Global-local (glocal) forces infuse postmodern urban spaces (Dovey, 1999), reflecting the significant role of semiotics (images and signs) as indices of global economic boosterism and local cultural forms. With the proliferation of urban images and signs, postmodern urbanism is characterised by the commodification of place identity and by the fragmentation of spatiality. This gives place experience phantasmagoric character wherein the global and local, the familiar and the strange, the real and the virtual become inextricably intertwined.

As consumption and mobility frame everyday life, under regimes of global capitalism, ‘post socialist’ urban spaces in Eastern Berlin and Central Moscow are experiencing a ‘transnational imaginary’ which is shaping local constructions of identity. Confronted with growing abstraction, and with emerging cultural content of flows and information intensity, people are increasingly able to reflect upon post modern conditions within ‘post socialist’ reality, with such reflexivity becoming aesthetic (Lash and Urry, 1994). Inevitably though, ‘post socialist’ urban spaces in Eastern Berlin and Central Moscow are subjected to branded glocal landscapes with distinct signs and billboards, whilst representing the corporate identity of post modern spatiality, where non-place (Auge, 1995) and space of flow (Castells, 1996) prevail.

Accordingly the current paper explores possibilities for (re)(de)constructing the meaning of ‘post socialist’ urban experience whilst conceptualising Foucault’s heterotopia (places ‘outside of all places’) as an articulation, both material and psychological, of an ‘aesthetic cocoon’ (Leach, 2001). The work proposes a spatio-temporal narrative (Soja, 1995), of a journey (within/between) Eastern Berlin’s public spaces and Moscow’s underground metro, whilst offering a representational system for ‘heterotopian’ urbanism (De Cauter, 2001). The conceptual framework regards postmodern ‘heterotopian’ urbanism as semiotic representation and spatial metaphor, reflecting space-time compression (Jameson, 1991), whilst engendering frameworks of place and memory within ‘post socialist’ Berlin and Moscow. In conclusion therefore the proposed (re)(de)constructed ‘topographical fragments’ are comprised of a ‘field of play’ within which a series of spatial transformations simultaneously emerge, as a simulation of urban experimentation in-between the local and global (glocal), the imaginary and reality.
Postmodern Representations

Lefebvre (1991) distinguishes between ‘representations of space’ engaged in by planners and cartographers, and symbolic ‘representational spaces’ in cities, drawing on shared experiences and interpretations of everyday ‘spatial practices’ of people, where making space is very much a way of making meaning (Liggett, 1995, pp. 248-251). According to Foucault (1986), the meanings of representational spaces or discourses are never absolute, but always subject to translation and interpretation. However postmodern urbanism is conscious of the power of discursive production of urban representational spaces where people not only live their space through its associated images and symbols, they actively construct its meaning through cognitive and hermeneutical processes (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). Discourses express human thought, fantasy, and desire and thereby represent human ontology (existence)(such as beliefs, fantasies, values, and desires about how the world is), and epistemologies (knowledge)(how better understandings of the world might be achieved).

While Lefebvre’s (1991) trialectics of perceived, conceived and lived spaces indicate the city as a commodity with its representational form being restyled, reformed, re-mapped and represented, Barthes’ (1976) semiotic approach is concerned with the how of representation, with how language produces meaning—poetics of space in terms of a system of signs. Semiotics compress space and time under late capitalism (Harvey, 1989), as representation of urban experience to produce multifunctional hybrid spaces (Jameson, 1991). This has called for a new aesthetic of cognitive mapping of a city with multiple meanings and images thus arriving at the signification of the city through the perception of its inhabitants rather than their conception, with the urban environment being reduced to a perceptual knowledge of physical form.

“Here we are in Venturi’s [postmodern city], not just Las Vegas but any [postmodern city], a mediascape of office buildings and stores transformed by their corporate identities into new language of consciousness: the sign molded in glass and light, splashed over with the insignia or characters of logos … Buildings are no longer mass, but an array of sentences spelling out the consciousness of a city. The city’s language of buildings and streets, of glass and light, is a declaration of ideals . . . transforming things into words, objects into signs, the dark of nature into neon abstraction and codes. . . the mediascape devours the literal materiality around it “ (Christensen, 1993, pp. 9-10).

City as Theatre of Memory

According to Harvey (1989) postmodern discourse regards the city representation in terms of narratives, and collective memory (Boyer, 1994; Barthes, 1976), with collective identities being socially constructed, whilst being constituted through the ‘spatiality of social life’ (Soja, 2001). Boyer (1994) has pointed out that the postmodern aesthetic claims to return to narrative forms, searching for an architectural language that communicates with the public, that manipulates simple combinations and patterns that are part of our collective recall or memory. However with narrative forms (myths and rituals) influencing the architectonics of (postmodern) spatiality, postmodern representation, as being transformed by changing cultural practices, regards the urban as a theatre of memory (Ellin, 1996) for the production of semiotics. People perform various roles to (re)construct their urban imageries as conjuring up of various impressions ‘in the mind’, which may be ‘visual’, as well as auditory, verbal, textual, or of a notational, or symbolic score (Liddament, 2000). With the text remaining central, indeed, our environments grow increasingly hyperreal, one critic maintained, people generally ‘must now exchange their role as users and become readers’ (Bergum, 1990).
Therefore conceptualising the post socialist city as a collective collage, a ‘theatre of memory’, is based upon Harvey’s (1989) diagnosis of postmodern representation of urban experience, with the city being a theatrical space, ‘a series of stages’, where individuals can assume different identities under space-time compression.

**Space-Time Compression**

The concept of ‘space-time compression’ was elaborated by Harvey (1989, p. 240),

“...the history of capitalism as being characterised by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us’.

He added, “The central value system...is dematerialised and shifting, time horizons are collapsing, and it is hard to tell exactly what space we are in when it comes to assessing causes and effects, meanings or values” (Harvey, 1989, p. 298).

“Given the pressures to accelerate turnover time (and to overcome spatial barriers in terms of displacement), the commodification of images of the most ephemeral sort would seem to be a presented from the standpoint of capital accumulation” (Harvey, 1989, p. 183).

“In clinging, to a place-bound identity, however, such oppositional movements become a part of the very fragmentation which a mobile capitalism and flexible accumulation can feed upon. Regional resistances, the struggle for local autonomy, place-bound organization, may be excellent bases for political action, but they cannot bear the burden of radical historical change alone” (Harvey, 1989, p. 303).

“Capitalist hegemony over space puts the aesthetics of place very much back on the agenda. The construction of such places, the fashioning of some localized aesthetic image, allows the construction of some limited and limiting sense of identity in the midst of a collapse of imploding spatialities” (Harvey, 1989, p. 303).

Past decades have seen the rise of ‘a new society of the image’ in which consumerism and market frenzy are not the issue so much as ‘consumption by the eyes’ (Jameson, 1991). As postmodern society becomes increasingly fragmented, with community groups becoming less clearly defined, global companies - through sales and branding - have developed a new niche of ‘fluxus’ community based on image consumption. It is not simply that urban life has become more superficial, more image- and consumption-based under conditions of late capitalism, but rather that the city in itself has become an imaginary space. The city itself is ‘soft’, in the sense that it is a type of reality for which the boundary between imagination and fact is not absolute (Raban, 1974).

“Cities, unlike villages and small towns, are plastic by nature. We mould them in our images: they, in their turn, shape us by the resistance they offer when we try to impose a personal form on them”.... (Raban, 1974, p.10) And “...the city as we might imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture”. (Raban, 1974, p. 10).
However, this dynamic has affected our sense of ourselves and our lives, with the self being collapsed into its manner of (re)presentation with the border between the ‘self’ and city becoming fluid. An alternative reading of the structure and meaning of contemporary and past urban spaces was nonetheless provided by Soja (1989), in his ‘reassertion of spatiality’ using Foucault’s concept of heterotopia (which are places outside of all places). In his project Soja (1995) collapsed modern(ist) history into postmodern geography, creating a ‘rebalanced spatio-temporal narrative’, where the heterotopias of Paris and Los Angeles (1789/1989) have been displayed/constructed as artworks.

**Aesthetic Reflexivity**

The perceived significance of urban cultural spaces has promoted themes of aestheticisation in today’s postmodern society, reflecting the increasing role of image consumption, with the emergence of a new consumer type - the ‘fluxus’ consumer of the architecture of postmodern commercial take-away. This process of aestheticisation of everyday life is characterised by the commodification of postmodern place, fragmentation of spatial experience, the globalisation of local culture and the invention of nostalgic representation of the past for contemporary consumption (leisure, tourism). Thus, apart from the component of knowledge or information intensity, component of sign value or aesthetic image becomes apparent in urban production and consumption, triggered by economic boosterism and disappearance of traditional local meaning.

Furthermore in postmodern societies people are increasingly able to distinguish and evaluate ‘style and taste’ images and symbols operating at the level of cognition. Confronted with increasing cultural content of flows, and with the heterogeneity and complexity of spatiality, people reflect upon their social conditions, with such reflexivity becoming aesthetic, opening up possibilities for recasting meaning in work and in leisure. Aesthetic reflexivity can be seen in terms of the increased choice element of consumption which involves a set of identity-choices: an aesthetic-expressive dimension of the (post)modern self (Lash and Urry, 1994).

Understanding aesthetic reflexivity, about the value of different physical and social environments, as part of a critical historic movement, is connected to the increasing mobility of people (Lash and Urry, 1994). What this tends to generate is a cocoon-like existence, predicated upon aesthetic gratification. And it is this cocoon, this isolated state of being cosseted from reality and locked into some dream-world, that can be expanded and developed to offer a representational system for postmodern contemporary life.

**Transit Landscapes**

The fragmented nature of ‘super modernity’, increased mobility and telecommunication, and the rise of new media have altered experience of time, space and place identity (Auge, 1995). Media culture has put people into a space of ‘total flow’, with the juxtaposition of their mental images (Jameson, 1991), and with possibility of re-mapping a city through locating the hidden spaces in the ‘unconscious’ of the city. This is in accordance with Lefebvre’s image of interpenetrating spaces with new forms of representation, new social order, and experience of space, time.

In a territory where non-place (Auge, 1995) and space of flow (Castells, 1996) prevail, a new category of landscapes ‘in transit’ emerge which ‘users on the move’ experience as they cross
these ‘in-between’ landscapes, regarded as ‘spaces-interfaces’ and as new social places of a mobile society. Therefore ‘transit spaces’ provide the possibility of a more situational or flexible location of the self, which is intended to guarantee a means of orientation within the emerging meta-spaces of global mobility. An aesthetic of cognitive mapping (Jameson, 1988), could make possible the situational representation of an individual within transit spaces, where different trajectories are crossing and overlapping. The proliferation of urban images and signs (semiotics) gives place experience a phantasmagoric character wherein the global and local, the real and the virtual become inextricably intertwined (Huang, 2000). With navigation into a spatio-temporal journey within/between the cit(y)(ies) in terms of turning-inside-out of transit spaces, the conceptual framework seeks to reaffirm spatial possibilities. Such possibilities imply immersion, habitation, being-there, drifting between reality and mythical spaces, between the screen, the imagery and reality of transit spaces.

**Conceptual Framework: Spatio-Temporal Narratives and Shifting Place-Identity**

With consumption and mobility framing everyday life, in the post socialist era, under regimes of global capitalism, (eastern) Berlin and Moscow are subjected to branded landscapes with distinct signs and imageries representing the corporate identity of globalisation. Historical (Socialist) monuments take their place within the fabric of post (modern/ socialist) city, with such juxtapositions being a montage of urban images, revealing the fragmented nature of postmodern space, with its souvenirs and its myriad connections to ‘other’ places. In accordance with Benjamin (1985), there is an attempt to recuperate and reassemble from the fragments, a different picture of the post socialist ‘transit’ city, through the flow and distribution of images. (similar to the use of multi-media to capture the urban experience in Tschumi’s (1989) folies at Parc de La Villette, in Paris).

Accordingly a deconstructive reading/narrative is proposed of a journey through space-time compression (within /between ) city(ies) of crossed scales, dissolved boundaries engendering frameworks of place and memory (similar to Coates’ ecstacity (2000). This transit experience is a conflation of Berlin and Moscow, with post socialist public spaces being mapped into fictional terrain of perceptive imagery, where street patterns overlap and interlock with landmark buildings, all appearing in unexpected locations. The spatio-temporal narrative/experiment employs digital images, with the juxtaposition of fragmented imageries, formulating hyper-spatial conditions which compress space-time experience (Baudrillard, 1993), whilst casting the experiential tools to explore transit spaces as an individual construct (neo- flâneur). There is a need to capture the affects of the transit post socialist city by mirroring the way in which semiotics juxtapose many different possibilities, emotions, sensations, and perceptions (Deleuze, 1997), as being actualised in determinate space-time dynamics, geographical and historical milieus, and individual people’s lives (Smith 2001)

Such spatio-temporal narrative/experiment leads to ‘de-solidifying’ things and dissolving spatial distinctions, to (de)constructing the perceptual dialectic between virtual and real, near and far, inside and outside, thus intensifying the cognitive process (Fahmi, 2001). Cognitive mapping of the post socialist transit city takes on the characteristic of a Baudelairean (neo)flâneur whilst approaching the reality of the vast terrain of city spaces with his investigative gaze. There is tendency to capture the ‘logic of the place’ in the post socialist transit city, where spatial changes often outpace the revisions of maps due to its constant space-time compression. Whilst investigating possibilities for (re)(de)constructing the meaning of postmodern space, in terms of Foucault’s heterotopia (places ‘outside of all places’), the conceptual approach tackles inscriptions of difference, belonging and historical becoming and
erasure in post socialist contexts of (Eastern) Berlin and Moscow. The sensory experience of navigating a metropolis under transition attempts at weaving anecdotal observations, encounters and reflections oriented by the metaphor of shifting images, recalling dialectics in post-socialist contexts.

The conceptual framework emphasises the cognitive mapping of:

*transit 'heterotopias' as representing a metaphor of postmodern spaces and 'being', whilst simultaneously being subjected to 'transnational' space - time compression along the 'metropolitan/alternative corridor' between / within Berlin and Moscow (see illustration 1, p.15); and*

*semiotic matrix of post socialist urban spaces in eastern Berlin and central Moscow as a spatial memory (Boyer, 1994), whilst being regarded as arenas for urban experimentation in between the local and global (glocal), the imaginary and reality (Fahmi and Howe, 2003) (see illustration 2, p.16)*

An attempt to conceptualise the Baudelairean flâneur (Benjamin, 1973) as a multilayered narrative in post modern conditions will enable us to a reflexive (and cognitive) understanding of epistemologies (Fahmi, 2003). The flâneur, as an alternative ‘vision’ and an image of movement through the urban spectacle of (post)modernity, is the ‘botanist of the asphalt’ who walks through the city, whilst exploring shifting social space. More importantly are the attempts at adapting the nineteenth-century figure of the flâneur to a postmodern context (neo-flâneur), as being engulfed in the signs and stimuli of the global flows, whilst witnessing the fetishism of commodification and aestheticisation of postmodern consumption in post socialist metropolis. Such neo-flâneur is a type that is out to take its artistic or aesthetical distance from its consumerist urban surroundings. Postmodern images of the urban self do more than entail an increase in the distancing defense strategies; they paradoxically also involve the postmodern phantasmagoria of an absence of distance. In the aestheticised perception of consumers, no form of distance imposes itself.

Walking in a transit post socialist city (Berlin-Moscow) dominated by space-time compression, the flâneur attempts to recuperate substantial interpersonal relationships (Shields, 1994). The fate of the flâneur constantly invites us to consider whether or not the era of globalisation allows the kind of walking space that might liberate the contemporary (neo) flâneur from traditionally defined social space and social relations. To grasp the interaction between urban planners’ spatial theories and individuals’ perceptions of the lived space of the urban, for a critical reading of the utopian discourse, it is essential to examine the way our flâneur’s gaze and cognitive mapping mediates the walker’s experience of transit spaces of post socialist city.

Furthermore the metropolitan flâneur, has also been relocated, for much of the time, to the inside of buildings and malls (the aesthetic cocoon) (Leach, 2001), such as Sony Centre in Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, and GUM mall near the Red square in Moscow, with the ‘outside being a traffic-flow-support-nexus’. The flâneur has been displaced by the post pedestrian type of driver, with the vehicle (metro, bus, tram) serving as a cocoon in which the individual finds protection from the dangers of the urban jungle and the phenomenon of ‘fried urban nerves’. Vehicles have helped reduce the urban experience to a visual spectacle, with the cinematographic experience conferring on perceived objects a certain plasticity. In this sense, the neo-flâneur becomes an absorbent recipients of post modern imageries which can be layered onto the concrete surfaces of the overpasses and transmitted from the immense constructions of neon light which tower over the buildings of post socialist city’s intersections,
squares and boulevards. City’s imageries invest representation with texture, multiplicity, intricacy whilst collecting and moving along its principal arteries an immense flux of trajectories, a vivid generation of visual life focused in the depth of its boulevards and avenues, and enclosed within the façade of its buildings. In the peripheral world of the highway, the complexity of the building mass is imperceptible as it fades into a faint image which hardly persists in our memory. The speed of driving creates a cinematographic effect that results in a loss of sensible referents and a decay of architectonic markers.

**Narratives Of Transit Spaces (Between Berlin And Moscow)**

The neo flâneur’s transnational journey through the metropolitan corridor between Berlin and Moscow is a metaphor, a hallucinatory navigation across time and space – with arena of erased signs and memories, mediating cities to individuals and individuals to cities. The inhabitant of space in transit (between Berlin and Moscow) searches for gravitational axis to the images and texts of transitional landscape which dynamically swarm and shift. The traveler between cities is absorbed by the process of oscillation and anticipation, by determining the rhythm of those urban voids and saturations, thus creating an instance of the transit city which is welded from the fragments of both Berlin and Moscow. Accordingly post socialist cities metamorphose with post modern fragments being restructured.

During the journey from Berlin to Moscow, a ‘transnational experience’ (Sassen, 1991; Smith 2001) nevertheless shapes local constructions of identity with the emergence of ‘multi-local’ and ‘global-local’ (glocal) brands (Dovey, 1999). Consequently associated lifestyle values, sites of experience, and marketing of urban images are predominated by the ideal of boundless and undefined spatiality in an age of ICT and supermodernity (Ibelings 1998). Within the context of globalisation and space-time compression, the West-East journey represents a heterotopian gateway and exchange place linking the global and transitional economies.

The alternative ‘transnational’ journey through the metropolitan corridor, between Berlin and Moscow, is an exploration of narratives about identities as subjected to cities experiences in its endless process of splits, multiplications, openings and abandonment. Alternatively the transnational ‘imaginary’ journey of the flâneur accumulates into multiple screens of vision, compacted by memory and a network of random trajectories. The journey has a language with the act of traveling being at the interstice between viewing and being visually dissolved into cities assemblages and scatterings of detail which form units of urban articulation. The flux between cities and inhabitants is a site of visual tension with imageries generated that collapse and reformulate the perception of the city /its languages/its cultures.

**Post Socialist ‘Transit’ Spaces (Eastern Berlin And Central Moscow)**

Over the last decade post socialist city has been at the centre of dramatic changes whilst increasingly seeking to redefine and reimagine itself through place marketing along different set of global dynamics. A series of competing and complementary - imaginary post socialist scenarios are being constructed in the process of reinsertion into ‘capitalist’ urbanisation. Andrusz (1996) emphasised the relationship between post socialist transformation and urban crisis under capitalism in terms of aggravation of class contradiction as manifested in socio-spatial stratification within urban areas. Additionally socio-economic restructuring impacted land use development and local community with respect to transformation of ‘post socialist’ urban spaces by new cultural practices, influencing the expression of identity and spatiality.
Such process could be regarded in terms of path dependent approaches which considered multiple development in post socialist countries as driven by actions of individual agents and social institutions, embedded in complex socio-economic networks.

The case of Berlin and Moscow is explored in the context of their re-defined West-East transitional identities whilst globally restructuring their urban images. Nevertheless post socialist urban spaces (in eastern Berlin and in central Moscow), in post modern age, form accumulative layers between history and surface imagery. The conjunction of history and inscription operates powerfully against the language of cities’ surfaces implying a balance of text with history, text with inhabitation.

The experimental procedure, employing digital narratives and images, traces details of the metropolitan saturation of movement in juxtaposition with the gestures of machinery of vehicles (Moscow’s metro/ Berlin’s tram/ bus/ S-bahn/ U-bahn). The imageries (fragments of images and text) of transit post socialist cities intimate in the potential escalation of confrontation between image and text- between human figure and city. There is a need for prescient grip of the processes of accumulations, multiplications and dispersals of imagery on the surface of the post socialist transit city, the sudden oscillations between sensation and nullification in its inhabitant’s identities.

In addition the gesture of post socialist transit city’s presence is intricate split between transformation enacted upon the city’s surfaces and transformation imposed upon the consciousness and visual capacity of its inhabitants. This produces two aspects; the blur of city’s surfaces; and its inhabitants’ imageries. Against the enveloping packaged ‘post socialist’ city imageries, a barrier of text is constructed between its inhabitants’ identity and its visual impulse. A narrative is therefore generated from the habitual visual vocabularies of the ‘post socialist’ city which permeate the trajectory of viewing and its representation of images. Spatio-temporal narratives about post socialist ‘contested’ representational spaces (Palast der Republik and Potsdamer Platz in eastern Berlin) and (Moscow’s underground Metro) go to the heart of issues concerned with the role of place and place visioning in the spatial constitution and expression of collective memory, and with accommodation of cultural identities within new institutional, symbolic and spatial structures.
Visions interpreting Berlin as a postmodern landscape of contested East-West transformation, raise issues of how politics, history and place are linked in the formation of cultural identity. Nevertheless encountering a Zeitgeist of ‘becoming’ is enveloping all aspects of life in the city - from the experience of walking a metropolis under intense revision, to exploring discourse on the future of the ‘New Berlin’, whilst recounting the erasure of the ‘GDR’ past from the historical narratives of unified Germany. Moreover post socialist urban spaces have been marketed in the context of a reinvented city with new emerging opportunities. Contested urban spaces could be noted across the eastern part of Berlin, between historical elements of the city and recent post modern architectural development. Against the role played by local population, a process of historical revision and post modern re-assertion is manifest in image aestheticisation of Potsdamer Platz (European headquarters of Sony), whilst exhibiting the power and wealth of capitalism, and in the commodification of Friedrichstrasse (the Fifth Avenue of Berlin) for commercial consumption. Amidst Berlin’s promotional strategy to establish a new place image and foster a new identity, the post socialist ‘Palast der Republik’, in the city borough of Berlin Mitte (where Stadtschloss existed until 1950 in the heart of old Berlin), stands challengingly at the apex of representational space in an equally symbolically charged city. In addition, the huge ‘socialist’ blocks of flats (constructed under the original name of the Stalineallee) on Karl-Marx Allee, exhibit their monumental dereliction which articulates the loss of power with extreme poignancy. From the future of these post socialist sites, issues of collective identity, the acknowledgement/erasure of history and imagined cultural community are reflected upon urban imageries. Meaning is being constructed in eastern Berlin, taking a postmodern feature, with gentrification and sub-urbanisation dominating the urban scenery, with the invasion of the stultifying, heterogeneous force of consumption and with the predominance of zones of marginal inhabitants (such as in Marzahn area).

As the surface of human history is disassembled from the city streets (un-naming of GDR symbols- a phenomenon noted in post socialist Moscow's metro where Teatralnaya Metro station replaced Karl Marx station), with the language of the socialist era being erased, the graffiti on the surfaces of eastern Berlin become overwhelmingly saturated gesturing and exclaiming an endlessly new set of unknown names constantly overlaying and manipulating street signs of the city. The duality of the city's official naming and random signification of its individual inhabitants is an inextricable entanglement, thus transforming the hybrid text whilst producing cross-fertilisation of imageries. Moreover the transition of ‘socialist’ memory into ‘post modern’ imagery is filtered from its presence on the surface of the city into its representation on the media screen as being subjected to aestheticisation of architectural production. Whilst mediating between screens of the post modern present and voids of the socialist past, place identity in the eastern section of Berlin is re-defined and projected through the city’s memory and monumentally enveloping flood of imagery. The immense building work in the eastern (post socialist) part of the city and the sudden apparition of endless graffiti surfaces affirm Berlin’s dynamic urban contradictions. The consolidation of images and the act of vision in the city relies upon the process of engagement between the city and its inhabitants which gives post socialist spaces its psychosis of imagery and language, its fragmentation and post modern transformation.
Since 1980s metro stations have become places where ‘transition’ was most visible to inhabitants of Moscow. Rather than relying on iconography or iconoclasm in the metro, Lemon (2000) focused on the metro as place-trope, a figurative setting in contesting ontologies of a society in ‘transition’ alternately standing for social, economic, political dialectics. Verbal, visual and textual representations juxtapose social activity with a spatial infrastructure (suggesting De Certeau’s (1984) parallels between walking (as actualising space) and talking (as acting out language). Alongside metro stations which symbolised socialist state stability, spatial practices and consumption revealed the mushrooming of commercial activities around the metro with hawkers filling transfer tunnels and underground crosswalks, and with metro pedestrians combining tactics of shopping and commuting without detouring. One factor that sets metro petty trade apart from commerce in other venues is its stark visibility. Initially non-state kiosks were set up at subway entrances and in underpasses, with trading being conducted on folding tables or cardboard boxes. Later more permanent structures have come closer to metro proper in contrast to spatial aestheticisation further down the metro stations. Petty traders’ transgressions are regarded unlawful and inappropriate, whilst being considered as ‘people out of place’, thus calling for movements restrictions (propiska system requiring registration of residence with municipal authorities). Accordingly metro stations as transit space, with their spatial practices and infrastructures, exhibited aspects of inclusion and exclusion.

Nevertheless the metro, as spatial infrastructure and venue for contested social spaces, could be considered hybrid transit spaces at the frontier of post socialist transformation. The experience of transit spaces within Moscow’s post socialist metro often involves a critical examination of symbolic urban space and transformation of historical (socialist) connections. This process is accompanied by aestheticisation of urban consumption linking metro stations to ‘gentrified’ post socialist public spaces (Tverskaya Ul street and Red Square/ Okhtny Ryad Metro station), (GUM mall / Ploshchad Revolyutsii Metro station), and (Vozdvizhenkaya Ul street...
Biblioteka im Lenina and Arbatskaya Metro stations. Recently post socialist spaces in Moscow have experienced major spatial changes which affected the monumentality and rituals associated with socialist urban spaces. With the commodification of post-socialist urban spaces (Tverskaya Ul, Vozdvizhenkaya Ul commercial streets, and GUM shopping mall, and Manezh commercial store near the Red Square), shrines of market places appeared together with bazaars, street petty trading and informal exchange of goods (Andrusz, 1996). A pattern of spatial fragmentation prevailed as halls, staircases, seminar rooms, committee areas, basements were transformed into trading places, with arrangement of space changing from monofunctionality to kaleidoscopic appropriation of spaces; a sign of the preciousness of commerce and commodity. Such transformation of socialist spaces was influenced by the nature of dynamics of territorial restructuring in post socialist Moscow.

Conclusion

The consciousness of the ‘post socialist’ city is correspondingly fragmentary in relation to imprinting an institutional imagery upon its surface (such as in eastern Berlin’s re-construction phenomenon) which is simultaneously saturated with ambitious configurations (in the form of post modern architecture and ‘post’ socialist monuments). The semiotic matrix of (Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse in eastern Berlin), (Tverskaya Ul and Vozdvizhenkaya Ul streets in central Moscow) ‘at night’ forms a text of aesthetic representation where signs coagulate, logos deliquesce, thus creating a hybrid identity for its inhabitants. The blurred tracks of the night city’s articulation mirror transit trajectories, with an exhibition of images actively permeating and flexibly saturating the city. With the juxtaposition of historical traces of (socialism) within (post socialist) urban spaces in its fragmented and imaginary postmodern form, the city of deconstructed spaces and images is created which fractures our sense of urban totality. The new features of post modern ‘heterotopian’ urbandsim exposes the post socialist city of deconstruction full of urban voids and historic ‘socialist’ zones protected for their architectural and scenic values.

In conclusion therefore the perceived significance of post socialist urban spaces (in eastern Berlin and central Moscow), in moments of transition, has promoted themes of commodification and aestheticisation, reflecting the increasing role of image consumption (Lash and Urry, 1994). Understanding aesthetic reflexivity, about the transformation of post socialist physical and social environments, as part of a critical historic movement, offers a ‘post modern’ representation of the immense contradictions of the future of post socialist city.

Acknowledgement

The empirical stage of this research paper was funded by a grant from the Bauhaus-Dessau Foundation in Germany as part of the Bauhaus Kolleg V – Transit Spaces Programme 2003-2004.
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