauss and Corbin provide clarification of this point when predicting the future uses of grounded theory:

Adaption [*sic*] will include combining it with other methodologies (hermeneutical, phenomenological, for instance). . . Particular fields will combine the methodology with other methodologies rather than consider them to be competing. (For instance, researchers in nursing use various combinations of ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory . . .) (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 283).

The process of theoretical sampling led to the revelation, early in the study, that there were predominately two different groups of park users. Group membership was loosely based upon the length of time park users spent in the park and how they used the space. I had come to think of the space as being two parks in one.

Park 1 = consists of people who use the space for “too” long. They are using it as it was designed – as a living room (or for gardening). These people hold the view that’s what public space is for.

Park 2 = consists of people who do not use the space in the center of the park for extended periods of time, or only walk through it.

Even though we have two parks in one, with two distinct types of park users, they have a lot in common. Some of the similarities of park users are that members from both groups:

- are in favour of moderate alcohol consumption in public space;
- value flowers in a park and consider them necessary;
- do not want to help with gardening: Park 1 users see gardening as a lot of hard work and they don't work for free. Park 2 users pay taxes and think there should be money in the budget for flowers;
- relieve themselves in parks or other public places (because it is a park, not because there is a beer store across the street);
- No one panhandles there (not even panhandlers);
- Live in the same neighbourhood (Park 1 users live in rooming-houses and apartments, some moving in and out of housed/unhoused status; Park 2 users live in private houses & apartments);
- think I should be paid/compensated for labour and materials;
- make donations or say they are going to;
- are concerned about my safety in the park and advise me accordingly;
- refer to the garden as belonging to me – and the plants as being mine.

After developing the two categories of park users, it became clear that the activities occurring in this park contradicted the literature on public spaces/places and urban parks. Much of the literature on public space is concerned with design issues with an emphasis on safety. The literature on social and public disorder and social and physical renewal programs has been contradicted in this park. The city councilor for the ward endorsed the 'broken windows' way of thinking about the park. She felt that if I restored the flowerbeds 'undesirables' and their undesirable behaviour would leave the park because so many other 'good' park users would start using the space.

I did not know what type of use the park would get with flowers in it. My experiences contradict the 'broken windows' approach: users from Park 1 appreciate the restoration of the flowerbeds more than anyone, probably because they spend the most

amount of time there. Users from Park 2 like flowers being in the park but do not spend a greater amount of their leisure time there. With the restoration of the flowerbeds more people that are not residents of the neighborhood are using the park for varying lengths of time. They tell me it is the flowerbeds that have drawn their attention to the place.

This park has contradicted the literature that chronicles social control through design. At earlier stages in my research, I was prepared to endorse a change in the design of the park in order to prevent damage to the flowerbeds. To stop my research at that point would have been premature. The significance of the use of the space would have been missed. A redesign may have reduced social interaction in the space. The implications for civic participation research would have been lost.

That there was a lack of ‘community development’ around the creation of the flowerbeds also contradicts experiences in the urban renewal literature. Stopping the study at the redesign phase would have prevented me from recognizing that individuals were becoming engaged citizens, through their involvement with the flowerbeds, even though they were not directly involved with gardening.

Field Observations

Taking its methodological cue from anthropology, the naturalistic researcher sets out to document the details of the participants’ lives. The symbolic interactionist employs naturalistic investigation techniques to look at what is going on in the real world (Blumer 1969: 46-47). Meaningful action is observed and interpreted with a recognition that “people act toward things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them, not

on the basis of the meaning that these things have for the outside scholar” (Blumer 1969: 51). This method is illustrated in the work of “urban ethnographies.” I had made the decision to study how the space in the center of the park was used rather than studying the users of the space. Because I had spent so much time in the park I had acquired a great deal of personal information about some of the park users. This decision resolved the ethical dilemma that was created by my prior involvement with the space. Since my own involvement with the space centered around gardening in the park, I was drawn to behaviour/uses of the park related to the existence of the flowerbeds.

Earlier undergraduate work, undertaken in 1995, had involved the creation of a questionnaire. At that time I was interested in the consumption of products containing alcohol, in the park. The purpose was to deal with both the perceptions related to the location of The Beer Store (across the street from Dundonald Park), and the actual problems and needs of a specific user group. The questions were developed with the assistance of several men who drank various products in the park. They were aware of the legal issues concerning drinking alcohol in public places. For the most part they had previous experience with the legal and/or justice system. They were well known to local police. They openly talked about their addiction to alcohol and the impact that it had on their lives. They casually mentioned experiences with the police, social workers, and at detox-centers. They initiated discussions about the various products containing alcohol they had consumed, methods to acquire various products, factors that influenced their choice of products, and consumption methods.

The empirical world is a realist one in that it exists independently of us, yet it exists in the idealist sense that humans see it through their own perspectives. But the empirical

world does not exist entirely without us, nor does it exist entirely through our perception of it (Blumer 1969: 22-23). The men who drank products containing alcohol, in the park, were aware that they were perceived as a problem in the park (because of the lack of bathrooms); they thought the park could be improved with more police patrols, bathrooms, better lighting, more trash containers, flowers, and better upkeep. Their views provided the challenges to continue gardening and studying the park. They revealed how we can be wrong in our views of the world and it can ‘talk back’ to us “in the sense of challenging and resisting, or not bending to, our images or conceptions of it. This resistance gives the empirical world an obdurate character that is the mark of reality” (Blumer 1969: 22) and leads to a methodology directed at examining its obdurate character (Blumer 1969: 23). I was curious about the role or purpose of a small neighbourhood park in local residents’ lives and I attempted to gain an understanding of the use of public space by observing the uses of the space, my own included:

The empirical social world, in short, is the world of everyday experience, the top layers of which we see in our lives and recognize in the lives of others. The life of a human society, or of any segment of it, or of any organization in it, or of its participants consists of the action and experience of people as they meet the situations that arise in their respective worlds (Blumer 1969: 35).

This study begins and ends with me in the space and my own use of the place. Based on my experience of restoring flowerbeds in a public park, I provide the entry into how the space at the center of the park is used. The work of the classic naturalistic ethnographies has not involved exploring the role of institutions in shaping the participants’ lives. In contrast, Dorothy E. Smith uses the term ethnography to emphasize the idea of exploring organization concretely by using the experience of some particular person or persons as the entry point into forms of social organization which shape local

settings but originate outside of them: “The project of inquiry from the standpoint of women is always reflexive. Also, it is always about ourselves as inquirers - not just our personal selves, but our selves as participants” (Smith 1992: 94). In addition, my relationship and dealings with the City of Ottawa, becomes part of the analysis as “actual practice – how things actually work – becomes the focus of investigation” (Grahame 1998: 352).

What the City says about living in the urban core is contrasted with what the City does to their urban properties. What the City says about “partnerships” on projects like flowers in parks and what they actually do in parks is also explored. The disconnect between the discourse and what actually gets done has implications for citizens who may wish to participate in their community. These notions evolved over the ten years I have spent time in the park. My awareness of how the space is viewed and utilized by different user groups, as well as my own use of the space, and changes in my views about it and the other users inform this study.

Participation With Self-analysis & Interviewing Technique

Ethics clearance was obtained from Carleton University’s Ethics Committee (Appendix A). This was necessary, before conducting the respondent interviews, as set out in the terms and conditions of the Tri-Council Policy Statement for research on human subjects. Once my formalized study of the park began, I would reveal to park users that I was studying the many uses of the park. I have always been known, in the park, as a student/gardener. Yet, some park users had, over the years, suspected me of

being a 'spy' for the City of Ottawa or the Ottawa Police: they knew I did not get paid for gardening and they would see me talking with the police in the park.

I did not conduct interviews in the park. I did attempt to accurately remember and record conversations, that occurred in or about the park, in my field notes. Conversations with informants such as city staff, city police and the city councillor took place at the park and over the telephone. Notes were always taken during or immediately after the conversation. Several off-site interviews were conducted in the homes of local residents'. While the semi-structured interviews were expected to last twenty minutes, the respondents usually spent one to two hours discussing the park. My role, as a participant-as-observer (Gold 1969), put me in an awkward position in terms of conducting interviews. Given my lengthy involvement with the space, city staff and local residents, I was strongly identified with the park. I was considered an expert on the happenings there. When I conducted interviews with local residents they thought my questions were simplistic (Appendix B) and would not possibly lead to a graduate degree in sociology. However, I share the views of Giddens on the value of exploring everyday life:

Durkheim tended to argue as though only the study of the large-scale and the long-term were sufficiently important to warrant the attention of sociology . . . it can readily be demonstrated that the analysis of the apparently trivial or ephemeral can contribute in a basic way to understanding the more durable features of social institutions (Giddens 1987: 12).

When a respondent would comment on some aspect of the park or the activities of park users that I found surprising – I would remark that I was amazed by the observation because it was something that I had never witnessed in the park. The respondent would pause, reflect, perhaps discuss the incident with me in detail – and then tell me that my observation was correct. For example, my chiropractor's office is located a few doors

east of the park. When my regular chiropractor was on vacation, I met with his replacement. While chatting about the source of the pain in my neck (writing my MA thesis on the park), he offered his opinion of the space and some of the park users:

Chiropractor told me that he likes to eat his lunch in the park in the summer but he does not like to be bothered by vagrants (rough people) panhandling – that had happened to him in the summer.

I said that was really unusual. Panhandlers do not panhandle in the park – he agreed and said: “actually, they were just talking to him” – but he wanted to be left alone (Field Notes, February 20, 2002).

I never had an opportunity to present myself as a neutral observer: I always did intend to make changes to the space, and I took advantage of my ‘expertise’ to try to change perceptions about the park. In this regard, ‘bracketing’ or ignoring what we ‘know’ about the phenomenon under study was not possible. Adopting a critical sociological approach allowed bracketing to “. . . make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories” (Van Manen 1990: 47). I wanted to avoid *problematizing* any of the park users; I did not assume there were any problems in the park. I wanted to discover the positive aspects of the space. My methodology evolved from my attempt to get into a position to acquire that information.

While in a limited sense I was an expert on the park, I could not discover what I wished to know based solely upon my own behaviour in the space. Gardening in the park set me apart from all the other park users: they did not garden there. That I created a garden produced a stimulant to how others acted and interacted, in the space. The flowers acted as the key linkage, the “over-riding pattern or story line which provides new insight into the situation investigated” (Williamson, Karp & Dalphin 1977: 215-16).

Since I held an interest in the site before conducting naturalistic field observations, my interest and involvement with the park became part of the study; I was unable to separate my prior knowledge of the setting from my current research interests. Not only do you see the park through me and what I choose to show you: you will see me in the park. In, *Doing Field Research*, Johnson delves into the ‘paradox’ of the social sciences. Social scientists are ‘embedded’ in the observations of the external phenomena that they hope to understand, as well as generating ‘truthful self-understanding’ (Johnson 1975: 24). The observer’s ‘embeddedness’ raises a methodological concern for Johnson:

. . . the inevitable tension between empathy and sympathy. Field research has long been considered justified because it affords an empathetic understanding of the meanings of events to those in a given setting. An empathic understanding results when the observer is able to understand daily events as the members experience them. To achieve this, the observer goes through a learning process which is similar to that of a neophyte member. If others develop feelings of trust toward the observer to the extent of sharing their private thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, close personal ties will undoubtedly result. The development of such ties raises the possibility that the observer will adopt a sympathetic stance toward the objects of his research. A sympathetic stance is one wherein the observer takes the side of the group which is studied, and hence feels bound to demonstrate the validity and correctness of that perspective. (Johnson 1975: 24-25)

While I will explore different aspects of my personal life that originally led me to create a private garden in a public space, I will stop short of psychoanalysis and waxing poetic. I will explore how my views about the space, the place, and park users changed over time.

Document Analysis

Literature reviews of the theoretical and substantive areas were undertaken throughout the project. City of Ottawa policy documents on parks, civic participation,

partnerships, citizen input, keeping the urban core livable, and budgets were also analyzed. The field notes and interviews and some of the readings on public space, parks, and urban design were subjected to the rigors of the constant comparative method. Initial coding resulted in the identification of thirty-five different headings. As the study progressed, more observations were made, more reading was done, and more comparisons took place.

Ultimately, the field notes, interviews, and literature developed around six headings and themes; sub themes were grouped within the more general headings.

1. volunteer(s)/gardening
 - gardening and ownership
 - contributions
 - appreciate flowers
 - paid labour vs not helping; compensation; offers
 - hailing; recognizing me as gardener/owner
 - protection and theft; territorial
2. budget/city programs and policies on parks
 - cutbacks
 - flowers (gardens) as necessary program
 - garbage cans
 - increased usage: housing development; dogs
 - cash-in-lieu of green space
 - adopt-a-park; partnerships
3. alternate, alternative use of 'public' space (contributing to transcendent utopian moments)
 - weddings and wedding photos
 - no panhandling
 - no yard space
 - guerilla gardening
 - civic participation and helping
 - interaction over garden
 - sleeping in garden
4. design issues and use
 - walk through

- living room: meeting friends, family, associates; provided with social/health services
 - Tai Chi
 - dogs
 - gardening
 - location of beer store & attitudes to drinking in public
 - establish 'community'
 - toilet
5. contact with police (emergency services)
 - police attitudes towards park and park users
 - calls to police
 - neighbourhood expectations of police for safety and management of space
 - ambulances
 - police contributing to perceptions
 6. Impressions of space
 - correcting of impressions
 - class issues
 - expectation of green space in city
 - gendered use of space
 - reactions to my use of space – gardening and studying
 - avoid because of other users

The previously mentioned categories of park users (Park User 1 and Park User 2) provided the categories that the data was constantly being compared against. As I read more substantive theories, they were also compared with the observations from the field notes and interviews. It was not difficult to ascertain that the events that occur in Dundonald Park contradict the theories. Once I became cognizant of this, I brought this awareness back into the field in order to test my findings (and my analytical skills).

I still believe that the uses of space in Dundonald Park contradict the literature, but I am uncertain as to whether this park is an anomaly or whether there is a problem with the theories. From my own experience, I know that developing any understanding is a lengthy process: in my case ten years, and counting. I also found that I could have

produced an acceptable thesis sooner, but it would have been based upon misunderstanding. This awareness has heightened my skeptical outlook on life. It has also increased my devotion to the critical sociology of everyday life and studies of the banal.

Chapter III: Everyday In The Park

The Friends of Dundonald Park

On Forming a ‘Fake’ Group

I arrived in Ottawa, from Vancouver Island, British Columbia, in August 1992. I brought my two young daughters with me; we joined my fiancé and his young son. This newly blended family of five temporarily resided in a one bedroom duplex, one block northwest of the park. Since the children were four, six, and eight years old, we used the park for a few months before winter set in. We did not have our own yard. The flowerbeds did not have any flowers in them and were full of grass and weeds. This amazed me. I am originally from Victoria, British Columbia. Many of my relatives in Victoria were avid gardeners. Some had careers involving horticulture/gardening in Beacon Hill Park and Butchard’s Gardens. I could not understand the neglect of the flowerbeds.

During the winter of 1992 I noticed a for rent sign in a window of a rowhouse across the street from the park. We contacted the owner, viewed the house, and arranged for a two-year lease, moving across the street from the park in February, 1993 (we bought the house in May, 1994). We still did not have a yard and our children played at the park; they were not old enough to go by themselves. When the children played in the enclosed play area I would sit on the edge of the largest planter and pull clumps of grass and dandelions out. This behaviour generated interest and discussion with park users who

would be sitting on the benches in the center of the park. Many of them recalled previous employment in landscaping and commented on it being hard work. They did not offer to help, but told me what to do.

City of Ottawa parks maintenance staff would occasionally appear to empty the three or four garbage cans and mow the grass. I asked them about the flowerbed's missing flowers and heard that city council had eliminated flowers from the budget four to five years before my arrival in Ottawa. City grounds staff used to plant and maintain annual flowers in the beds; they used to have greenhouses and a flower show. They reported that they liked having flowers in parks and liked taking care of the beds. They also reported on low employee morale with downsizing and restructuring; "experts with degrees are mowing grass and picking up garbage". They thought that it was a waste of human resources. We agreed that phasing out annuals and moving to perennials and shrubs would have been a better solution for the parks, the flowerbeds, and the morale of city employees. They also complained about politicians making cuts to meet budgets without concern over the impact, i.e., a beautiful city.

The only City property with flowers was city hall. This does not mean that the City of Ottawa is without flowers. Indeed, there are many beautifully landscaped public areas including parks, along roads and pathways (the canal and Queen Elizabeth Parkway, for example). These areas fall under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Commission (NCC). This crown agency faced program review and downsizing in the 1990s (they privatized their grounds maintenance staff), but continue to beautify their properties with flowers. Some old tulip bulbs did remain in Dundonald Park's flowerbeds, but they had quit flowering until we dug up the soil and added compost.

When I began contacting city hall with questions about the maintenance of the park and with service requests, I was told that if I wanted anything done I should go through the Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA); they had a working relationship with the City and requests were easier to manage that way. I did contact the CCCA and they bought me a replacement hose when mine was stolen, but they have not come out to garden. Generally, their focus is on development and transportation issues. That is also the focus of their community newspaper, *The Buzz*. Other local neighbourhood newspapers report on public and private gardens, and gardeners (e.g., *The Ottawa South Community Association Review* June, 2001: “New Garden on Glen Avenue”; “Pruning Your Flowering Shrubs”; “Plant, Grow and Share Your Harvest”; “Notes From the Garden Club”; “2001: Year of the Sidewalk Garden”; “Midwifery Garden a Labour of Love”; “Give Your Flowers a Haircut!”; photographs of tree planting at a park). *The Buzz* does not. However, their Centertown survey revealed that Dundonald Park is the favorite neighbourhood park, partially, because of all the beautiful flowers (2001: 14).

If I recall correctly, my ‘official’ involvement with the park and the City began the next spring/summer, 1994⁵. City staff advised me to write them for official approval of my plan to restore the flowerbeds. I wanted to enter into an acknowledged relationship

⁵ While there are no other members of the ‘Friends of Dundonald Park’, I was aided by my husband (who took pity on me). He is neither an advocate/activist for the park nor a ‘gardener’. He is an excellent labourer and a tremendous help, in all things. The year we turned all the sod over, 1994, another neighbour (coincidentally, another frustrated gardener from Victoria) helped us. He also contributed plants – unfortunately, he moved away. Our children have been enlisted, to pull weeds, on occasion (for cash). They do not enjoy it and are often frightened or annoyed by some of the regulars. A new crowd of regulars moved into the park last summer (2003). They seemed to lack an appreciation or understanding of the flowerbeds. Their behaviour, sitting on a bench next to the flowerbed – turning slightly – and peeing into the flowers while one of our teenagers pulled weeds so repulsed our teens, that I am not able to pay them to help me anymore. That episode was one of the last straws, for me, and led me to ‘quit’ gardening, at the park, August 22, 2003.

with them so they would know to contact me in the event of any major work planned for the park that would require protecting the plants. They were not opposed to the idea of me restoring the flowerbeds, but wanted their position clearly stated. I could do what I wanted with the flowerbeds, but they could not help me.

I also consulted with the City's heritage planner. I was curious about whether heritage designation would bring improvements to the park. He cautioned that heritage designation had certain drawbacks. The main one being that it is nearly impossible to make changes to a place with heritage designation: you would have to know that you never wanted to change anything. Interestingly enough, on May 9, 2003, I received an invitation from the Mayor's office to attend "a plaque unveiling ceremony to commemorate Igor and Svetlana Gouzenko in recognition of their historic flight to freedom in 1945." The ceremony was held at Dundonald Park, June 4, 2003. The Gouzenkos lived across the street from the park at the time they defected and the park played a role in that event. The Federal government is also planning a commemoration of the event.

Over the next two gardening seasons I became acquainted with the Superintendent Parks and Trees, the District Supervisor Central Parks, and the manager responsible for the maintenance of Dundonald Park. I could call them directly for requests of topsoil and compost. I was shown a copy of an internal letter that stated that I could restore the flowerbeds, but the staff was not to assist me in any way because flowers had been cut out of the budget – park maintenance had been reduced as well. The grounds staff who I dealt with on a regular basis took that to mean that they could give me large garbage bags to put weeds in so that I did not fill up the garbage cans, making them too heavy to lift.

The City allowed me to use their water tap with my own hoses and sprinkler. They would provide me with piles of topsoil and/or compost for me to distribute and would respond to my service calls to replace burnt out light bulbs, to add more sand to the children's play area, and to replace the "Dundonald Park" sign (it has been missing again for over 3 years) (Personal e-mail communications, May 3, 2001). They will also pick up bags of garbage if I collect it for them, but they will not pick up loose garbage in the park. If I pull weeds and leave them on the grass next to the flowerbed, they will mow around the piles. One year there was a public appeal for residents to water city trees during a dry spell. I watered trees in the park that I could reach with my hoses until the dry spell was over.

I have always felt that the City was shortsighted and mean spirited in its attitude towards maintaining its own property. While we did have some type of relationship, I did not feel it was a partnership. I also thought my neighbours were misguided in blaming the location of a beer store for the rundown appearance of the park. I placed the blame squarely on City mismanagement. I thought the City was creating unnecessary problems in the park and setting a bad example in terms of how to contribute to creating and maintaining a vibrant and livable urban core.

They have been very focused on how they see the division of labour in the park. Things that they say they will provide, or do, often remain outstanding. For example, after I complained to the Mayor's office that their position on gardens in parks made my project more difficult (Personal correspondence, June 22, 2001); they did not have to help me but they should have quit making it harder. They thanked me for my 'volunteer' efforts and attempted to rectify the situation (Personal correspondence, July 17, 2001).

They offered 150 feet of hose, a sprinkler, and a metal box with a lock so I could keep my equipment at the park. That would be much easier for me than having to carry the hose home all the time. What I received was 50 feet of hose, a sprayer, and no box. I continue to carry my own hoses and sprinkler back-and-forth.

One annoying issue did get resolved at that time, though. Every year I had asked for more garbage cans in the park. There is often a lot of litter in the park and the garbage cans are frequently over-flowing. Three or four cans were just not meeting the needs of the park. Over the past few years there have been many new multi-family housing units built in the area. This has brought more people into the park. There are numerous take-out food facilities in the area: the park provides a pleasant picnic site. There are no on street garbage cans for a three-block radius even though it is a commercial area and there is a bus stop at the corner of the park. When I began gardening the park had been designated a “no dogs allowed” park. A couple of years ago, it changed to a “dogs allowed, on leashes” park. This has also contributed to over-flowing garbage cans. I thought I had always made a convincing argument for increased cans. Yet, every year the reply remained the same: if they put more cans in the park they would get used.

Apparently, there is a city bylaw against the dumping of household waste in city garbage cans. With staff cutbacks, the City no longer had the bylaw staff necessary to sift through the garbage to find evidence of offenders’ names and addresses to ticket them (thank goodness). Hence, no more garbage cans. When the Superintendent Parks and Trees and the District Supervisor Central Parks met with me on July 10, 2001 after my complaint to the mayor, they agreed the park needed more garbage cans and provided nine garbage cans in total (Field Notes, July 10, 2001).

Relationship Between ‘Friends of Dundonald Park’ & City of Ottawa

The City’s corporate slogan/motto is “Shaping our future together”. Elected officials and staff certainly seem to delight in expressing this sentiment and citing examples of partnerships. The grant program that could conceivably bring some benefit to the Friends of Dundonald Park is the Community Partnership Minor Capital Program.

The Community Partnership Minor Capital Program is an initiative to implement minor capital improvements to parks and recreation facilities on a cost-sharing basis. The City’s budget for the program is set annually and funding is apportioned by district based on population. Applications are reviewed and funds are allocated twice annually as per the application deadline dates: May 1st and September 1st. . . City matches the community contribution for projects on City property to a maximum of \$7,500 or 50% of the total cost of the project (City of Ottawa, 2003).

Only a solvent group or association may apply for funding. There does not seem to be a way for the City to collaborate with an individual with no money. They are unable to recognize what I have contributed to the garden because I have done it without a great deal of expense. Certainly, to go out and replace the plants would be costly but no actual value is attached to them.

Hello Susan:

In order to apply for a Community Partnership grant for the future purchase of plant material it would have to be for perennial plant material to meet the criteria of "fixed assets". The community group making the application must match the value of the City contribution. Volunteer labour can be part or all of the community contribution to the project provided it is equal in value to the materials. Normally we require a quote for labour from a contractor to establish the value but we can obtain feedback from City staff as to what would be a reasonable amount for the scope of the project. The grant funds can only be paid to an organized group, not to an individual. The local Community Association must provide a letter of support for the project and could be the group to sponsor the project, process the funds and provide liability insurance coverage for the volunteers. The Community Association in that area of the City is Centretown Citizens Community Association.

I have spoken with the manager for parks maintenance in the Central Area and he has advised that the City can supply topsoil for gardens if that would help.

Please give me a call to discuss this further (Personal e-mail communication, Thursday, January 22, 2004 9:10 AM).

The requirements of the City create some difficulty for me. I do not have a working relationship with the CCCA and they have never expressed any interest in flowers. Of course, I've never had liability insurance (other than my own household coverage), and the City had never told me I needed any. I have attempted to contact the CCCA to solicit their advice and suggestions (Personal e-mail communication, January 24, 2004).

The City has another program, The Adopt-a-Park/Adopt-a-Roadway program; it looks for "good people to do great things in Ottawa parks!" There have been changes to the program since Dundonald Park was adopted. When I looked at the program in 2000, the City had a larger role than it does now. Initially, the Adopt-a-Park program was just for parks (not roadways) and was "a program which allows volunteers to contribute to the maintenance and care of community parks and to be recognized for their efforts. It is a partnership program between volunteers and the City to enhance the quality of our parks" (City of Ottawa 2000, 2004). Volunteers were required to make a two-year commitment to clean a park twice each year. They could do additional things beyond that requirement, such as painting over graffiti, tree planting, painting park furniture, inspecting parks for vandalism and damage, grass cutting, or donating furniture.

The City's role was to help you choose a park, provide garbage bags, leaf and yard waste bags and gloves for each clean-up, pick up collected litter, erect a sign in the park – recognizing the adopter's efforts, place "thank you" ads in community newspapers and

provide participation certificates. The City also recommended collaborating with local businesses for support. The program is now combined with the Adopt-a-Roadway program (City of Ottawa, 2004). The City has scaled back their involvement. They continue to help volunteers choose a park or stretch of roadway, they provide garbage bags and gloves (but have discontinued their leaf and yard waste program in parks), and pick up collected litter. The City continues to provide a sign displaying the name of the adopting volunteer(s), but no longer takes out thank you ads in neighbourhood newspapers or provides participation certificates. On 27, November 2000, thirty-two parks had been adopted, only one was adopted by an individual. As of January 18, 2004, sixty parks had been adopted. The Special Needs Network adopted Dundonald Park. I could not have adopted the park even if I wanted to since I do not satisfy the program requirements. I have spent far more time and effort than what is required, but I do not clean the whole park. There is no program for people who want to have flowers in parks. There is no way for me to ‘volunteer’ and there is no way for the City to partner with me.

For reasons unknown to me, I have never had a good working relationship with my city councilor (who lives on my street, a block and a half away). When I initially sought City approval for my project she was in favour – based on her approval of a ‘broken windows’ solution to social problems: the park was seen as a problem because of the amount of drinking that goes on there. I recall her telling me that improving the park would result in better park users, pushing out undesirable park users. My research revealed that the so-called undesirable users were the biggest supporters of my gardening efforts; they appreciated having a better-looking area to spend their time in. The more desirable park users liked the improvement for its own sake, improving the

neighbourhood, giving the park more of a presence on the street – but they did not spend more time there.

When I began the restoration project I did not have any financial resources of my own, so I contacted the councilor's office to see if they had any way to assist me. They said they could not provide any resources, except flyers, that they gave to me to distribute around the neighbourhood in case there were other residents who wanted an opportunity to garden. Somehow, it was now my responsibility to make sure other frustrated gardeners were not deprived of the opportunity to garden in the park. That experience cemented my resolve to not have a real community group. There I was with no money, no community support, or assistance, not much free time (with a young family and going to university fulltime) having to plaster the neighbourhood with flyers. I thought: I can have meetings or I can have a garden; but I cannot do both.

The purpose of the flyers was to announce a gardening day where other interested gardeners could come out to help dig-up the overgrown beds and bring any donations from their own gardens. My neighbour, the city councilor, did not make an appearance; the only person who attended was the regional councilor (this was before amalgamation) and she brought donations from her own garden. When I would phone the city councilor's office for clarification on policy or budget issues, or for specific requests for assistance with material or labour from city staff, I would often express my frustration over practices that made the restoration of the flowerbeds more difficult than what the actual work was. The city councilor's response was to tell me not to do it then, if it bothered me. I found her reaction and lack of support baffling.

I had been particularly irked when I discovered that the same city councilor spent thousands of dollars, in partnership with the Somerset Heights Business Improvement Association to provide a tap, hose, and metal box to lock the hose in for a much smaller garden on Somerset St. Here the City was helping to create a new garden when they were not willing to take care of existing ones. I began to believe that if I had a real group, with many members (voters) I would also receive some assistance from the city councilor. On the eve of a local election staff in her office telephoned me. They left a message on my answering machine telling me she had funds available for whatever I wanted for the park. I did not return the call and they did not contact me again. I thought if the gesture was sincere, they would have called me back to make arrangements. I did feel this was an attempt to bribe me for my vote.

Another local 'real' group received \$950.00 to create planters at McNabb Community Center. Again, this is even though the City no longer grows flowers or takes care of the beds it has. A member of this group, McNabb Neighbourhood Improvement Bunch (McNIB) called me to ask if they could have some of the yellow irises from the flowerbed in the park. She had been given my name and phone number from the city councilor's office. I reacted rather negatively to this event. I could not help but think that I had spent ten years scrounging plants to try and fill the flowerbeds, without much help, especially from the City, and yet they wanted me to give my plants to a group that had been given \$950.00 from the City, to buy plants. Perhaps, I am overly sensitive, but I felt slighted.

I receive phone call from woman, G, who identifies herself as a member of McNIB. They would like to know if they can have some of my yellow irises from the park for the 2 new planters they have made around the signs, at McNabb Community Center. I say no, I am still trying to fill my

garden (after 8 years) and have done so without any assistance from City. We discuss gardening in public space, scrounging plants – I advise her to go dig them up; people will offer but not follow through. She says people in new townhouses, at Kent and Somerset want garden space – maybe they will help at park.

I don't want people in my garden now. Don't want McNIB people changing things about park. They identify problems in community then "get them fixed" (e.g., prostitution, problem buildings, drugs). I don't want to be one of their problems – removed from park (Field Notes, June 6, 2001, 7:00 PM).

Another way to be a legitimate public gardener with the City is to belong to the Community Garden Network. A local community garden group, "Bugs", has participated in an annual party that takes place at the park. I spoke with them about how their type of "community" garden works, and I mentioned that I had a "community" garden that needed help. Their garden is on land the City owns. They pay \$1.00 per year to lease the property from the City. Gardeners are given 10ft x 10ft plots (or 10ft x 11ft), and free vegetable seeds in exchange for fifteen hours of volunteer labour around the whole area. They said it benefits low-income growers by providing vegetables; but membership is not dependent on income level nor are you required to grow vegetables. The property their garden is on is ready to be developed and they are lobbying for the development to incorporate their garden.

I have attempted on several occasions to get some assistance from the Community Gardeners Network, for the park, to no avail. We have quite a different view of what 'community' garden means. They grew hostile and defensive when I questioned them about their operations; to the point of turning away from me, in conversation (this was at an information table) (Field Notes, Oct 8, 2000). I view their efforts as the privatization of public space, for personal gain. In my view, this is no different from private property

owners, located next to public land (i.e., the greenbelt) extending their backyards into the greenbelt. We happen to live within a system where you have to pay for property, through buying or renting it. Then you have to pay taxes on it, partially based on size. I do not have enough property for the size of garden that I desire. There is unused publicly owned property across the street from my house. I cannot go and put up a little fence around a 10ft x 10ft plot of it, and put a picnic table in my little plot, for my exclusive use. I am at a loss to explain why the City engages in this activity yet does not take care of its existing gardens, any more than I can find a way to explain why they cannot collaborate with me.

I was forwarded an e-mail by a community activist that was directed at anyone interested in learning about community gardening, community organizing, leadership skills and conflict prevention. The Community Gardening Network was putting on a one-day workshop, at the Bronson Centre (Personal e-mail communication, May 16, 2002). Since I was unable to attend, I called and left a message about my community garden, asking for help, and suggesting they post my name and number. My call was not returned and no one contacted me about gardening. But shortly after that I noticed a new garden being created outside the Bronson Centre.

I recently had another Community Gardening Network experience. This past summer (2003) I quit gardening at the park. At the annual picnic, a woman was directed to my home, when she made inquiries about who had put the perennial garden in. I happened to be working in my front yard at the time. She came and introduced herself to me and said she noticed the garden could use some work, she thought it was too big for one person to care for. I have had to listen to a lot of good intentions and offers of help

over the years, none of which ever materialized. I was rather negative in my response, and she understood my frustrations. She was involved with the Community Gardening Network and thought she could rally the troops to come out and “put the garden to bed” for the winter. I wished her luck. We had a couple phone calls and continue to communicate by e-mail. She was disappointed about not being able to get any assistance for the garden (Personal communication).

I have called the City to ask about damaged plants being replaced when film equipment has been set up on top of plants. Three movies have done some of their filming in the park, in the past few years. When I put in the call, the City sent maintenance staff to drive past the park, they did not stop, or get close to the flowerbeds – they said they didn’t see any damage and I would not receive any plants (the City has never provided any plant material or funds).

The only time they were concerned about damage to the flowerbeds was when the G8 protesters used the park for their chill zone and the starting point of the snake march.

Called in clear opposition to the G8, in solidarity with protests in Alberta and with resistance to capitalism and imperialism world-wide, the two days of protest in Ottawa will target the many manifestations of political and economic power of Canada's national capital – the year-round administrative home of the G8 in this country.

As part of this resistance, Dundonald Park will be reclaimed as a Chill Zone to offer a public, chill and festive space in which radical anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist opposition to the G8 can be expressed and articulated in eight thousand creative and artistic ways over the course of the two days of protest.

The Dundonald Park CHILL ZONE will BEGIN at 1PM on Wednesday June 26th.

Dundonald Park is located at SOMERSET and LYON, across from The Beer Store.

Dundonald Park will be used by various groups, organizations and individuals to create a zone of radical artistic expression and creativity. The creation of this Chill Zone in Dundonald Park will itself be an action, that is, a reclaiming of public space -- the public space of a city park in Ottawa, where as in many other cities, parks are monitored and regulated by state authorities taking away the human and community value of public gathering and meeting places.

We are inviting people to come to Dundonald Park during "Take the Capital!" and organize autonomously in a variety of ways. We encourage groups, individuals, collectives and organizations to stage poetry readings, street theater, workshops, musical improvisation and all manifestations of creative festive dissent toward the G8 that come to mind. All those coming to participate in these activities are asked to respect the chill and festive character of the Chill Zone (Personal e-mail communication, June 4, 2002).

I took exception to the notion that Dundonald Park needed to be reclaimed. I contacted the organizers, and the editor of the Xpress who was covering the story from the protesters point of view. My point was that this park did not need to be reclaimed; it already was a site of resistance and ultimately provided opportunities for transcendent utopian moments. I suggested there were probably other parks that did need rescuing. I was also concerned that the action itself would be "taking away the human and community value of public gathering and meeting places" by messing up the park for all of us regulars. I was dismissed. By this time I was used to being dismissed for my views about the park and felt I was probably becoming known as, "that crazy gardening woman."

The City did contact me and said the flowers were a high priority item -- if there was any damage I was to let them know.

City Parks staff has confirmed with me that the City is taking an inventory of the flowers and that if any are damaged they will be replaced on a priority basis (Personal e-mail communication, June 25, 2002).

The protesters said the same thing. There was no damage from the Chill Zone. There was just the usual type of damage from people trampling through the flowers, sleeping on them, and letting their dogs tip-toe-among the tulips. Those are not priority areas for the City.

On one occasion, I thought I had found a way to have a positive impact on parks. I attended a meeting for a proposed high-rise development. The city councilor chaired the meeting. A representative of the building company, the architect for the project, and the city planner made presentations. All of the other people in attendance lived in the building next to the proposed high-rise. They were concerned about losing sunlight and their view (would see a brick wall instead of the sky). They also expressed concerns about being disturbed during the building process.

I ask: since there will be a huge impact on the neighbourhood, by building 190 units, what increase in services can we expect to see eg., garbage cans along Somerset between Bank and Percy – and in the park. In response, I am told that a private contractor will be picking up the garbage from the building. Not quite what I wanted to know.

I stay afterwards, to explain my question and look at the plans. There is not much green space. The developer tells me they have, at another location, paid \$80,000. in-lieu-of-green space. The money was earmarked for a specific park. They are quite willing to do that.

The City Councilor says: the City doesn't do that. There will be no increase in services for the neighbourhood – should be happy more people are moving in – then we may eventually get an improved budget (Field Notes, June 5, 2001, 7:00 – 9:00 PM).

Since I already have a horrible working relationship with my city councilor, I decide to follow-up on the idea myself. I brought it up in my letter to the Mayor (Personal

correspondence, June 22, 2001), but there is no acknowledgement or discussion of the idea in the reply from the City (Personal correspondence, July 17, 2001).

I recently attended a public meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. There were sixteen members of the committee, including presenters who were City of Ottawa staff. There were three members of the public including myself. I was the only member of the public interested in flowers. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Universal Program Review and impending budget cuts. There is not much risk of funding cuts to the park's program because there isn't any funding or program to cut. The only items related to parks are the wading pools and special events equipment. Maintenance for parks comes out of a different program budget (operations) so that aspect would be reported on at a different committee meeting. The main thrust of this committee is sports fields (maintenance and pesticide use). They did have a Community Garden Network committee, but the fate of a community garden policy seemed-up-in-the-air at the current time. And that is not my kind of community garden, anyway. I think it is safe to say, that the City of Ottawa has lost its vision on the purpose of parks.

Discussion

Initially, I had not intended to include the City in my analysis. I was very focused on the locale and I was not looking beyond the center of the park, flowers, or myself. Then I started thinking about the role of the City throughout my whole experience. I had taken notes every time I had ever talked to anyone from the City, right back to the beginning of

the garden project. In addition, I have attended public meetings and taken notes. Now, I think the whole thing is really about how the City makes certain claims about partnering with the community, wanting citizen input in the budget process, wanting to keep the urban core a livable and vibrant area, but they cannot respond to individual initiatives at a time when membership in groups and associations is declining and it is becoming increasingly recognized that a small core group is doing the majority of the 'formal volunteering' (Heying 1997; Putnam 1995; Reed and Selbee 2002).

If, as I believe, civic participation is part of 'becoming' and ultimately part of a utopian moment what is an individual citizen to do when the City cannot accommodate individual initiatives. Does the City limit or somehow restrict citizenship rights by interfering with the dialectical process of imagining a better City and then going about creating it. Identifying a disconnect between the discourse and what actually gets done has implications for citizens that may wish to participate in their community. An awareness of these issues was made possible by incorporating aspects of Smith's theoretical and methodological development of 'standpoint'.

While the corporate line is that City is looking for citizen engagement and input it is clear that it has become difficult, if not impossible, for the City to deal with individuals. While the public was invited to meetings, there was an almost nonexistent turnout at the community consultation events that I attended. Membership in the community association seems minimal and stagnant. The notion of partnership is also seen as problematic when so many elements of the relationship are dysfunctional. If efforts to become an engaged citizen are met with more than the expected bureaucratic obstacles, but actual hostility, how can we expect people to get involved?

Examining the role of the City goes beyond civic participation. The location of the study, Dundonald Park, belongs to the City, and responsibility for it lies with the corporation. This makes the adoption of ‘broken windows’ ideas about the park particularly galling. The entity that has responsibility for the maintenance of the park shows a lack of concern and care for it, complains about some of the park users, and then advocates community involvement for making improvements with the aim of the improvements displacing the ‘undesirable’ element (while they still do not provide any assistance or resources for the improvements that they want). This situation contradicts broken windows theory on two fronts. Rather than having the City apply property standard bylaws to a private property owner, it is the City that does not maintain their property. In addition, the ‘undesirables’ appreciated the improvements in the park and they were not displaced.

The Creation of Parks in Ottawa

Archival research revealed that the City of Ottawa has been consistent in their lack of maintenance for neighbourhood parks over the past one hundred years. In 1892, there was a plebiscite on adopting the “*Public Parks Act*” for the City of Ottawa, the yeas won and the Board of Park Management of the City of Ottawa was created in 1893. The Act set out how the Board was to operate, obtain funds (through taxes – “Park Fund Rate” and debentures), obtain property for parks and provide park maintenance. When Mayor Bringham retired from the Board, in 1898, he stated, “that he found in his travel abroad that Ottawa was very far behind in the matter of parks” (Board of Park Management of

City of Ottawa, 1893-1904: December 9, 1898). Yet, Commissioner Scrim reported that the past members of the Parks Board had made a serious mistake with: “too much land purchased in every case; didn’t take maintenance into account”

We should not lose sight of the fact that Ottawa is a modern city and in the residential part every house has more or less ornamental ground therefore the plea for breathing space does not cut any figure. They look well to strangers visiting the city, but the people whose property adjoins the square derives almost the sole benefit. People having such advantages should furnish the land or the most part of it if the whole population are to pay for the improvements and maintenance. The extra taxes collected form but a small part of the expense. (Board of Park Management of City of Ottawa, 1893-1904: February 14, 1900).

The rest of the Board did not agree with these sentiments. When residents of a ward petitioned the Board to create a park it was to create breathing space and to beautify the property.

There were some delays in creating Dundonald Park. It was originally a reservoir lot belonging to the Water Works. The City tried to transfer the property to the Board of Parks Management (Bylaw No 2067) but retain the possibility of using it if required for water works. The Board was of the opinion that it could not improve the property under the terms of the Bylaw. On October 2, 1901 Aldermen Hopewell and Bayley attended the Board meeting. They wanted to know if “some arrangement could not be arrived at whereby the Board could take over the land and maintain it without impairing the title of the city corporation, should it at anytime be required for water works purposes”. The Board referred the question to their solicitor, who replied on December 4, 1901, that there was no way for the Board to properly acquire the property unless the Corporation dedicates this portion of land for park purposes. By February 11, 1902 the Board was in crisis over lack of financial support from the City. The Board was dissolved by a Special

Act of legislature on May 20, 1902. Leveling of the water works reservoir lots for park purposes remained an issue for the newly formed Parks Committee (City of Ottawa, June 3, 1902) and the expenditure of \$700.00 was approved for leveling and laying out the lots). The following April, the committee agreed to have the Superintendent and City Engineer prepare an estimate of putting the property in proper shape, in and after the style of Minto Park (City of Ottawa, April 1, 1903). The engineer replied by letter, that until the location of the suggested reservoir was decided that no money be spent on the Somerset Street property. He verbally reported to the committee that the cost of improving, in the style of Minto Park, could be done for about \$1600.00 In view of the uncertainty of the reservoir site and the possibility of the Ottawa Improvement Commission taking over the property, it was agreed to let the matter stand (City of Ottawa, May 28, 1903), “Considerable discussion followed relative to the improving of the Somerset Street Park, which was characterized as being in a very neglected condition. Moved to instruct the Superintendent to lower the property to a proper level for park purposes, at a cost not to exceed \$500.00” (City of Ottawa, July 30, 1903). “In June, 1904, the City of Ottawa leased to the Commission for a period of fifteen years, from June 29, 1904, Rockcliffe, Strathcona and Somerset Street parks. The Commission to improve, maintain and repair these properties during that period” (Ottawa Improvement Commission 1912 Report – December 21, 1899 – June 30, 1905: 2). “Before it was leased to the Commission, the original surface soil, down to the underlying hardpan, had been removed” (1912: 7). “Mr. Alex. Stuart, who as Superintendent of Works, designed and supervised what remained of the work authorized by the Commission including . . . Somerset Street Park” (1912: 11). “The work of improvement was commenced by the

Commission in 1905 and completed in 1906 at a cost of \$3,420.74. The Ground was raised and laid out with horizontal and diagonal walks with grass plots between, interspersed with flower beds, while in the center is a large concrete basin for a fountain. Trees have been planted around the outer edge of the park” (1912: 15). While the creation of the park was not without problems there is no obvious reason to view it as problematic.

Park Improvements/improvers

Viewing the park as a problem leads me to question (like others do) my involvement with it. Since I use the space for pleasure, therapeutic and creative purposes, I am gardening for myself, not the neighbourhood, not for improvement, and not for social reform. I’m not part of the crusade. I actually consider my position to be anti-crusade and feel that I am the only person in the neighbourhood privileged to speak for the park. I am the only one who really knows what goes on there.

This was not always the case, and I can say now as a repentant, that I was partially seduced into the ‘improvement’ mentality of the city councilor and the local community association. But even initially I considered the garden mine, for me. Restoring the flowerbeds was supposed to lead to some sort of urban renewal ideal of displacing the ‘problem people’. Making the park ‘nicer’ would attract a better clientele. This would discourage the riffraff. My research has shown that the space is not designed to be stayed in for lengthy visits so certainly the better clientele would not displace the regulars. Now I am the nemesis of the reformers (people and Beer Store displacers). We are never

talking about the same thing; they do not know what they are talking about. Our positions are antithetic. We are barely civil. They are civil for longer than me because they initially misjudge where I am coming from. They think I am one of them.

When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of his information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him (Goffman 1959: 1).

My inability to act for them even surprises me. I know what they expect; I just cannot bring myself to comply.

I object to being called a volunteer, yet I am continually being confronted with that label. I am always dismayed that I am not just called a gardener. My frustration is increased by the City of Ottawa's Adopt a Park Program. The Special Needs Network adopted the park several years after I restored the flower beds, so they get a sign, a certificate, the City says thank you and they get their picture in the paper. All that for agreeing to clean the park twice a year. I see now that I do not fit into an ascribed role that the City can respond to. We do not have a straightforward relationship. It is as if I have a garden in spite of them. To me, that is part of the reason to have a garden at the park. This symbolic use of the space represents my triumph over oppressive forces that try to stifle the expression of the vision I have of my life. The city employees, the city councilor, and local residents are confused when confronted by my use of the space.

What I am doing in the park is associated with a constructive, positive purpose but I'm not doing it the right way.

Given the fact that the individual effectively projects a definition of the situation when he enters the presence of others, we can assume that events may occur within the interaction which contradict, discredit, or otherwise throw doubt upon this projection. When these disruptive events occur, the interaction itself may come to a confused and embarrassed halt. Some of the assumptions upon which the responses of the participants had been predicated become untenable, and the participants find themselves lodged in an interaction for which the situation has been wrongly defined and is now no longer defined (Goffman 1959: 12).

My phone calls to the city managers and parks personnel generally go around in circles. My past performances at community association meetings have resulted in me trying to correct misconceptions about the park being a 'problem'. My educational efforts have failed miserably.

At such moments the individual whose presentation has been discredited may feel ashamed while the others present may feel hostile, and all the participants may come to feel ill at ease, nonplussed, out of countenance, embarrassed, experiencing the kind of anomie that is generated when the minute social system of face-to-face interaction breaks down (Goffman 1959: 12).

The regulars, on the other hand, seem to understand what I am doing, why I am doing it, and they like it. We do not have problems talking to each other. I do not need to educate them. They already have a highly moralistic code of honour, which includes being very territorial and protective of me and the garden.

. . . we must not overlook the crucial fact that any projected definition of the situation also has a distinctive moral character. It is this moral character of projections that will chiefly concern us in this report. Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way. Connected with this principle is a second, namely that an individual who implicitly or explicitly signifies that he has certain social characteristics ought in fact to be what he claims he is. In consequence, when an individual projects a definition of the situation and

thereby makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind, he automatically exerts a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect. He also implicitly forgoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be and hence forgoes the treatment that would be appropriate for such individuals. The others find, then, that the individual has informed them as to what is and as to what they *ought* to see as the “is” (Goffman 1959: 13).

They are aware they are perceived as being a ‘problem’ by their extended use of the space. Their rational explanation has to do with the lack of public washrooms in the area. They probably recognized my misuse of the space before I did. They include me but treat me as separate. I am of course not one of them when we are outside the park. What I know of their lives and their emotions confirms that I am similar to them in my need to use the space at the center of the park but it does not qualify me, as the researcher, to draw any conclusions about them. It is only through knowing them that I have come to know myself better.

Many crucial facts lie beyond the time and place of interaction or lie concealed within it. For example, the “true” or “real” attitudes, beliefs, and emotions of the individual can be ascertained only indirectly, through his avowals or through what appears to be involuntary expressive behavior (Goffman 1959: 2).

I am left with the feeling that the City has lost its vision about parks; they no longer have a purpose. The importance of providing places for civic engagement, participation, and developing and exercising citizenship rights seems to have been lost. These acts need a place where they can take place, and flowers to make it happen.

Design Elements/elements of design

The park was referred to, in minutes from meetings, as Somerset Street Park until it was completed. It first appears in the Ottawa City Directory in 1907, as Dundonald Park. At the turn of the century, these small parks or squares were created at the behest of the different wards, by petition to the Parks Management Board. Citizens would cite the need for beautification and breathing space. Redesign in the 1970s was to create a “People Place”.

The renovations will reinstate the Park and provide play structures, additional landscaping, picket fencing, seating, new lighting while retaining the passive formal concept of the original design (City of Ottawa Council Minutes, May 3, 1978: 2212).

The design of the park, with diagonal asphalt paths cutting through it, transforms a leisure setting into a thoroughfare.

I sat in the center of the central part of the park. Initially I intended to note all people that traveled through the center of the park since I could not observe all areas. Within fifteen minutes I thought I had identified a pattern. Those traveling from the NE corner all had either backpack, briefcases, and/or shopping bags. Those moving through the park from the SW corner didn't carry anything or had children or dogs with them. This did not hold and I was unable to then keep an accurate tally. I adjusted my strategy and only observed those people that sat on a bench or at a table in the center of the park.

Upon my arrival there were two males playing chess. They were youngish, dressed casually i.e., shorts and lime-green socks. They remained the longest: 45 minutes.

A couple from the NE arrived with grocery bags. They sat at that end.

Two women in shorts, with a large dog on a leash arrived from the SW, and sat at that end. Then a guy went up to the couple and gave them a can (tuna size) and a can opener. The same guy also knew the women and joined them briefly before they decided it was safer to drink beer from benches on the perimeter of the park. They mentioned this fact to me in passing (Field Notes, September 13, 2000, 3:00 – 4:00 PM).

This is a very busy little park. I'm unable to keep track of all the movement and activity in the space. I adapt my viewing strategy to the area that is easier to watch since more stopping and sitting occurs here – the center. It is also the area I am most familiar with and associated with because of my gardening activities.

Living Room

I the researcher and I the researched, am one of the park regulars – someone who uses the park in a way that it is not designed for or intended to be used. My ongoing involvement with the park and the regulars provided clues into the uses of the space. I know of regulars who arrange visits with their children (who are denied home visits by the Children's Aid Society), who see parole officers, social workers, nurses and street outreach workers in the park. In addition, it seems to function as an extended living room or social space for regulars, some of them are known to me as panhandlers. However, they do not panhandle or interfere with the people traveling through the park. This further supports the notion of the place as providing a private/public social function. It is a both a site of social service provision and socializing. This living room aspect of the design allows for meeting friends, family, associates and the provision of social/health services.

Used the word, 'living room', to describe how the park is used by people who spend more time than usual in the park. Attributed this to the number of rooming houses in the area. Was understandable, not a problem. The provision of health/social services in the park is not considered a problem either. She was aware of office workers coming into the park for their lunch hour, during good weather. She thought any longer than 1 hour seems unusual, even if they are not drinking. Understands that the beer store is not the source of all-evil. Doesn't object to drinking a beer in the

park. Objects to a group of guys drinking a 24 pack (Interview, February 21, 2001, 10:30 am – noon).

Issues related to the use of the space at the center of the park were identified; this area of the park is not limited to the expected leisure and recreational pursuits.

I sat in the same location as previously, but in the evening. Initially, no one sat in the central area under observation. People rode bikes or walked through the park, in pairs, without stopping. Only two out of 14 people were walking alone. One twelve-year-old girl, J, joined me on the bench. A police cruiser going along MacLaren St. shined its spotlight on us in the center of the park.

One male, self-identified as N.A. Indian, in jeans, white T-shirt, and running shoes stopped on his way from the wine store at Hartman's, and asked us for a cigarette. Not for him - but for his buddies that were waiting for him to return with the large bottle that he had with him. He introduced himself as S, shook hands with us and then proceeded to tell us all about construction work, his recent trip to Cape Breton, his granddaughter - the future Olympic gymnast, his world champion hoop dance - with 34 hoops, and his nearly being an Olympic hockey player except for getting drafted into the US army. He also does work for Northern and Indian Affairs as an interpreter.

He spoke in a native language to two women that walked past us - one responded. Then they recognized each other - old acquaintances. Had seen his hoop dance. That was Grandmother A, newly returned to Ottawa, first night doing street outreach work. She was accompanied by F (she gave me her card, for me to contact her if a mutual acquaintance was ever in need of her services) (Field Notes, September 20, 2000, 7:30 – 8:20 PM).

Upon arrival to my regular seat, in the middle of the park there was a youngish looking woman sitting across one of the chess tables (NE) from a slightly older looking young man (approx 24 and 32). She had a green binder in front of her; he didn't have anything (except tattoos on the inside of his arm). They were speaking in French. She gave him a sealed envelope. He held it between his hands, tapping it upright on the table. Then she took out a book that looked like a day planner and was going through it while talking to him. My translator said that the woman remarked on having a lot of homework to do, and he asked her to make some time to meet with him again. They seemed to decide upon a date, and she took out a card, wrote on it, and gave it to him. Then they both left (Field Notes, October 12, 2000, 4:30 – 5:30 PM).

These are not the only instances of people receiving different types of social services in the park. The Salvation Army outreach van has been seen delivering food and beverages; the City of Ottawa SITE van provided condoms and a needle exchange program; and individual teachers, nurses, lawyers and social workers have met with clients in the park.

Private Garden

My field observations indicated that my own use of the space in the center of the park was not typical and created some confusion and/or discomfort for some people in the neighbourhood. While I am not considered a 'vagrant', I spend just as much time in the park as those that are considered vagrants.⁶ There is nothing about the design that lends itself to gardening activities. To maintain a garden you need equipment (shovels, spades, clippers, trowels, stakes and twine, hoses, sprinklers, etc.) and some place to keep the equipment. When the city staff maintained annual flowerbeds in parks they used a fleet of vehicles and kept their equipment at their maintenance yard. That someone is spending a lot of time in the flowerbeds and treating them as private gardens is not what the space was designed for.

Ultimately, it was the travel-through nature of the space that led to the generation of a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Anyone spending an unusual amount of time in the space at the center of Dundonald Park could be using it to become engaged

⁶ 'Vagrant' is not my choice of word. This is the word that the police dispatchers always use when a call is made, requesting service at the park. It is also one of the words that people in the neighbourhood use when discussing 'problems' in the park.

citizens. Perhaps, they were engaged in a dialectical process of imagining a better park and then going about creating it.

Activities in the Park

Recreating: physical

A group has been doing Tai Chi together, early every morning (not in winter), in the park, for years. This began long before I moved here. The park is fairly level and well laid out for their exercises. They have worn out the grass next to the large flowerbed – this bothers one of my neighbours. Last year (2003) the City had the center of the park resurfaced. There are several trees planted in the asphalt and their roots had lifted the surface making it very bumpy. The Tai Chi group immediately relocated their activities to the new, smooth surface. I guess they had just been making do with the grass. Several years ago a few of the women would move the hose around for me but I'm not usually gardening early enough for them to help.

Went to park to putter in garden, not much energy and going to be very hot day (around 9:30 AM). One of the Tai Chi guys comes to tell me that he is 74 years old, and to show me how to make new roses – by dead-heading longer pieces (back to the 3rd stem) and then just sticking the dead looking twig into the ground. He says he has done it a lot and it works. We did several together (Field Notes, June 25, 2001, 9:30 AM).

The park was not designed with any specific physical or athletic activities in mind. There is no equipment outside the children's play area, and the larger grass areas are all cut-up with pedestrian pathways. It is suited to activities that don't require large areas of

open space. Some additional activities that occur in the park are: badminton, croquet, Frisbee, golf putting, catch, tightrope walking, happy-sac, juggling, calisthenics and gymnastics, yoga, card games, checkers and chess playing. People also practice playing musical instruments in the park.

Recreating: plants

The flowerbeds are part of the design of the park, but when they were abandoned and overgrown with weeds and grass they did not contribute to interaction and created a perception of physical and social disorder (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999; Wilson and Kelling 1982, 1989).

An older man comes and sits on the bench right beside where I was working. He struck up a conversation by saying, “What an unusual assortment of plants – unexpected in a park.” I explained about me planting them – he asked about assistance from the city– I explained – he said: “That’s a crying shame”. We discussed the various park/city programs and the inability of the bureaucracy to respond to little things. He used to live in the neighbourhood in the seventies – he said it wasn’t a nice park then (Field Notes, June 20, 2001, 2:00 – 6:40 PM).

Two women in office clothes, walking at lunch time, stop and ask me if it’s a community garden or if I’m a volunteer – discuss – they say that the garden gives the park such a presence – sense of place (Field Notes, June 21, 2001, noonish).

I’m dead-heading roses. Two women walking a dog stop and ask if it’s a community/volunteer garden. We discuss garbage cans. They say the garden give the park such a presence – a sense of place (Field Notes, June 21, 2001, 1:00 PM).

Another neighbour came to see us at park – said it looks beautiful from the #2 bus, on Somerset St., too (Field Notes, June 8, 2001).⁷

⁷ Theoretical Memo: people coming through park now detour to walk around flower bed, slowly, and then back track to get back on their route (June 21, 2001)

I was on front porch reading. A man and a woman parked their car, got out and looked at garden. I went to park to move hose, man was gone; woman asked me if I was gardener – talked about gardening in park – she said they only stopped there because they saw the garden; she was waiting for him to do something nearby, then leaving (Field Notes, July 15, 2001, afternoon).

Everyone: men, women, children, employed, unemployed, with means, without means, gardeners, non-gardeners, beer drinkers, non-beer drinkers all have said it is really nice to have flowers growing there (Theoretical Memo, June 21, 2001).

They say that flowers in the park raises the visibility of the park, giving it more of a presence. This results in people altering their path through the park – to detour around the garden. It also brings new people into the park – they only stopped because they saw the flowers. They had presumably seen it was a park but that was not reason enough to enter the space. It would seem that flowers are an important design element both in terms of attracting a wider variety of users and in influencing movement through the space. According to Jacobs, a successful urban design in one that supports and encourages diversity.

. . . in real life only diverse surroundings have the practical power of inducing a natural, continuing flow of life and use. . . only a genuine content of economic and social diversity, resulting in people with different schedules, has meaning to the park and the power to confer the boon of life upon it (Jacobs 1961: 101).

So, it would appear that the success of the park is partially dependent on having flowers in the garden since it attracts attention from a variety of users, who have different schedules.

Recreating: liquids

The location of the park was not determined by the existence of a Beer Store hence the consumption of beer did not feature in its design. While there are no liquor licence or zoning restrictions on the location of Beer Stores “apart from being located in a commercial zone that permits ‘retail store’” (Personal e-mail communication, December 18, 2003 11:43 AM; *Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996; Liquor Licence Act*) there is a public perception that the location, across the street from a park, is undesirable and the business can be forced to move. Even the city councilor suggested that the Beer Store should be forced to relocate and social housing could be built on that spot. Yet, the only involvement the City of Ottawa has with liquor policies is by enforcing provincial legislation related to drunkenness in public, liquor licence violations (i.e., selling liquor to minors), and noise by-law complaints. The City of Ottawa does not have an alcohol strategy (personal e-mail communication, December 18, 2003).

Dave went in to make dinner, X and friends told him to take good care of me; he told them they should buy me a beer. They asked me about my antique store, asked my first name, and what I drink during the day. I asked X what was different this year – he said the way I placed the plants and that it was full. His friend says some people don’t know how to drink in park – he claims he is never a problem. X says the fine is \$150. now. They say the garden makes the park really nice – they like it a lot – get upset about guys peeing in it and stomping around looking for empties (Field Notes, June 20, 2001, 2:00 – 6:40 PM).

Walking dog through park in afternoon – see condom wrapper in garden – corn and other plants trampled – comment on needing to grow prickly plants, to X. He says: “We got rid of the guy peeing.” I told him about the wrestler (peeing at one end of garden when I was working at the other end – and how I didn’t know what to say – so said nothing). X said, they will teach me how. His friend said there were lots of broken beer bottles

in the park – he said people shouldn't drink bottles in park – should drink cans (Field Notes, July 20, 2001, 2:30 PM).

Couldn't sleep. Thought I'd get up and keep an eye on the park because plants have been stolen in the middle of the night lately (thinned out – looks like professional job). Didn't see thief but between 12:30 and 2:30 AM three different guys walking through park peed on trees – that's more than beer drinkers during the day (Field Notes, June 24, 2001 12:30 – 2:30 AM).

I conclude, people don't pee in the park because there is a Beer Store there but because there is a park there. I suspect I'd be run out of the neighbourhood if I tell my neighbours that. I now have a new reason for not getting rid of the Beer Store.

A middle aged man and a woman with a dog, on a rope walked through the center, picked up a bike and sleeping-bag that had been left by the benches, bade each other farewell and the woman and dog continued through the park. The man, wearing jeans, black boots, a black and white T-shirt with a slogan (opposed to animal testing), and a jeans jacket briefly lingered at one of the chess tables, NE, and then approached me and J. It apologised for the intrusion, then proceeded to ask me to go to the beer store for him. He held a ten-dollar bill in his hands, in front of his body. I gave him my standard response: I do not go into beer stores, I am from Victoria. I also mentioned that I had told his friend, S, the same thing on another occasion. He continued talking to me about being a chronic alcoholic yet only being allowed in the beer store once in the morning, once in the afternoon, and once in the evening – all because of one little mistake, kicking the window once when he was declined service. He did go back to the chess table, but didn't stay there – and came and talked to me again: about his philosophy of life – it doesn't matter how many great things you do, you are just remembered for the one bad. This injustice also has something to do with having war vet uncles that fought for freedom – but he can't even buy a beer when he needs one.

Then the police arrived, asked the man to step away from us to talk to him, asked him if he was carrying anything, then sent him on his way. Then the police officer returned to talk to me about the location of the park, what he characterized as the misuse of the park, and then about my garden, specifically the size and condition of my hostas. He had to listen to my theories of park use as well. He was unaware of the social and health services that are provided there – and aghast at my living room suggestion. We ended up being alone, with people just walking through the space (Field Notes, October 12, 2000, around 5:00 PM).

I'm moving a rock in my front yard when a neighbour, L, appears and tells me that when he left his house unlocked, for 3 minutes, to talk to the painters at the side of his house – a large white, middle aged, drunk guy went into his house – peed 3 times in his vestibule, then passed out there. He saw him through the window, went around back and called 911 because he didn't want to confront the guy alone. He says he is going to petition to get the Beer Store to move. He is going to write city councilor, *et al.* I refrained from comment (Field Notes, May 19, 2001, around 2:00 PM).

Came home from walking the dog. Other neighbour, C stopped me to tell me he had finally had an answer back from city councilor about garbage pickup in park (too much dog waste). There will be more pickups. Also said there will be more police patrolling the park. He knew about the drunk going into L's house and continues to believe Beer Store should be forced to move to a commercial area (e.g., Bank St.) and/or change their business hours: "Not having the Beer Store there would solve all our problems." Again, I refrained from urge to correct him (Field Notes, May 19, 2001, around 7:00 PM).

R. also mentioned how good it would be, what an improvement to get rid of Beer Store – says there is increased policing, "police surveillance" of park – I said I wasn't sure if getting rid of Beer Store would make much difference (Field Notes, June 11, 2001, 4:30 PM).

Went to park to water, weeded a bit – X, M, and friend were there – asked me about my store and the fire because they had driven past new building on Wellington today. I told them I had just been to the open house next door, \$345,000. They said prices going up in the neighbourhood because of all the new building; I said it was because of the convenient location of the Beer Store. We discussed whether Beer Store makes any difference to the park – they think it does with guys that are only passing through – regulars like them know how to drink properly in park (Field Notes, July 15, 2001, around noon).

The location of the Beer Store across the street from the park is of little relevance to the use of the space by the regulars. Beer is not the only product containing alcohol consumed in the park and they have told me they would be willing to carry their beer some distance to drink in this park (since they live in the neighbourhood anyway). If the Beer Store is perceived as contributing to the 'problems' associated with the park it is because it is located across the street from a park. The wider population does not expect

to see an alcohol-dispensing site near a park or other recreational setting (Cavan 1966: 5-15). It is still illegal to consume alcohol in public places in Ontario. The occurrence and frequency of regulars consuming beer at the park seems disproportionate to the reactions they arose over the amount of time they spend at the park. I never drink beer at the park but my presence for extended periods of time also arouses strong reactions from those who travel through the space.

Toilets

Q: How much time do you spend in the park?

A: When my daughter was younger we spent more time in the playground area. I would sit and read there. I only go through it now I'm sorry to say.

Q: Have you spent that much time in other parks?

A: In Strathcona because it was designed for going for walks and having picnics. It has bathrooms and lots of space away from traffic. Bathrooms would be a bigger problem -- what you would find in them (Interview, March 9, 2001, 10:00 – 12:00).

Dundonald Park does not have any public toilets. Given the location of the Beer Store, across the street, many people think there would be no urinating in public if there was no Beer Store (as discussed in the Beer Store section). Given the amount of time I have spent observing what goes on in the park, I can attest that urinating in public (when there are no toilet facilities) is related to the lack of facilities and not the ability to purchase beer.

I haven't been gardening much for past 3 weeks, put the hose on a few times but it has been too hot, and I started a full-time job. But, it is also the time of year I get fed up with amount of garbage and damage done to garden. Everyday there is another clump of toilet paper in garden (suspect late-night card players) (Memo, August, 20, 2001).

Between 12:30 and 2:30 AM, at three different times, guys walking through the park peed on trees (Field Notes, June 23, 2001).

Young children are trained to urinate in public, by their parents, who take their children into the bushes around the playground. I have also seen teenagers making quite a production of urinating in the children's playground during the evening and/or bad weather (when no one else is in the playground).

Some park users, who spend a lot of time at the park, do not drink beer – but still have to urinate. Some park users, who do drink beer, have to urinate. It has come to my attention that people who have had too much to drink or have some other kind of impairment, may urinate in the park: against a tree or in the flower beds. Some are barely conscious of what they are doing; others will yell at you if they feel a lack of privacy over being visible (once I did not have my glasses on and could not tell what was going on but because I appeared to be gazing in the direction of a gentleman leaning against a lamppost, he let me know I was out-of-line). Many people who stay in the park for too long will urinate in the yards and driveways of the houses surrounding the park.

Worked on removing rust infected Hollyhocks and moving more of the compost, watered. F. came to park with 'boyfriend' – asked me if she could give him a flower – I said yes – she used my clippers, he was delighted. She said, "lots of people pee-pee in garden but she can't be there all the time (to protect it). People from Somalia don't pee-pee in garden, lots of other places around" (Field Notes, August 20, 2001, 2:00 PM).

Surveillance

I walked through park to go shopping, stopped to look at garden. The young white, long-haired guy (friend of M) with dogs stopped me to say his dog wasn't there digging up the garden – but would be in half an hour. I said OK, that's good; he said just kidding, he doesn't let the dog dig there anymore. I said I understand, it takes people awhile to get used to it (that the garden doesn't belong to the City). Then a stranger, black guy, came up to me saying: “Jesus Christ made this (touches grass, motions to garden) he kept repeating that – long haired guy on bench says, that's right – how's it going, man. Then black guy excuses himself – says he forgot something on the bench, and leaves. Long hair tells me I have to watch out, be careful, lots of weird guys around here (Field Notes, June 11, 2001, 4:30 PM).

Open the front door to take dog on walk, there is a police car sitting outside my house. Policewoman from the other day; we chat. She says she tries to stop by – cruise by – but had been having a wild day and didn't have time to come around until then (6 pm). Said they had taken to parking in the park to do their paperwork, “even though people don't like it” but the parks a problem – they are desperate – the Beer Store doesn't help (Field Notes, June 12, 2001, 6:00 PM).

In Dundonald Park, Foucault's panoptic power (Foucault 1979) becomes inverted hierarchical observation. Those in the park watch me; my house, stuff, and family and my interactions with others e.g., police, family and other park users. Sometimes this has led to accusations that I am a spy for the City and/or the police but over time those misconceptions get rectified. They also watch out for me. I believe it is more than a coincidence that my house has never been broken into while all of my neighbours have.

When I first began gardening the park was visited by the foot, bike and horse patrols of the City of Ottawa police force. These services helped create a pleasant atmosphere in the park – they did not leave the impression that the park was a ‘problem’. My young family would jump up from the dinner table to run outside and pet the horses. Then those services were cut-out and/or reduced. I used to call the police for minor disturbances

when I was more possessive and territorial (obsessive) about trying to fill and maintain the flowerbeds. Then I adopted a different intervention model; I call emergency services if a situation seems to be escalating towards violence, is violent, or someone seems to be in distress (medical problem). I've been told many times by police, that they want me to phone for every little thing. They claim that the more calls you make the more willing police are to go there because of how resources are allocated. The issue of police visibility contributing to the reputation of the park was of particular interest to one interviewee.

She discussed at great length her efforts to have a resumption of the police bicycle patrol in the park. Feels that the police cruisers coming into the park sends the wrong message: that the area is troubled. The cruisers also are too visible and give the drunks time to get away. The bike patrol, and foot patrol coming into the park at random times is a better use of their time. She showed me letters she had written to two police chiefs and the former regional councilor regarding the park and policing. In those letters she claims there is a problem element, drunks that panhandle. When questioned, she agreed they are panhandlers but that they don't panhandle in the park. Did mention the use of the park as a 'lavatory' in the letters.

Said, "I know most of the guys that hang around here (to see). Each new season I look to see whose back and who hopefully died." Then she wondered if her family is as well known to the park users (Interview, February 21, 2001, 10:30 am – noon).

There seems to be an excessive over-reliance on the police over the management of the space. To my knowledge, there has not been a serious or violent crime committed in the park in the eleven years I have lived here. Coincidentally, during the same time period the park has remained a kind of no-man's-land. There are two Business Improvement Associations in the area (one on either side of the park but neither considers the park in their area). There was no 'community development' or action around restoring the flowerbeds. For all the grumbling the local residents do about various activities in the

park, they have not consolidated their efforts (like the nearby McNIB) group has. The police have expressed negative attitudes towards the park and some of the park users, but they have not suggested any community-policing activities. They do suggest more enforcement. Damage to park properties, including flowers and trees, was a problem in 1904 as well. At that time, the Board had been “unable to secure any aid from the police” (Board of Park Management of the City of Ottawa, 1893-1904: May 25, 1904).

I have never particularly enjoyed hanging around in playgrounds. I am aware of the one in the park and its users and their impact on the flowerbeds. Just outside of the gate into the play area there is a drinking fountain, next to it is the tap I use to water the gardens. One of the flowerbeds abuts the drinking fountain. I refer to this smaller flowerbed as the shade garden. It is in filtered to dense shade for most of the day (there are two Russian Olive trees right in the bed and there are higher trees around it). Given that it is a high traffic area and shady, I intentionally keep it jungle-like. I thought that would provide more interest for the children and I wouldn't be concerned about the plants. It is mostly planted in violets, ferns, lily of the valley, vinca, and yarrow. These plants are all hardy and green all season. I don't even waste any hostas there.

I do notice when something seems particularly out of the ordinary in the playground. One Halloween afternoon, several years ago, two rough looking men were alone in the playground. It looked like they were booby trapping it with ropes and hung one rope, as a noose, over the top of the swing set. The police came very fast when I called that time. Another time, a summer evening, not that long ago, we were walking home through the park; there were a lot of parents and children in the playground (since it is fenced, with one gate they are trapped in there. An older man was yelling obscenities and threats and

approaching the gate to the playground. The parents all seemed to be frozen like blinded deer in headlights (I understand not wanting to frighten or alarm your child). I distracted him by loudly asking him if he had a kid in the playground – if not he had to get away from there because it was only for people with kids – he then directed his ranting towards me, and I hurried home.

Discussion

Much of the literature on public space is concerned with design with an emphasis on safety (Kilian 2000). A parallel theme is concerned with designing better public spaces as places of contact (Jacobs 1961; Lofland 1973, 1998; Newman 1973). In practice these goals often conflict. When we look specifically at successful small park design:

Probably the most important element in intricacy is centering. Good small parks typically have a place somewhere within them commonly understood to be the center—at the very least a main crossroads and pausing point, a climax. Some small parks or squares are virtually all center, and get their intricacy from minor differences at their peripheries. . . . for neighborhood parks, the finest centers are stage settings for people (Jacobs 1961: 104-5).

Perhaps, different parks have different purposes. And within different parks different aspects of their purpose is defined differently by different groups. Just as in Cavan's study of bars, which revealed that use by 'regulars' differs from others users and different bars had different types of 'regulars' – with different needs (1966: 212-13).

The strange thing about having a private garden in a public place is that most people think it 'belongs' to the City. Damage to City parks has been a common phenomenon since parks were first created in Ottawa. Newman's work on Crime Prevention Through

Environmental Design (CPTED) claims that communities working with the police in concert with housing designs that successfully generate a sense of responsibility for common areas become “defensible spaces” (1973, 1996). While Newmans’s work has been about housing projects, I believe some aspects are applicable to what is happening at the park. When I look out my window I can see the flowerbeds at the park, from certain angles the flowerbeds appear to be an extension of my front yard – and we have joked about that being the case. By taking responsibility for the flowerbeds and acting like they are part of my yard, the space becomes defensible. Park users care about it more.

While I take issue with most of the work done by Whyte and the Project for Public Space (PPS) (with their emphasis on “inappropriate activities” and “undesirables”) he does provide a useful concept for our purposes:

Triangulation is the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other (PPS 2004: section 8).

It appears that flowers encourage interaction by ‘triangulation’. If public spaces such as parks do exist as a place of contact, and if there is a concern over designing better public spaces then we need to be aware of the role of flowers in facilitating contact, and design accordingly. Perhaps, maintenance of the existing design (that included flowerbeds) is the real issue.

Thinking about the similarities of the different park users, combined with my field notes, and the lack of ‘community development’ around gardening in the park led me to a ‘sociological moment’. That is, civic participation is a process with different access points, it needs time and a public space to occur in. The park provides an opportunity to

participate in civic life. This is linked to transcendent utopian moments – where we can imagine a better park and go about creating it, and where we become aware of the transformative aspects in everyday life.

The Social Qualities of Flowers

Since flowers had already been cut out of the City budget before I moved to Ottawa I do not know what the park was like when it had flowers. I know from being in other parks that flowers seem to act like a magnet and draw people to them and people will observe and speak to each other about flowers. I do know that the flowerbeds were being used to hide beer, wine, and sherry bottles. Besides the spattering of old tulip bulbs that remained in the planters there were a few ugly, itchy, buggy, overgrown shrubs behind the benches. The drinkers would put their bottles in the shrubs to avoid detection by the police. If the police caught them drinking in the park they usually did not issue tickets but would dump the contents of the bottle.

I sell our car for \$100. and buy 3 rose bushes at Canadian Tire, for 5.95 each. Want roses for placing at strategic places to prevent paths through garden, and peeing in garden (Field Notes, April 24, 2001).

Went to park to plant 3 roses. Went home to get bucket of water, upon return 3 ‘regulars’ sitting where I’m digging. Exchange pleasantries – they say I’m bothering them; they were going to watch me. One of the guys (seen him around for years) mentioned that he had already been in 2 fights in park (his park) and would protect my flower garden as well. He doesn’t approve of guys bringing knives into park, or drinking at the wrong time of day – when kids are there.

I explained about needing to plant something that would look good by the benches and prevent walking through garden, and peeing. They want something that will grow high enough to hide wine

bottles under. They all left and another man stopped to ask me if the City provides me with water and to say he appreciates my efforts (Field Notes, April 25, 2001, 2:00 PM).

There was a perception around the neighbourhood that the only use the center of the park got was from people consuming alcohol in the park.

Q: How long have you lived by the park?

A: Eleven years.

Q: Were you aware of it before you lived here?

A: No not really

Q: Did you have any impression of it when you moved here?

A: My friends called it the wino park (Interview, February 4, 2001).

I did not take up gardening at the park as a way to meet people. I used to think of gardening as a solitary and quiet past time. Then I went public:

Driest April on record. I go to park to check if roses need water, they do. Some guy is sitting by them: one is missing. I tell the guy that – he is appalled that someone would dig it up; we agree it's none of the regulars – they like the garden too much and are territorial. He planted a rose for his mother that lasted 25 years. I go home for a bucket of water. Different guy there when I get back. He's a gardener. Mentions that he noticed 3 roses were planted, and that 1 was missing. He also mentions that he tried growing some of my hollyhock seed, 2 years ago – it didn't flower and stayed short (Field Notes, May 1, 2001, 3:30 PM).

When we left home for dog walk-stopped to look at garden (if any seeds up yet: sunflowers, corn, Four O'clocks, Sweet Williams, Iceland and California poppies). X and his wife were there. She asked me if I'm the lady that does the garden. Said it was the best year yet- noticed I had moved some day lilies. I said I wanted it full and was waiting for seeds to come up. X said give it time – might take until June (Field Notes, May 19, 2001).

M asked my permission to pick some lavender (to go with his strawberry cake) told me he had some of my rhubarb, last year. He talked about planting herbs (he had been trying to get a community gardening plot). Has been thinking that a few of us should do more with my garden (than flowers), but my irises are beautiful.

Offers of help/involvement have never been actualized. I didn't comment, agreed more herbs would be a good thing. Everyone always watches me work; no one ever helps me. M, and his group of friends have been watching me for years (Field notes, May 27, 2001, 12:00 – 6:00 PM).

There is constant interaction with me when I am gardening.

Put sprinkler on, do a little clean-up, sit in shade looking at garden. Older Italian-Canadian man goes to garden – picks some oregano, chews it; lifts other plants with his cane. I say, is that one a weed. He starts talking to me about different places he went in Canada (50 years ago) that were memorable because of the flowers that grew there. Discuss different plants he likes, and that he starts from seeds (Field Notes, June 13, 2001, 9:30 – 11:00 AM).

Too hot, went home, went back later to move hose. Older guy on bench (who is there almost everyday) says: "I've been wondering if you are compensated by anyone for this garden." I tell him about feeling like a hooker when guys give me money in the park, we laugh. He says, he has been watching us for 3 years and was curious about how it worked. I tell him how it works; he feels that is not right – we should be compensated. My old Chinese friend is at playground with grandson – comes out to tell me garden is really beautiful and full this year. Very nice – then he asks how my house is and we discuss price of heating fuel (Field Notes, June 13, 2001, noon).

Moved some more ferns to shade garden. Watered large bed, cleaned up – wrapped garbage bags around trees and lights (not enough garbage cans and they are over-flowing). People who have never spoken to me – will stop and say: your garden is beautiful; this is the best year for the garden (Field Notes, June 9, 2001, afternoon).

Later, in the afternoon, I'm planting tomatoes and alyssum. B, from a block and a half away – walking through park – stops to ask me if I have a problem with theft because her neighbour was talking to her about guy on a bike with child trailer full of plants (they thought they might have come from park).

It appears I am being talked about (as is garden) throughout neighbourhood. Everyone has an opinion about behaviour related to garden but all refer to it as being mine (Field Notes, June 16, 2001).

Somali guy, friend of F (formerly scary woman) says to me: you adopted the garden? I laughed and said, for sure it was an orphan. He has never talked to me before but has seen me gardening for a few years (Field Notes, June 7, 2001).

This interaction extends beyond the garden and I am stopped on the street and in stores, and asked questions about the flowers.

Sun tanning guy said, he had been looking for me (I wasn't at park – was on my front porch). Took a spider plant out of his car, in clay pot. It was a gift (Field Notes, June 7, 2001, around noon).

Walking up MacLaren St to pick up take-out Chinese food for Father's day. Hailed by J – outside her house. She can't find white poppies in any book – wants one from us. Will give me whatever plants I want in return. I explain about root cuttings. Will give her one if I ever do it (Field Notes, June 17, 2001).

Went to pita bakery, asked by owner: "How's your garden at park?" (Field Notes, June 18, 2001).

Saw T's friend, K, in the corner store.

She said: You take care of the park don't you?

A: Just 2 of the flower beds.

She said: My roommate wants to do some gardening and I wondered if you needed/wanted any help.

A: Yes. She has our number and address (Field Notes, May 14, 2002, 8 PM).

There is more interaction between strangers at the park. The flowers act as a stimulant.

Gardening in park. A woman comes up to me and said: are you Susan? It was G, who had called me about McNibb. They went shopping on the weekend and bought their plants. A guy with a dog zoomed over next to us (beside poppies) and said he had never seen such large poppies before – didn't know they got that big – asked us if it was a 'community' garden and G said: no, it was all thanks to this lady (points at me) (Field Notes, June 11, 2001, 4:30).

Went to park to take pictures of garden with digital camera. The 'mediator' was there with his dog. I asked him if he wanted to see the plants I bought with the money he gave me last year – he said,

yes, they are lovely. I asked him if he is a mediator (A: no), after I told him his 'friend' (F) had told me about the plant thief, etc. He told me something of her background – has had her own problems with the police. Then he started talking about garbage cans. Said my efforts are valiant. Will be making another small contribution again this year. He also commented on having a Beer Store across the street – when some members of the neighbourhood are valiant in there efforts to clean up garbage and with what I do – while others leave empties and pee in the park (Field Notes, June 12, 2001, 8:00 PM).

Older man was asking me about garden, F's friend, from Somalia, walking by – stops to talk to us, says: I adopted garden (again) and tells older guy how wonderful I am – asks me my name – volunteers to help me, anytime, flexes his muscle, says he is strong – but I have to be there to show him what to do – says he is serious, means it. Both men agree it's nice to have a beautiful garden in the park (Field notes, June 20, 2001).

There is more interaction between park users and the space, with flowers in it. Different activities are occurring and again the flowers seem to be the stimulant.

An untraditional/traditional wedding took place at the park today (September 9, 2000). All the elements of a traditional wedding were there, in an alternative manner. First the ring bearer (a dog), the MC, and a guitar player arrive. Then the bride, in a flowered, purple long dress with a veil of white net, and her attendants arrive. His three attendants drag the groom, in top hat and muscle shirt, from the corner. There is duct tape over his mouth, this prompts two police cars to put their lights and sirens on – and they check with the groom that he is ok and knows his abductors. There is a photographer, blue garter for the bride, a (toy) microphone for conducting the service. One couple arrives by car a few minutes later (guests). The ceremony is conducted by the small flowerbed (east side), on the grass, guitar music is played for the waltz, hat passed and each guest deposits something, rice is thrown, photographs are taken by the large flowerbed. Flowers were picked from the large flowerbed, for bouquets (Field Notes, September 9, 2000, 6:00 PM).

Formal wedding party and professional looking photographer suddenly arrive at park. Pose for pictures next to large flowerbed

and leave. I'm thinking it is too bad the flowers are droopy and garden is filthy (Field Notes, August 3, 2002).

The gardens did bring new users into the space: picnickers, flower photographers and painters, and wedding parties are having their pictures taken next to the flowerbeds.

Other Local Flower Gardens & Interaction

There are two churches in the neighbourhood: each has a nice garden. They have different approaches to the use of the space, and the purpose of flowers. Dominion Chalmers United Church had a large underdeveloped garden at the side of the church. Many of the regulars from the park used to hang out in this area. It was similar to the abandoned flowerbeds at the park, a nasty patch of grass and a few buggy shrubs. Then the church landscaped the area, put in a winding path, ornamental trees, sod, flowers, shrubs and benches – and a very high chain link fence. The area is no longer available from the sidewalk but only from going through the church. St John the Evangelist Anglican Church has a very nice assortment of perennials and shrubs and grass around their building. They also have a bench, under a tree. Members of the congregation care for the flowerbeds and consider the garden part of their inner-city ministry – an outreach program. Some of the regulars from the park have also been seen hanging around this area. These represent quite divergent local views on the role of flowers.

Discussion

It appears that flowers encourage interaction by ‘triangulation’. As discussed in the Design Elements/elements of design chapter, having flowers in the center of the park, beside the benches, acts as a stimulus that links people – and gets them to talk to each other (Whyte 1980; PPS 2004). Flowers in the park are also the sociological key linkage or story line that provides new insight (Williamson, Karp & Dalphin 1977: 215-16). Flowers affect interaction between people and the use of the space.

Logically, the people that spend the most time in the space would appreciate the garden the most. In this instance, people who spend the most time in the space are often considered ‘disorderly’ or ‘inappropriate’ users of the space (Whyte 1980). Putting flowers in the park was supposed to encourage more appropriate use of the space by ‘better’ users (Whyte 1980; Wilson and Kelling 1982), this has not happened. Many of the park users who spend a great deal of time at the park are my biggest fans, ultimately become possessive and territorial about the gardens, and value the improvements to the park.

Self-Analysis

On Becoming A Gardener

Even though I have gardeners on both sides of my family, none of them taught me anything about gardening. Many of my closest relations gardened out of a sense of ‘keeping up appearances’ not for enjoyment. Gardening and yard work was another

household related chore. There was a strict gender division of household labour; my brother got to mow the lawn and I had to vacuum the house. I recall many arguments over that injustice.

Once I became a homeowner I delighted in reshaping my yards. I still preferred outside work to inside work. Inside work always seemed like too much of the same thing over-and-over again. While many of the outside tasks are repetitive there are more elements that change – based on seasonal changes and growth of plants. It always seems different. My first home was a townhouse in Saanichton⁸, on Vancouver Island; not far from my mother's and aunt's houses in Brentwood Bay. They both had nice yards and gardens. Despite gardening being a chore, they enjoy the time spent sitting in their yards or on their decks – and they often entertained guests there. My mother has lived next door to an avid gardener for the past twenty-five years. He became my mentor/teacher. I believe we enjoyed the same aspects of gardening, for us it was all about (the urge) the vision, the creation of something from nothing (change), and experimenting with different plants – the discovery of what they could do – where they could do it, and I suppose the control over the space; in my case a sense that was lacking in every other area of my life. My 'apprenticeship' lasted two years.

In order to have a single family home on a larger lot – with the possibility of a larger garden we moved up-island, to French Creek (between Parksville and Qualicum Beach). It was the garden that sold me. The property was ¾ of an acre. The house was well set back from the road with lots of trees and shrubs lining the driveway. There was flowering quince next to the front steps and a nice assortment of bulbs, perennials and

⁸ I had been living in Vancouver, B.C. for six years – with my then husband, and my daughters – a newborn baby and a 4 year old. We moved to Vancouver Island in 1988.

groundcovers lined the path to the front door. You could enter the backyard through a gate on the right-hand side of the house. In the center of the yard was a small stand of extremely high evergreen trees (mostly cedars) under the trees was a picnic area with a table and a large built-in brick bar-b-q, to the right of this area was a goldfish pond with a small bridge over it. Most of the yard was grassed; there was a deck off the back of the house, and a patio area next to a small makeshift greenhouse. There were perennial borders all along the back of the house and more perennials and shrubs along both fence lines (left and right) separating the yard from the two neighbour's yards. There were no other houses or yards behind us as the land there was the edge of a hill with a road winding up to another residential area.

I really liked my garden but my life sucked. As long as I was 'working' and 'improving or increasing' the investment in the family home I was 'allowed' to garden. This gave me a tiny bit of control over my life – by making time to spend working in the garden I could shift other activities/actions that I didn't want to do or didn't enjoy. My experiences with gardening up until this time were all about ownership and control. I owned the home, the land around it, the garden, and the plants in it. I could dig up the plants and move them, or divide them and make more plants or give some away or trade them for other types of plants. I felt I had control over the garden and the part of the process that was creative. I could make structural changes – patios, decks, walkways, arbors but I never tried to control plants – they just do their own thing.

Then one day, while dividing polyanthuses in my garden – I said to my then husband, "There is nothing left of me—take me to the hospital." He did not reply and went to wash his truck. We were not married for much longer. In order to regain control

of my life I had to throw out my old life and start a new one. I had to leave my garden behind.

While standing on the edge of the planter of the larger flowerbed, I'm dead-heading cosmos and throwing the seeds into the bed so they will start more plants and spread out further, next year.

H (an aboriginal man), one of the park regulars, comes up quietly behind me, I didn't know he was there, and says: "Somebody must of hurt you real bad, too" (2000).

His observation led me to the generation of a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Anyone spending an unusual amount of time in the space at the center of Dundonald Park, might have had their feelings/emotions deeply hurt and they may not have fully recovered their emotional health. I eventually saw this as one aspect of the notion of transcendence – whether of self, of park, or of city.

On Creating A Private Garden In A Public Place

When I moved to Ottawa I had a vision of a life. It was a life where I could become actively engaged in my own life. When I began restoring the flowerbeds I was doing it for myself, for the therapeutic effect gardening has upon me, the creative aspect of gardening that I enjoy, and a desire to create a new life based upon how I envisioned life could be living across the street from a park with beautiful gardens in it. While my new home did not have the space required for the types of gardens I had in British Columbia, the park did.

When I am gardening in the park I am perceived as a 'benefactress.' Most people that see me gardening or talk to me about the garden try to call me a

‘volunteer’, which I strenuously object to. Since no one wanted to help me and I wanted to have my own garden for my own reasons – I thought of it as having a private garden in a public place. I garden for my own pleasure. I consider the flowerbeds mine and indeed all the flowers actually are mine. At its simplest level of analysis I have a private garden in a public place.

Was working at home but kept seeing people and dogs in the garden so would make trips over there to do something in garden (territorial without yelling). Brought hose to water, brought clippers to clean up lilacs. Each time it created a stir – everyone moving, apologizing, commenting on ‘my’ garden (Field Notes, May 16, 2001).

Being possessive about the plants and the garden was one of the most difficult aspects for me to resolve. It is just not possible to have a private garden in a public place without experiencing loss and destruction on a scale that is not comparable to what you might experience in your own yard (not to mention a lack of control).

When I first started the garden, I was fixated on turning the space back into a flowerbed. In addition to the hard manual labour of removing the nasty shrubs and then turning all the soil over, removing the sod and adding compost and topsoil it was a challenge to keep the grass and dandelions out. Without plants or resources this was a huge task. I was possessive over the few plants I did have because they were my only source of material for filling in the rest of the garden – by dividing them when they became large enough.

By 1999 several sections had filled in, but there were still too many gaps in the plantings – for my liking. I found that if there was not enough plant density in an area the plants that were there would be trampled when that area became a

shortcut through the garden. Years ago, I would confront people about trampling the plants. Then I started to slowly realize that I was the one who was going to have to change my thinking because they were not all going to change their behaviour. After all I was also using the space in a way that it was not intended to be used. It was conceivable that other people might not like me standing in the middle of the flowerbeds all the time; they might not share my taste in garden style/design. Me being there might be really annoying.

I have come to accept theft, destruction and garbage in the garden. They are aspects of having a garden in a park. I am able to keep this in perspective by thinking/saying that it is still better to have flowers in the park than to not have flowers in the park therefore, some loss is better than no flowers. I find it strange that much of the destruction in the park is justified because it is assumed the plants ‘belong’ to the City. When some people find out that the plants are ‘mine’ they change their behaviour and attitude. They then consider the flowers an act of generosity and a public good. This observation has created a great deal of confusion for me. While I wanted to shame the City into taking care of their own flowerbeds – people seem to care more about the flowerbeds if they find out the City does not ‘own’ them. At no time do I ever think that flowers should not be in the park – I’m just not sure how they should come to be there. I do know that it is too much work for one person to make it happen and keep it going.

So, even though the flowerbeds are too big for one person with no resources, to restore and maintain, I did it anyway. I pretended that it was not that large a task. I was determined to live the life I envisioned, across the street from a park that had beautiful

flower gardens. Now that I live across the street from beautiful flower gardens the park represents my triumph – to me. When I moved to Ottawa I knew I did not have any power and very little control over my own life and a flowerless park symbolized that, for me.

Discussion

The writing of myself into the analysis was something I initially avoided. I did not want to be the data. Actually, I had not intended to study the park for my thesis work; it was too close to me and I thought the work involved in studying it would ruin the gardening experience for me. The participants of a qualitative methods seminar convinced me that there were good stories to tell about the park – and lots going on there – and there was no way I could separate myself from those happenings. But, I still did not want it to be all about me. Methodologically, emotionalism does not hold much interest for me. I agree with Maines's point-of-view, that the extreme positions in sociology - that all writing is fiction/ the data speaks for itself - are not useful for issues of representation (2001).

Instead, we should try to find the most useful and appropriate voice, distance, information formats, and interpretive frames and devices for the empirical and analytic concerns at hand (Maines 2001: 109).

So, for better or worse, a highly censored version of myself is in the thesis (that being the advantage of autobiographical writing).

In order to have the life I wanted, across the street from a park with beautiful flower gardens, I had to become a “public character” (Jacobs 1961). A garden and the process

of gardening had a significant impact on my search for identity (Bhatti and Chruch 2000). To challenge the power structures that were interfering with my ability to have the life I envisioned I had to be present in public, “in the world of appearances”; I had to exercise my citizenship rights through the use of the space (Arendt 1959). I exercised power by penetrating the space. By going public I acquired a great deal of attention, without paying for it, and disproportional to my social and economic status (Derber 1979).

By employing standpoint – to a sociological analysis that begins from my embodied experience I was able to offer further resistance/subversive behaviour by becoming aware of the invisible social relations and organizations (Smith 1992, 1999) – and then ignoring them. This also allowed me to “do” sociology in a manner that contributed to my existential and moral development (Gardiner 2000). I believe sociological studies are enriched when the researcher reflects upon her own experiences (Van Manen 1990). Employing phenomenology allowed me to explore how my own view of the space and the park users had changed over time. This allowed me to resolve/avoid approaching the study of the park as a private/public issue and pointed to how others were also exercising their citizenship rights by participating/becoming engaged in the space and how that leads to a transcendent utopian moment thus avoiding the *problematizing* of park users.

Transcendent Utopian Moments & Civic Participation

Walking through park with Dave and dog. Stopped by neighbour, who comments on how good the garden looks this year, compliments our efforts and wants to know what plants I would like (since plants are seldom bought for garden I assume she is digging things up from her cottage). She corrects me and wants to know what she can buy me (Field Notes, April 22, 2001, 8:00 PM).

Very pleasant successful 6 hours of gardening. Lots of compliments- really full garden this year. Given plants from L's garden. Given more plants from P's garden (traded for a hunk of a groundcover from my yard). D came to say she was going to buy my geraniums; what colour did I want (red). D was there when plant exchange taking place: she said, "this is how it should work (be)" exchanging plants – did she mean it then becomes a 'community' effort. I still do all the digging and scrounged all the plants that I now have to exchange, to get other ones (Field Notes, May 27, 2001).

We have seen how acquaintances have been formed over the garden. I would now like to suggest that the garden acts as a means to access citizenship rights. Beyond my own use of the space to access my citizenship rights (discussed in the Self-Analysis chapter) I began to see other examples of people becoming engaged, through the flowers in the park.

We went to park to walk dog, and see where the California poppies are coming up (from seed). The scary woman (F) was sitting in the center of the park, with one of the guys (her friends). She saw me and came to see me – fast (I thought to yell at or punch me) but she came to tell me a Chinese woman was there on Saturday, am, with a buggy, taking plants from throughout whole garden. Today is Monday. She had talked to her 'friend' in the white house, about it. He told her he had given me money last year to buy plants. They were talking about me.⁹ We had never spoken to each other before; she might have been the only park regular that never said anything to me about the garden.

I told her his plants were still there – and that I could tell plants were missing throughout the garden. She was upset and said the flowers should be left there to smell and see. She would phone the police if the woman came back for more plants! (Field Notes, June 4, 2001).

It was the most amazing thing to witness. Here was a woman raising her voice to insist that the same service be provided to her that is usually provided to others (against her); she was going to call the police over the theft of flowers, from the park.

⁹ Seeing me look at the garden has made her rip up plants and swear at me, in the past – when she was drunk. I had seen her removed from the park, by the police, several times over the past few years. She would be screaming, and ripping off her clothes – yelling about police brutality.

We are having a yard sale. Neighbour (mediator) came over to make another contribution to garden (\$20). I can get what I want. Later, friend, U stopped by – asked me to show her the garden. F was on a bench she hailed me. Apparently, she had told someone looking at the flowers, early in the am, that she would call the police if they were taking plants. Then she explained that she never stole plants, People from Somalia do not steal plants. Her mother had taught her never to even touch them (they are for seeing) (Field Notes, June 16, 2001).

I have also begun to see how the park provides an opportunity to operate, to a certain degree, outside of the mainstream economic system.

When I go to the park, to move the hose, X, one of the regulars, tells the woman he is drinking with that the garden is mine and that I have been doing it for years – she says if I lived in the suburbs I would have to pay a lot for a garden plot that size – so good for me getting a big garden for free (Field Notes, May 16, 2001).

Some additional alternative uses of the park that have been discussed in other chapters are:

- weddings and wedding photos;
- G8 protests;
- no panhandling;
- gardening;
- sleeping in garden.

While I still do not get much help with the manual labour I am witnessing other forms of participation:

- cash contributions;
- plant contributions (either bought or dug up from own garden);
- protection (of garden and me);
- people have told me they were going to phone the City about getting more garbage cans in the park.

Civic Participation

I decided to attend the 2002 City Priorities for Somerset Ward meeting on January 26, 2002. This three-hour session involved breaking out into various working groups to discuss ideas that would eventually be put forward for the City to consider as part of the budget consultation process. I put my cash-in-lieu of green space policy idea forward to my working group and they liked it (as discussed in the Friends of Dundonald Park chapter – Relationship Between ‘Friends of Dundonald Park’ & City of Ottawa section). This would allow the funds to be directed to specific parks instead of them going into general revenue. All the other participants and the city councilor supported the idea when we reconvened as one group (Field Notes, January 26, 2002). The majority of people at the meeting were involved with the Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA). This is the same small group of people who put out the Buzz. One of the participants was interested in my experiences gardening in the park and was going to contact me about doing an interview for the Buzz. I was also supposed to be contacted about my proposal being put forward at the Public Consultation Meeting. Neither of those things happened. But I went to the meeting anyway.

Based on my experiences, I have to wonder why anyone would want to get involved with the public consultation process.

The usual CCCA crowd was at the meeting, putting forward their usual concerns about development, heritage designation and transportation issues. No one mentioned parks so eventually I had to. I put forward the idea just as it had been approved during the earlier process and I was universally derided for suggesting something that would take us back to our pre-amalgamated state of being. How could money being paid to make up for a lack of green space in a development be expected to benefit the local community that faced increased use of their existing parks? The

money is to go to buy land for creating new parks. Many of the same people were at both meetings, including my City Councilor. It was like a bad dream; the kind that does not make sense. I stayed afterwards and asked the City Councilor to explain. It turned out there had been either a change in policy, or they had not know how the policy worked at the earlier meeting. But, no one told me. No one seems to care about taking care of existing parks in Ottawa (Field notes, June 6, 2002).

Four months later I was contacted by the CCCA. They were not sure if anyone had followed up from the initial meeting (they hadn't) but were "looking for interested people to get involved, once again" (Personal e-mail communication, October 15, 2002).

I am not a volunteer, I do not belong to a community association (or any other one), my contributions are plants and labour (not dollars) so my civic participation activities are not measured.

Discussion

The park provides an opportunity for transcendent utopian moments. While there is an emphasis, in the literature, on the theme of loss – linking the deterioration of public space/places with the loss of public life, there is much to be found in parks. Dundonald Park seems to provide a bit of space to take a brief interlude from capitalism. We get glimpses of alternative uses of time and space through awareness of the different types of park users, and how they use the space regardless of the design limitations. The spectacle of the park, the acts of creating private gardens and spending long periods of time there regardless of the lack of public toilets are illustrative of social acts of resistance, the challenging of power structures.

While some parks have been sites of struggle (Mitchell 1995; Staeheli and Thompson 1997) that have resulted in displacing "inappropriate" park users, that has not

been the case in Dundonald Park. Inappropriate park users have not been deprived of their rights to participate. Perhaps the distinction is between representation and citizenship: we need public places to be citizens, not to be represented. Jacobs' thesis (1961) that complex social relationships maintain spaces as sites of contact seems to be borne out in this park.

We set out with a goal of identifying transformative aspects in everyday life, through the transformative power of the place. We have seen that the place provides a living room (and on occasion a bedroom) to those without one, a garden for those without one, and is a site of social service provision. No overt economic activity occurs in the park, including panhandling. I'm receiving attention without paying for it and in-lieu of paid employment (Derber 1979). This is an example of operating outside the social structures to challenge those structures and finding an aspect of the everyday that is transcendent/transformative. It would appear that this type of space is needed if you are outside of the mainstream, economically and intellectually.

Volunteering, charitable giving, and membership in groups or associations are not the only ways to be engaged citizens actively participating in civic life. We have seen various types of contributions: gifts of plants, seeds, advice, and cash. We have also seen various park users become territorial over the garden and engage in protective behaviour towards the garden and the gardener. They have discouraged unpleasant behaviours and tried to prevent theft and damage to the plants. There is a problem with measuring civic participation by volunteering, charitable giving, and group membership. Civic participation appears to be a process with unequal access points. We need to explore ways in which the City limits opportunities to become engaged citizens. Dialectic

requires more than imagination. Action is also necessary to create a better city, park, garden, or life. Opportunities for participation are necessary for creating improvements. Unfortunately, the City of Ottawa does not have a vision for public parks; they have lost their purpose.

Chapter IV: Conclusions & Implications

The challenges proposed by Michael Gardiner's theorizing formed the basis of this thesis. On the one hand, an empirical study was required to test the utility of elevating everyday sociology to a critical knowledge, where the theoretical concepts could be put to the test. With everyday life being so grounded in experience abstract theorizing about a critical counter-tradition would be meaningless unless it could contribute to the 'doing' of sociology. On the other hand, we set out to become aware of transformative aspects in everyday life, an exercise that also required exploring actual experiences.

A critical study of everyday life needs to include an awareness of our experiential involvement of place in the analysis. I am not necessarily referring to a documenting of the origins of a particular place, or the purpose of a location for its own sake. My interest is in what the experience of place comes to mean in our lives. When we consider places as not only physical but experiential what role does the experience of any place play in our existential development? In my case, by attempting to understand the purpose of a place in my own life I saw how the experience of place created personal and social change. Or as Relph says (1997: 208) "sense of place is existential and political." The inclusion of the meaning of place has analogous implications within the discipline of sociology.

There are methodological implications when including experiences of place in an analysis. This can lead to including ourselves in the analysis as well. I believe I have demonstrated that sociologists can be in the study without the study being exclusively about them. By building on our own experiences of place we become more aware of how

others are experiencing a place. When we become aware of transcendent utopian moments in everyday life we are in a position to promote and encourage social change as well as change within sociology: “That, I believe, is our job as students of social life—to learn from those we study and then teach others the lessons we have learned” (Anderson 2003: 237).

Elevating Everyday Sociology to a Critical Knowledge

Elevating everyday sociology to a critical knowledge through empirical studies is possible but may lack universal appeal within the discipline. I’m beginning to think some of these methodological issues are simply a matter of taste. It suits me, my outlook on life and my approach to the discipline to seek out the purpose of something. It also suits me to want to change things that bother me – like parks without flowers. I cannot help but be ‘critical’ in my approach, and I am not interested in being purely descriptive. I am uncertain whether an empirical study within a critical everyday framework would work if it were not phenomenological.

Methodologically, Dorothy Smith’s and Max Van Manen’s approaches are compatible with a critical approach to everyday life sociology. My study of the park, and my understanding of what was happening there were enriched by including the role of the City and their institutional discourse. Relying on naturalistic observation alone would not yield the same rich data source. It had not occurred to me to include the role of the City until I read Dorothy Smith (1987; 1992; 1999). Being in a location without it being a location that seriously interests me and commits me to the world could have

conceivably resulted in an adequate piece of work being produced but again, the data would not be as rich. I believe that my commitment to the location sustained me through the thesis process. Actually, without Smith, Van Manen, the City and me this thesis would be about a bunch of people drinking beer and peeing in the park. Instead, “the mundane world became the privileged site of revelation, mystery and the poetic” (Gardiner 2000: 35).

Becoming Aware of Transformative Aspects in Everyday Life

Fortunately, this thesis is about more than beer drinking, and peeing in the park. I believe it is about becoming aware of transformative aspects in everyday life by catching glimpses of fleeting transcendent utopian moments. Public places provide opportunities for these moments. In this instance, that is the essence of Dundonald Park. The dialectical process is something that the City cannot provide programming for. So, even though they have lost their vision for parks, all is not lost. As long as the park exists, we can use it to become ourselves while we go about imagining and creating a better park.

In order to transform myself I had to transform the space in the center of the park. Then I had to become aware of these transformations. I believe this is an instance of making dialectical peace with yourself, a step towards making your dialectical peace with the world: “Only he who, by decision, has made his dialectical peace with the world can grasp the concrete” (Walter Benjamin in Gardiner 2000: x). Gaining awareness requires being the subject of your study. So, to become aware of transformative aspects in everyday life we have to include ourselves in the analysis; the things we do outside of

ourselves as part of creating ourselves. In this case, we see how the repetitive action of an individual can bring about change.

Appendix A

Research Proposal and Ethics Review

Towards An Evaluation of Urban Vest-Pocket Parks

COVER LETTER FOR APPLICATION TO THE CARLETON UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE

Title: Towards An Evaluation of Urban Vest-Pocket Parks.

Purpose of the research: To fulfill the requirements of a graduate course. Will provide preliminary research towards the MA dissertation. Besides producing a term paper, the assignment provides training in conducting interviews. It is anticipated that up to thirty interviews will be conducted.

Confidentiality/anonymity: Anonymity of the respondents will be maintained. There will be no names, initials or other identifying remarks in the data released. The documents will be saved to a floppy disc only. The documents will be password protected. While the data is being analysed the floppy discs will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. After the data analysis, for this class assignment, the data will be retained for use towards the MA research thesis. During this interval, the data will continue to be stored in a locked filing cabinet. After completion and acceptance of the Master's thesis, the data will be destroyed by smashing the floppy disc with a hammer. The estimated completion date for the Master's dissertation is May 2002.

Benefits to participants: The participants may gain an understanding of some of the local park users. Design improvements may be identified within the park.

Risks to participants: There is minimal risk to participants associated with this research. They will not be identified in the research paper. There is no harm associated with discussing the use of space in small urban parks.

Research Instruments: Equipment will not be used. Interview questions will be developed in advance but are flexible. Minor note taking will occur. The notes will be transcribed and expanded off site, by memory.

Dissemination of research results: This is a course assignment. Results will be analyzed and graded. Results are also discussed in class, which has taken a "vow of silence." The research results may also appear in the Master's dissertation.

I agree to comply with the Tri-Council Policy statement, "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans."

Susan A. Kerr
January 28, 2001

Professor Florence Kellner

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

I have been involved with a small urban park for the past eight years. This park is located directly across the street from my home. My personal involvement with the park extends beyond mere observation from a distance. I requested and received permission from city officials to restore the abandoned flower beds in the park. All of the labour and plant material for the flower beds has to be provided by myself. I have been successful in achieving a partial restocking of plant material by only using perennials. Operating without a budget, the plant material has either been started by seed or been divided from established plants. Often times the plants have come from people in the immediate vicinity. There is a great deal of local interest in the activities that go on in this park.

Not only is this location of historic significance but the ongoing daily activity that occurs in this setting is intriguing. Over the course of eight years, I have gotten to know individuals who frequent the park regularly. Individuals, who spend an unusual amount of time in the park, for example, longer than one hour per day, generate a negative reaction from those who use the park regularly, but just for travelling through. The current design of the park, with diagonal asphalt paths cutting through it, transforms a leisure setting into a thoroughfare. This design seems to contribute to misunderstandings and misperceptions between the different park users who by the way, are all local residents.

I have undertaken naturalistic field observations in this setting for previous course work. The purpose of that course was to generate grounded theory from field notes. No interviews were conducted at that time. Issues related to the use of the space at the center of the park were identified. Initial naturalistic field observations have led to the discovery that this area of the park is not limited to the expected leisure and recreational pursuits. The benches located in the center of the park seem to serve as both an extended living-room type of area and as a site of social/health service provision to some members of the community. I am continuing course work in qualitative methods and would like at this time to conduct interviews in fulfillment of course requirements. Interviewing techniques are central to the current course requirements. A research paper will be produced based on the interviews conducted.

My previous field observations indicated that my use of the space in the center of the park was not typical and created some confusion and/or discomfort for some people in the neighbourhood. While I am not considered a 'vagrant', I spend just as much time in the park as those that are considered vagrants. There is a misperception by local homeowners about the 'vagrants'. For example, these regular park users also live in the same neighbourhood: they are not homeless. They do not conduct panhandling activity in the park but they do meet social service providers there. Ultimately, for my Masters Thesis I would be delving deeper into the sanctioned use of small urban parks. This would entail an examination of the vest-pocket park program¹⁰ to evaluate how the design of the parks or how changes in their design have resulted in changes in their use.

¹⁰ Vest-pocket parks are small urban parks that are one city block or less in size. They are typically wedged between two or more buildings. Often they were created on abandoned or neglected land or on undeveloped land that was kept off the market. They were part of an urban renewal scheme that was philosophically directed at the 'war on poverty'.

An attempt to determine whether these small urban parks continue to serve the needs of the local residents will be undertaken.

I am currently interested in ascertaining from the local homeowners their views on the park, their use of the space, and their perceptions of how the space is used. At this stage in my research, I would like to conduct face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. I know all the subjects so the interviews will be in a casual, informal setting. Notes from the interviews will be transcribed onto a personal computer. The documents will be saved to a floppy disc only. The documents will be password protected. While the data is being analysed the floppy discs will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. After the data analysis, for this class assignment, the data will be retained for use towards the MA research thesis. During this interval, the data will continue to be stored in a locked filing cabinet. After completion and acceptance of the Master's thesis, the data will be destroyed by smashing the floppy disc with a hammer.

Anonymity of the respondents will be maintained. There will be no names, initials or other identifying remarks in the data released. There is minimal risk to respondents. There are no anticipated negative consequences for participating in this research, for the participants. They may gain some understanding of the 'others' who inhabit the park and the neighbourhood. City planners could conceivably utilize the results if the design of the space is shown to lead to social disharmony. The so-called 'problem' users of the park are not being put at risk by an opening up of discourse around the use of public parks in urban settings. The respondents will be informed of the purpose of the research and will be provided with copies of the research paper should they so desire. Free and informed consent will be obtained from the respondents prior to conducting the interviews.

Appendix B

Sample Questions

How long have you lived by the park?

Were you aware of it before you lived here?

Did you have any impression of it at that time?

Have you lived close by to other urban parks before?

Was that experience similar or different from living by this park?.

How much time do you spend in the park?

Have you spent that much time in other parks?

Why/why not?

What has your experience of spending X amount of time in the park been like for you?

What goes on in the park when you are there?

Do you feel you have anything in common with other people that spend time in the park?

Introduction for Informed Consent Form

My name is Susan Kerr. I am a graduate student at Carleton University, in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I am doing research for a course. The results of this research may also appear in my Master's dissertation.

I will be gathering data from people that live around a small park. I would like to conduct one-on-one interviews, that are expected to last half an hour. The purpose of this research is to determine if the current design of this park suits the needs of the local residents. The interviews will be conducted between February 2001 and April 2001. The respondents are asked to respond freely and openly. If they choose not to, or wish to withdraw from the study their previous responses will be destroyed.

There are no immediate benefits to participants but they may gain an understanding of some of the local park users. Design improvements may be identified within the park. Anonymity of the respondents will be maintained. There will be no names, initials or other identifying remarks in the data released. After completion and acceptance of the Master's thesis, the data will be destroyed. The estimated completion date for the Master's dissertation is May 2002.

There is minimal risk to participants associated with this research. They will not be identified in the research paper. There is no harm associated with discussing the use of space in small urban parks.

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Informed Consent Form

I hereby give my informed consent to be interviewed. I understand the nature of my involvement, and I have been assured that my answers will be kept strictly confidential. I will not be identified in the research findings or the research paper. I also understand that the questionnaire and the information recorded from the interview will be destroyed after the information has been used in the studies for which it was intended. I will not be identifiable from any quotations that appear in the research paper or MA thesis.

I am also aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and that I may withdraw at any time. If I choose to withdraw, I have the right to request my previous responses will be destroyed. The researcher agrees to comply with such a request.

I understand that there is no risk to me from my involvement in this study.

Sign here:

Date:

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