

CHAPTER 1

PLACE-MAKING AND THE MEDIA

Manhattan, to *Sex and the City* fans, is a collection of fashionable bars, restaurants, busy sidewalks, and iconic skyscrapers. Los Angeles, to viewers of *Beverly Hills 90210* or *The Hills*, is “a simple equation of sunshine, beaches, palm trees,” trendy boutiques, and nightclubs (STENGER 2001, 63). To the millions who watched *Dallas*, it is to this day a city of oil money and big hair (CURRY 2004). Places created by television are more-than-real and larger than life. Although fragmented and exaggerated, the places television creates are more beautiful, more glamorous, and even more grotesque than residential experience, a vacation, or a business trip might lead one to believe. “It is not the allure of the real New York City that gives it such prominence,” affirm SADLER and HASKINS (2005, 213), “but rather the appeal of the absolute fake version.” Some places exist not as lived in, walked through, worked on, or “been there,” but as they are seen on-screen. The evocative images that film and television produce create place; mediated place in simulated and stimulating forms is constitutive of contemporary experience.

Orange County, California, is a locale that is experienced in myriad ways. In our hypermediated culture, a neat and tidy distinction between direct and indirect (or mediated) experience cannot be sustained. Place-making and meanings are irretrievably bound up in media, including the twin towers of visual media: film and television. In exploring three popular television shows, we argue that the media, specifically television, plays a significant, yet overlooked, role in place-making.

Until recently, Orange County had limited exposure in film and television, with few movie roles and nary a *Sex and the City* to its credit. With the broadcast of three highly popular TV shows bearing its name, the County of Orange has been transformed from lackluster suburbia to televisual star. These shows—*The OC*, *Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County*, and *The Real Housewives of Orange County*—aided in transforming Orange County into the new and hip “OC,” a glamorous spectacle, a more-than-real simulation. The transformation of Orange County into “the OC” illustrates how television moves beyond representing or simulating place by becoming an active participant in place-making.

This book fills a lacuna in geographical research: the role of television in place-making. In this introductory chapter we elaborate mediated place as process. We position the study within media studies in geography and articulate our perspective through an interrogation of key issues in place and representation. En

route we illuminate the optical unconscious, animate place, implode the real/reel binary, tarry on the textual metaphor, and travel to televisual place as simulacra.

MEDIA GEOGRAPHIES: FAST FORWARD TO THE OPTICAL UNCONSCIOUS

Early forays in media geographies focused on mimetic and pedagogic qualities of film (MANVELL 1956; KNIGHT 1957), and pioneering work by Eugene WIRTH (1952) examined relationships between narrative, space, and place in film. It was not until the “cultural turn” in the late 1980s that geography began a serious engagement with visual media. Geographers in this period were initially attracted to visual media because this provided a way to examine non-material culture and representations. Both AITKEN and ZONN (1994) and NATTER and JONES (1993) make this argument in contending that geographers have traditionally emphasized material conditions over representations, set within the larger debate over “traditional” versus “new” cultural geography (COSGROVE 1993; DUNCAN 1993; JACKSON 1993; PRICE and LEWIS 1993a, 1993b). This debate focuses on whether “traditional” cultural geography, modeled after Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School, privileged material conditions and “fieldwork” to the extent that non-material cultural forms and representations were neglected.

Prior to the cultural turn, humanistic geography’s engagement with media focused primarily on literature (MOORE and GOLLEDGE 1976; SALTER and LLOYD 1976; POCOCK 1981a, 1981b; MALLORY and SIMPSON-HOUSLEY 1987) and art (REES 1973; KING 1990; TUAN 1990), in part because film and television were viewed as forms of mere entertainment. By ignoring such a wealth of information, geography appeared to be an elitist pursuit wherein popular culture was not deemed worthy of inquiry (GOLD 1974; BURGESS and GOLD 1985).

Since these early forays into media, numerous books have engaged geographical implications of media (BURGESS and GOLD 1985; ZONN 1990; AITKEN and ZONN 1994; CLARKE 1997; SHIEL and FITZMAURICE 2001; CRESSWELL and DIXON 2002; JANCOVICH, FAIRE, and STUBBINGS 2003; LUKINBEAL and ZIMMERMANN 2008; ADAMS 2009). In these books, as well as in journal articles, cinema and space has garnered far more attention than television and place, which is surprising given the fact that in 1990 BURGESS outlined an agenda for media research in geography which identified the importance of television.

Our goal is to demonstrate ways in which television creates and perpetuates meaningful experiences vis-à-vis place. To do so we investigate how the techniques that form televisual landscapes structure narrative content and affect active engagement with place. These techniques, or narrative conventions, work to situate place within a landscape that promotes geographic realism, an effect that appropriates social-spatial meanings to a particular locale. Geographic realism works to authenticate place by grounding the fictional narrative to a “real historical place” (HIGSON 1984, 3). Geographic realism seeks to build and reinforce the

social and spatial meanings of place. Geographic realism functions fully within the realm of optics, or as HIGSON (1987, 10) explains:

Television constructs a sense of a public sphere of knowledge, action, events, and people, out there, separate from the viewer who observes from the private sphere of home. But at the same stroke, television constructs the public sphere *as a series of images*, in which the viewer *does* participate, precisely as observer (HIGSON 1987, 10).

Place-making requires more than mere observation and a voyeuristic engagement with the aesthetic production of televisual place. As BRUNO (2002, 16) notes, an optical model of filmic space reduces spectatorship to a fixed, disembodied gaze which is unfit “to account for the types of displacement that are represented, conveyed, and negotiated in the moving image.” Optical models are important in understanding the power of the gaze as it naturalizes ways of seeing. A focus on optics, however, limits the inquiry to socially constructed meanings found within television. Film and television produce both a visual aesthetic and an “anti-aesthetic interruption” (DUBOW 2004, 277) that engages the optical unconscious. The optical unconscious “lies below the formal level at which the visual might begin” (DUBOW 2004, 266). In other words, we do not see vision but experience it through corporeal experience (DOEL and CLARKE 2007). The optical unconscious accentuates

the conviction that the world is not a ready-made that can be counted on and reflected upon. It is an event, a happenstance, a taking place. What takes place, however, is not arbitrary, as eventfulness is increasingly *anticipated* by a plethora of more or less imperceptible ‘performative infrastructures’ (DOEL and CLARKE 2007, 898).

DUBOW (2004, 270) argues that the optical unconscious is “[s]tructured in mobility, it designates a space that eludes legibility, or rather it produces a space in which the visual struggles to ‘take place.’” Spectators are not motionless subjects chained to identification with the camera's gaze; rather, they are engaged in a “kinetic affair” that exceeds the representation presented (BRUNO 1992, 115). This kinetic affair links the pleasures of spectatorship to the feeling of dynamic motion, which is generated by the camera's wandering eye. This pleasure differs from the idea of the immobile subject experiencing pleasure as a voyeur. We are not passive vessels experiencing voyeuristic pleasure; rather, we explore the presentation as tourist. Exploration is a kinetic moving gaze which transverses the televisual world as an extension of our world. This anti-optical engagement “is a haptical mobilization, an (e)motional journey that leads us to question our identity and its relation to values, experiences, and knowledge” (LUKINBEAL and ZIMMERMANN 2008, 21; cf. BRUNO 2002). The optical unconscious “provokes tension, contestation, and emotional responses because it does not separate subject (the viewer) from object (the content and form of the visual/audio)” (LUKINBEAL and ZIMMERMANN 2008, 21). Where the techniques of geographic realism work to construct a landscape in which places have meaning, the optical unconscious produces an emotional realism that breaks down the barriers between subject and object, allowing for place-making to occur. BRUNO (2007, 23–4) describes cinema as an “art of memory”:

[F]ilm itself draws memory maps. In its memory theater, the spectator-passenger, sent on an architectural journey, endlessly retraces the itineraries of a geographically localized discourse that sets memory in place and reads memories as places. As this architectural art of memory, filmic site-seeing ... embodies a particular mobile art of mapping: an *emotional* mapping.

Where place has been traditionally defined by its absolute location within a global graticule, or in relation to other places in a relative space, newer theorizations conceive place as an ongoing process, continually practiced and performed (MASSEY 2005). The traditional definition of place limits television to representing place, while the latter challenges us to reconsider the role of visual media in the place-making process.

A PLACE FOR TELEVISION

The emergence and success of television as a mode of reception can be partially linked to the high rate of family formation following World War II in the United States. SPIGEL (1992) suggests that the growth of television in post-World War II was, in part, a cultural return to family values, neighborhood bonding, and community participation. Urban flight and rapid suburbanization in the 1950s spatially characterized this sociological change. Suburbanization and the advent of television forced a redistribution of consumption sites. SPIGEL (1992) links the rise of television to the values and ideology associated with suburban life. She argues that “suburbia emerges as a conformist-oriented society where belonging to the neighborhood network was just as important as the return to family life” (SPIGEL 1992, 86). Television aided in the re-visioning of this morality by providing a means through which people could safely negotiate spatial boundaries between the public and private sphere. Television provided a form of access to the sphere of the public within the private home. Television promised “familial bliss” which was “wholesome” in that it was white, middle class, and heterosexual (SPIGEL 1992, 192). Television purified public space by standardizing and naturalizing the “American experience.” In short, television provided unity through cultural hegemony.

Watching TV remains one of America’s favorite pastimes, and television is certainly one of the most ubiquitous of mediums. In addition to the television screens which populate airports, sports bars, and health clubs, the average American home has more TV sets than people. During the 2006–2007 television season, American households watched, on average, eight hours of TV per day (Nielsen Media Research 2007). TV is, undeniably, a significant part of our lives.

Cinema has received much more attention in scholarly circles than television. This is due, in part, to the smaller and squarer TV screen and the fact that TV shows are shorter and interrupted by commercials, often failing to command the full attention of viewers (HIGSON 1987). While movies are better conveyors of sense of place, owing to a superior aspect ratio for depicting landscapes, television’s episodic nature strengthens its place-making power. As opposed to a singular movie seen once or perhaps a few times at most, viewers make weekly

visits to the world of the TV show. If the show proves successful, these visits may extend over a period of years. The structure of a TV series allows *more* time for place to be created and for viewers to develop attachments to characters and become emotionally involved in their lives. Televisual place displays an aura of familiarity. The act of viewing can become a highly anticipated event, with escapes to the televisual world being an integral part of one's weekly routine.

PLACE AND TELEVISION

We move away from fixed and concretized notions in favor of a more animated view of place as gatherings, encounters, events, entanglements (THRIFT 1999; MASSEY 2005). Place is constantly produced and reproduced in a world in movement, open to change, mediation and contestation (CRESSWELL 2004). Place is a calling forth, a putting to task through practice and performance, akin to what TIM INGOLD (1993) calls a taskscape. An animated conceptualization does not imply that place is without structures, but rather that structures are emergent in ongoing practices and performances which make place meaningful. Place is a gathering—a gathering of things, thoughts, memories and emotions in particular configurations (ESCOBAR 2001).

In his treatise on television, ADAMS (1992, 118) conceives of place as a “system in which symbolic interaction among persons occurs (a social context), and a nucleus around which ideas, values, and shared experiences are constructed (a center of meaning).” ADAMS (1992) argues that television provides a social context that unites a great number of people around a common experience or event such as the Superbowl or the World Cup. Television also produces cultural symbols and meanings through the introduction and popularization of, say, Lady Gaga. In ADAMS' (1992, 119) words, “insofar as people experientially inhabit it and relate to other persons through it or within it,” then television is a place, or more precisely a “gathering place” (ADAMS 1992, 117). Televisual gathering places are not universal, but rather are contested domains in which meaning, power and knowledge are naturalized and contested. MASSEY (1994, 154) similarly suggests that place is the particular intersection of networks of social relations, movements and communications. For both MASSEY and ADAMS, places are not spatially defined areas with distinct boundaries, but are “articulated moments in networks of social relations” (MASSEY 1994, 154).

Meeting or gathering place has many forms; it cannot be restricted to the material embodiment of social processes in a particular location. Place is an expression of emotional resonance, a product of our imagination, memories and image-events from television and cinema. André MALRAUX (1967) describes place as a *musée imaginaire*:

We ... carry around with us a *musée imaginaire* in our minds, drawn from experience (often touristic) of other places, and knowledge culled from films, television, exhibitions, travel brochures, popular magazines, etc. It is inevitable ... that all of these get run together (HARVEY 1989, 87; cf. JENCKS 1984).

According to the art historian Denis HOLLIER (1998, 64), MALRAUX's conception is "a museum conceived in terms of cinema."

Televisual places are becomings threaded with feelings and emotion. Whereas space is often conceived in objective fashion, place speaks to meaningful experience in the world. As TUAN (1977, 4) argues, "places are centers of felt value." BRUNO (2007, 38) takes TUAN's argument one step further in positing that cinema and television, through moving images, are an "intimate exploration – a screen of personal and social, private and public narratives" (BRUNO 2007, 38). It is thus a

map of intersubjective views. A haptic architecture. A topophilic affair. A place for the love of place. A site of close picturing for undistanced *emotion*. A museum of emotional pictures (BRUNO 2007, 38).

Media are an indispensable component of place, contributing to how we experience worlds, not as universal, but differentiated by social, cultural and subjective processes that make place meaningful (RELPH 1976). In humanist terms, the essence of place cannot be defined by absolute location or functions, but rather through human existence and immersion (RELPH 1976). Places involve a "concentration of our intentions, our attitudes, purposes, and experience"; they are "the point of departure from which we orient ourselves in the world" (RELPH 1976, 43). Place is

a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world. When we look at the world ... we see attachments and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meaning and experience (CRESSWELL 2004, 11).

In television and cinema,

places are used as wax, they bear the layers of a writing that can be effaced and yet written over again, a constant redrafting. Places are the site of a mnemonic palimpsest ... places live in memory and revive in the moving image ... Mechanically made in the image of wax simulacra, the projected strip of celluloid is the modern wax tablet. Not only the form but the *écriture* is reinvented in film's own spatial writing, *décor*, and palimpsestic architectonics, as well in the spectatorial promenade. The loci of the art of memory bear the peculiar wax texture of a filmic "set" – a site of constant redrawing, a place where many stories both take place and take the place of memory (BRUNO 2007, 21–22).

IS TELEVISUAL PLACE A REPRESENTATION?

In geography there is a normative belief that television and cinema are representations of some ontologically stable reality awaiting our exploration. As AITKEN and DIXON (2006, 327) explain, "we can no longer talk of film representing, or mimicking, reality because we can no longer assume that there is a single reality waiting out there to be filmed." They go on to argue that while the "camera records mass and motion ... the 'nature' of the objects that appear on screen is firmly located in the social realm wherein meaning is ascribed to them."

We can ascribe two competing theories about the role of place within television and cinema. On the one hand, the normative belief ascribes to a logic wherein television and cinema are representations and thus can be assessed by their accuracy or success in providing “unmediated” access to the real world (MANVELL, 1956; KNIGHT, 1957; HARVEY 1989). Exemplary of this approach is HARVEY’s (1989) use of film in illustrating the condition of postmodernity. He sees certain films as “brilliant portrayals ... of the conditions of postmodernity, and in particular the conflictual and confusing experiences of space and time” (HARVEY 1989, 322). HARVEY observes film merely as an apparatus that projects pictures in motion which reduces “the complex stories of daily life to a sequence of images upon a depthless screen” (HARVEY 1989, 322). Because of this, no film “has the power to overturn established ways of seeing or transcend the conflictual conditions of the moment” (HARVEY 1989, 322). HARVEY perceives film as capable of only mirroring the conditions of lived experience (AITKEN and ZONN 1994). As he puts it, “in the final analysis” film is “a spectacle projected within an enclosed space on a depthless screen” (HARVEY 1989, 308). For HARVEY, material conditions should always be privileged over representations. Here, representations of place are tied to the re-presentation of absolute locales where mediated place is no more than a vicarious or secondhand experience (LUKINBEAL and ZIMMERMANN 2008).

A second view holds that place is a fusion of the actual and virtual (or mediated), as the actual and virtual are two interrelated dimensions of the real (MARTIN, 2000). This perspective finds expression in varying ways in cultural and geographical thought, including SOJA’s (1996, 11) influential work articulating a geographical imaginary as a “thirdspace” that is “simultaneously real and imagined.” Following the logic of SOJA, HANNA (1996, 638) argues that place is “always-already a representation.” His examination of Roslyn, Washington, – which played “fictional” Cicely, Alaska, in television’s *Northern Exposure* – demonstrates how a particular locale is a fusion of the real and imagined. In *Northern Exposure*, Roslyn constitutes the real, while Cicely is the imaginary; the locale is mutually constituted by both, as well as by the cultural history of the town. HANNA (1996) argues that this place is paradoxical in that Roslyn and Cicely can never wholly be constituted as either real or imagined because all places have a representational legacy that extends beyond practices that produce their current configuration. Prior to its notoriety as Cicely, Roslyn’s built form and identity was tied to its history as a company mining town, its revitalization as a quaint historic site, and subsequent evolution to vacation spot for Seattle-ites. Roslyn’s identity is bound to these legacies. The creation of televisual Cicely, from Roslyn, adds another layer to the representational *mélange* that is this place. In HANNA’s (1996, 642) words: “Roslyn, as a place, is just as much a representation as Cicely is material.”

HANNA’s (1996) essay on Cicely/Roslyn seeks to engage place as mutually constituted by its representational legacy and its material landscape. Its role as Cicely added a layer to Roslyn’s current form, including *Northern Exposure*-related gift shops and remnants from the set, but HANNA (1996) does not consider

the televisual place that *Northern Exposure* has created. We see that Cicely is a part of Roslyn, but what of the meaningfulness of Cicely's Alaska?

While HANNA offers one way to address how place-making incorporates the real and imagined, it remains cast within the real/reel binary and thus elaborates only how a morphological approach can be applied in understanding televisual place as a representation. A morphological approach requires the stripping away of layers to uncover the various meanings inscribed in a locale. As AITKEN and DIXON (2006, 329) note:

This is not necessarily articulating landscape [or location] as a passive stage upon which culture struts its stuff. Rather, the morphology of landscape is seemingly depicted accurately in the ways it actively connects with culture. In this interpretative gambit, culture is a factor and landscape is a medium.

As such, belief in the reel/real binary is reinforced as cultural meaning is naturalized and inscribed onto an ontologically stable locale, rather than seeking to expound upon the meaningful processes in place-making. Furthermore, POORE and CHRISMAN (2006, 513) argue that the

landscape-as-layers metaphor demonstrates how a discursive practice, which originated as a leap in scientific logic, can interact through time with the agencies of people, institutions and technologies to enforce certain ways of seeing and talking about the landscape.

These ways of seeing reinforce the idea that meaning is inscribed onto a pre-given landscape or location. COSGROVE (1989) similarly deploys the landscape-as-layer metaphor, reinforcing the morphological approach where different layers embody different symbols and meaning. The problem with the layered metaphor is that it "carries the implication that the way to uncover the most basic level of human beings' practical involvement with their environs is by stripping these layers away" (INGOLD 1993, 171). Rather than stripping away layers, or decoding sequential deposits of meaning, cinematic and televisual landscapes and places are never complete; they are performative becomings.

TUAN (1991, 690–691), too, recognizes the influence of evocative literature upon the "real world" but maintains the binary distinction between real and imagined places:

221B Baker Street [of Sherlock Holmes fame] is more vividly present to some Londoners than are the apartment homes of their maiden aunts, and more real by far to tourists than are the hotels they temporarily occupy ... [London] can seem unreal precisely because it is so thoroughly transformed by the literary imagination ... [I]t goes without saying that a literary person's sense of reality is more thoroughly penetrated by what he or she has studied and absorbed.

The same might be said of the reality of an earnest television watcher; rather than by words from a novel, it is a reality permeated with images from the screen. Take for example the Manhattan Television Tour, which TORCHIN (2002) presents as an experience which thrives on blurring the boundary between the televisual and "real" worlds. On the tour, guests are shuttled around the city to glimpse what would otherwise be ordinary New York buildings, but for their use in establishing exterior shots of popular TV shows (stops include the *Friends* apartment building

and *The Cosby Show* brownstone). Drawing from ROJEK (1997), TORCHIN (2002, 251) applies the concept of “dragging” to the tour: signs, symbols, and images in movies and TV “are dragged onto the physical landscape and the physical landscape is then reinterpreted in terms of [these] cinematic events.” In other words, place unfolds as an amalgam, simultaneously real and mediated. Place emerges, not only by our presence in it, but with fragments and figments of our *musée imaginaire* and the thrill of association with the more exciting, simulated world of TV. Through all of these, reality is enhanced, and “the everyday world of New York City is reconfigured as interesting” (TORCHIN 2002, 248).

More recently, media geographies have turned to a radically different understanding of the ontology of film and television. CRESSWELL and DIXON (2002, 3–4) argue that visual media is not simply “mere images of unmediated expressions of the mind, but rather the temporary embodiment of social processes that continually construct and deconstruct the world as we know it.” They go on to argue that the dominance of the textual metaphor in media geography reinforces the reel/real binary through its focus on text and context, implying a fixed positionality of the observer as she relates to a film or television show. The reel/real restricts inquiry of the spatiality of media. LUKINBEAL and ZIMMERMANN (2006, 322) challenge this normative belief in stating:

We eschew the representational determinism that film geography is synonymous with representations of some ontological stable “authentic” reality. Drawing from CRANG et al. (1999, 2), we posit that film geography always exceeds the cinematic technologies which produce representations because film is “constituted by the social relations, discourses and sites in which these technologies are embedded.” The technologies that capture, encode and represent the world are always embedded in social and cultural practices that are temporally and spatially specific. Representations are not the polar opposite of reality especially when it comes to film and cinema. Cinematic images are always socialized just as technologies are always socialized.

The textual metaphor is a hermeneutical method that assumes that cinema and television are authored and can be read like texts. While humanistic inquiries into the textual metaphor (cf. LEWIS 1979; MEINIG 1979) focused on “natural” or an “automatic” reading of the landscape, new cultural geographers have problematized the meanings associated with “reading,” “writing” and “text” (DUNCAN and DUNCAN 1988; DUNCAN 1990; BARNES and DUNCAN 1992; COSGROVE 1993; DUNCAN and LEY 1993). The textual metaphor presupposes that there is no single “author,” for it is through the act of “reading” that production and reproduction occurs. While landscapes, films, and television shows are written and read by experts and ordinary people alike, they constitute and reflect power relations that exist in culture and society (DUNCAN and DUNCAN 1988). The textual metaphor does not offer a meta-narrative which can read landscapes, but rather suggests an intertextual world of cultural signifying practices whereby a text is understood, interpreted and constituted by relations with other cultural texts. Landscape, film, and television are intertextually related to other systems of cultural production and reproduction (cf. COSGROVE 1984, 1987, 1993; DANIELS and COSGROVE 1988; DANIELS 1989).

When applied to film analysis, the textual metaphor often has the effect of limiting spatial inquiry to internal textual properties. According to HAY (1997, 214), cultural criticism through textual analysis focuses on the “internal properties of texts or upon the relations among film texts” which suggests a “kind of placelessness of an absolutely separate place of the literary/filmic in social relations and history.” Textual analysis, according to HAY (1997, 214), assumes that the reading of the text is done from “no place in particular” and that critical theory applied to a text is done from “anywhere.” From this vantage point, the textual metaphor assumes a “counter-public sphere” from which we might “intervene in social relations without addressing the locational politics of such a sphere” (HAY 1997, 214). While HAY does not take into account that geographers have addressed the cultural politics of authorship (DUNCAN and LEY 1993; ROSE 1993), his argument does point to a gap in our understanding of the spatial politics of the textual metaphor.

By reducing film and television to text, it becomes an instrument and gives research the status of a reading. This not only fetishizes space by making the researcher’s mental space envelop social and physical space (LEFEBVRE 1991), but it also sidesteps the history and social practices associated with the film production industry. The textual metaphor is a powerful and appropriate means of engaging spatial politics of the gaze and optical power inherent in film and television. But, we must realize that the textual metaphor has limits; there are extra-textual cultural processes that cannot be captured adequately via this metaphor, most notably the optical unconscious. The textual metaphor never truly offers what SMITH and KATZ (1993) call an *effective* and *coherent* spatialized politics because, according to HAY (1997), the locational politics of what is cinematic or televisual remains fixated on the narrative space within the text. Just as spatial metaphors work to hide cultural processes related to historical materialism (SMITH and KATZ 1993), the textual metaphor applied to film and television overlooks intertextual and extra-textual processes. It is our contention that cinema and television always exceed the space defined by the textual metaphor. To focus primarily on text in analyzing visual media runs the risk of losing touch with how television and cinema affect and engage everyday life.

TELEVISUAL PLACE AS SIMULACRAL

In his 1935 essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter BENJAMIN addresses the profound effects of film on art and society, astutely recognizing early on that film would reconfigure traditional modes of representation. If art is a representation of reality, film creates a much different representation than a stage play or a painting: The movie camera penetrates reality so completely that it presents “an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment,” says BENJAMIN (1968, 234), “and that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art.” Furthermore, as articulated by CLARKE (1997, 9), the audience sees from the camera’s point of view such that film is not merely a “*representation* of space”

but “(re)produces a virtual space” and, in effect, achieves a “re-framing of the world” (emphasis in original). The technology of film allowed us to see the world in novel ways, such as in close-up and in slow motion. “Cinema is at once a form of perception and a material perceived, a new way of encountering reality and a part of reality thereby perceived for the first time” (SHAVIRO 1993, cited in CLARKE 1997, 2). Indeed, from the comfort of home or as one in the crowd at a movie theatre, BENJAMIN (1968, 236) was prescient in arguing that film would change our experience of the world:

Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder ... so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling.

The subsequent development of montage furthered the manipulation of space and time, so that film was freed from its role as a “referential medium, bound to the Real, to become a *simulacral* medium, free to fabricate a reality-effect” (DOEL 2008, 96). Montage now presents a “reality effect” such that “once assembled, a film does not re-present a world that preexisted it” (DOEL and CLARKE 2007, 897). Film and television create their own realities that provide an experience in and of themselves (AITKEN and ZONN 1994; CLARKE 1997; DOEL and CLARKE 2007).

BAUDRILLARD’s postmodern theory jettisoned the belief that there is “an existing, knowable world,” a truth to be revealed behind the media’s glossy images (BEST and KELLNER 1997, 101). As a radical reconfiguration of Marxist theory, BAUDRILLARD saw that beyond both use value and exchange value, the commodity is purchased for its sign value, not for what it is, but for what it represents. Clothes and cars, rather than body coverings and transportation, have become success and glamour. What we see on television is what we strive to be, and our actions are conditioned by the movies. BAUDRILLARD claims that media images have so thoroughly permeated experience that we have lost any referent to the real; the image is reality (BEST and KELLNER 1997).

In webs of virtuality, we are left with nothing more and nothing less than a system of simulacra: “realer-than-real” constructions, depthless artifices, copies without an original, a “hyperreality.” For BAUDRILLARD, the mass media have disturbed the ontology of the entire social world (BEST and KELLNER 1997). Unlike Adorno, BAUDRILLARD does not view the masses as defeated or duped, but as bored, over-stimulated, and unquestioning, and it is by ignoring the media’s message that we, in effect, resist it. Caught as we are in worlds of simulacra, we are plunged “into a state of stupor”: “a radical uncertainty as to our own desire, our own choice, our own opinion, our own will” (BAUDRILLARD 1988a, 209). We suffer from “a state of suspense and of definitive uncertainty about reality” (BAUDRILLARD 1988a, 210). All we can do is “absorb it without reply”; this is our silent act of defiance (POSTER 1988).

Worlds created by film press into everyday life. BAUDRILLARD (1988b, 55–56) explains:

In fact, the cinema here is not where you think it is. It is certainly not to be found in the studios the tourist crowds flock to ... Where is the cinema? It is all around you outside, all over the city, that marvelous, continuous performance of films and scenarios ... The American city seems to have stepped right out of the movies ... [cinema] invests the streets and the entire town with a mythical atmosphere.

In BAUDRILLARD's (1988b, 104) words, "The cinema and TV are America's reality!" In light of this revelation, LUKINBEAL and ZIMMERMANN (2006, 11) raise the question: "What if the copy is better than the original? What if the original never existed but is a myth?" In his examination of LA's Hollywood redevelopment project, STENGER (2001) demonstrates that there can be serious material repercussions when the simulated world of film is better-than-real. "Hollywood-the-place" is being made over so as not to disappoint tourists expecting to see "Hollywood-the-cultural-myth" (STENGER 2001, 71). The redevelopment of Hollywood Boulevard is well on its way to becoming a simulacrum of a simulacrum. Television and cinema are simulacral, which shifts the mode of inquiry away from the problematic reel/real binary to the openness afforded by mediated place. We are not passive viewers or voyeurs of movement-images; we are active itinerates participating in, and creating, meaningful experiences and connections vis-à-vis place.

PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS

Our exploration of Orange County and the ways in which television and the media are intimately involved in place-making begins in chapter two. In this chapter, we trace the mediated and geographical imaginary of Orange County prior to its television popularity. This is followed in chapter three by an examination of the popular culture transformation of the County of Orange into the "OC" as a result of the shows *The OC*, *Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County*, and *The Real Housewives of Orange County*. These chapters provide background needed to position Orange County as a mediated place, highlighting ongoing processes of identity formation in mediated place-making.

In chapter four we address landscape and place-making, accentuating production techniques in television relating to geographic realism. In chapter five we reveal how emotional realism works to produce an affective response in televisual place-making. Chapter six draws on survey data to explore ways in which audiences experience "reality" TV shows. Here we highlight the tension between television as a re-presentation of Orange County itself and as an affective agent engendering emotional attachment to something called the "OC." Chapter seven delves into the tension between the optical reel/real place and the anti-optical emotional affect via a touristic experience by the lead author (Ann) in search of "the OC." We conclude in chapter eight with a discussion of the paradox of two places in one location: the County of Orange and the "OC" as mutually inclusive and exclusive.