A Mall, a Mosque and Martin Place: Publics, publicness and urban space

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University Digital Repository**, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. **Unless an Embargo has been approved for a determined period.

Adam Tyndall

March 2013
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## Contents

Title Page ................................................................. i
Statement of Originality .................................................... ii
Acknowledgements .......................................................... iii
Contents ................................................................. iv
Abstract ........................................................................ x
List of Figures ................................................................... xi
Abbreviations .................................................................... xii
Dedication ....................................................................... xiii

### Chapter One

1.1 A Fairey Tale ................................................................. 3

1.2 Overview ....................................................................... 6

### Chapter Two

2.1 Publics .......................................................................... 13

2.2 What is Publicness? ...................................................... 14

2.2.1 Coming to Terms with Publicness ................................. 14

2.2.2 Maintaining a Distinction .......................................... 18

2.3 How Do Publics Work and for Whom? ............................. 20

2.3.1 The Liberal Public ..................................................... 20

    Arendt ......................................................................... 21

    Habermas ...................................................................... 24

2.3.2 Questioning the Liberal Public .................................... 27

2.3.3 Subaltern Counterpublics and the Politics of Difference ... 32

    Fraser .......................................................................... 32

    Young .......................................................................... 35

2.4 Conclusion ...................................................................... 39
Chapter Three

3.1 Spaces for Publicness

3.2 Where is Public Space?

3.2.1 Publics, Space, History

3.2.2 Nostalgia not History

3.3 Decline, Debate, Dissipate

3.3.1 Public Space in Decline

3.3.2 Questioning the Decline

3.3.3 Publicness without Space

3.4 Conclusion

Chapter Four

4.1 Approaching Publicness

4.2 Putting Archimedes in Place

4.2.1 Questioning Archimedes

4.2.2 After Archimedes

4.3 Pictures of Publicness

4.3.1 Making a Case for Case Studies

4.3.2 Changing Orientations, Three Pictures of Publicness

4.4 Engaging with Publics and Publicness

4.4.1 Approaching Publicness

4.4.2 Talking with Publics

4.4.2.1 Interviews

4.4.2.2 Focus Groups

4.4.3 Watching Publics

4.4.4 Reading about Publics

4.5 Conclusion
Chapter Five

5.1 ‘It’s a public, I reckon’: Publicness and a shopping mall in Sydney ....................94

5.2 Making Space for a Consumers’ Public.................................................................96

5.2.1 Enclosing the Market: Gruen’s vision (un)realised ........................................96

5.2.2 Creating the Enclosed Market........................................................................98

5.2.2 The RPI and Institutional Investors.................................................................99

5.2.2 The RPI and Retailers......................................................................................100

5.2.2 The RPI and Local Government ....................................................................101

5.2.3 Controlling the Enclosed Market .................................................................103

5.2.3 Architecture.................................................................................................103

5.2.3 Regulation and Management......................................................................104

5.2.3 Leases...........................................................................................................105

5.2.3 Marketing the Mall.......................................................................................106

5.3 Between Traditional Public Space and the New Town Square ....................107

5.3.1 Writing the Mall:

From the end of public space to a new form of publicness ................................108

5.3.2 What of Other Shopping Malls?....................................................................112

5.4 Being Public in the Consumers’ Republic .........................................................113

5.4.1 A Consumers’ Public in Place—Westfield-Liverpool.................................114

5.4.2 Engaging with the Consumers’ Public.........................................................119

5.4.3 Time, Place and Publics..............................................................................120

5.4.3 Security and (in)security.............................................................................121

5.4.4 Consuming Politics....................................................................................126

5.5 Conclusion......................................................................................................132
Chapter Six

6.1 ‘It’s a public space but one with certain ethical requirements’: ........................................
Publicness and Auburn Mosque ..................................................................................................135

6.2 Space, Religion and Publicness ..............................................................................................137
  6.2.1 The Public vs. Religion? .....................................................................................................138
  6.2.2 Geographies of Religion Post-secularisation ....................................................................142

6.3 A Place for Australian Islam .................................................................................................147
  6.3.1 Australia’s Religious Landscape and Islam .................................................................148
  6.3.2 Australian Islam .............................................................................................................150
  6.3.3 Auburn and Islam ..........................................................................................................154
  6.3.3 A Place for a Religious Public .......................................................................................156
  6.3.4 Engaging with a Religious Public .................................................................................160

6.4 A Public Ethic in Religious Space .........................................................................................161
  6.4.1 Enabling Australian Islam .............................................................................................161
  6.4.2 Bridging to Others ..........................................................................................................164
  6.4.3 An Ethic of Publicness ....................................................................................................166
      Time and Ritual .....................................................................................................................167
      The Subject of Religion .......................................................................................................168
      Expecting a Culture of Place? ............................................................................................171
  6.4.4 Circulations of Muslim Publicness ................................................................................173

6.5 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................176
Chapter Seven

7.1 Absence and Address in Martin Place ......................................................... 180

7.2 A Spectre and (Public) Space ....................................................................... 183
    7.2.1 Derrida’s Spectre, Barnett’s Ghost ....................................................... 183
    7.2.2 Grounding the Ghostly Public ............................................................... 187

7.3 The Place of Martin Place ............................................................................ 191
    7.3.1 The Materiality of Martin Place ............................................................. 192
    7.3.2 Connecting Martin Place ....................................................................... 194
        Economic Life ............................................................................................. 194
        Cultural Life ............................................................................................... 196
        Institutional Life ......................................................................................... 199
    7.3.4 Martin Place and Global Sydney ............................................................ 200

7.4 Chasing Two Ghosts in and around Martin Place ........................................ 205
    7.4.1 Sydney Festival ...................................................................................... 206
    7.4.2 Stop Bush ............................................................................................... 213

7.5 Conclusion .................................................................................................... 230

Chapter Eight

8.1 And Finally Fairey Again ............................................................................ 234

8.2 Tracing Publicness, Thinking Publics ........................................................ 236

8.3 Three Propositions ....................................................................................... 240
        Beyond Categorical Practice and Place ..................................................... 241
        Beyond Presence and Absence ................................................................. 242
        Toward Process .......................................................................................... 244

References ......................................................................................................... 246
Appendices

Appendix A: Westfield-Liverpool, Indicative Interview & Focus Group Schedules

A1. CBD Coordinating Manager (Planning)—Liverpool City Council .......................267
A2. Centre Manager—Westfield-Liverpool ........................................................................269
A3. Community Development Worker (Aged & Disability)—Liverpool City Council ...271
A4. Community Development Worker (Youth)—Liverpool City Council ....................272
A5. Director of Tenancy Services—Australian Retailers Association .........................273
A6. Project Leasing Manager—Westfield-Liverpool .....................................................275
A7. Westfield Liverpool Focus Group—Seniors .................................................................277
A8. Westfield-Liverpool Focus Group—Youth .................................................................279

Appendix B: Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, Indicative Interview & Focus Group Schedules

B1. Secretary Auburn Gallipoli Mosque ........................................................................282
B2. Strategic Planner Department of Planning and the Environment—
Auburn City Council ........................................................................................................283
B3. Focus Group Auburn Gallipoli Mosque ....................................................................284

Appendix C: Martin Place, Indicative Interview Schedules

C1. Communications and Events Manager—City of Sydney Council ......................286
C2. Head of Production—Sydney Festival .......................................................................288
C3. Public Events and Film Liaison Manager—City of Sydney Council ......................289
C4. Spokesperson NSW Council of Civil Liberties .....................................................290
C5. Spokesperson Stop Bush Coalition ........................................................................292
Abstract

This work explores the relationship between publics, publicness and urban space. Its central argument rests on three assumptions about the nature of urban publicness: first, that publics are plural, being the collective expression of individuals’ many fleeting fidelities; second, that the boundary between public and private is porous and contextually determined and, crucially, there is a politics to how this boundary is defined, transgressed and traversed; and third, that publicness has no normative social or spatial idiom but it is shaped by publics’ encounters with others. Taking publicness as a contextually constructed process the thesis argues for a processual approach that attends closely to how publics come into being, in what spatial and political contexts, with the aid of what resources, and for what ends.

Using a case study approach I examine how three spaces in Sydney, Australia unsettle common understandings of the nature and processes of publicness and its association with space. In analysing the Westfield-Liverpool mall I deploy Foucault’s concept of heterotopia to argue that the shopping mall is a site of simultaneity: a privatized place where consumer culture coexists with various kinds of publicness. In exploring the Auburn Mosque I enlist post-secular theory to illustrate the intermingling of religion and a mode of publicness that is shaped by the ethical dimensions of religious life and the cultural expectations of place. In analysing Martin Place—a public square in Sydney’s CBD—I work with and against Barnett’s ghostly public to show how propinquity in public space can be both important and irrelevant to publicness.

Drawing from these cases I suggest the need to expand our concept of the spatial and social terrain of publicness to account for simultaneity of space and the plurality of publicness and the production of publicness as a process. Such an understanding maintains that space is neither public nor private but rather always potentially open to the processes of public making. However I insist that place still plays an important role in these processes. The texture of place shapes publicness by resonating with some publics and forms of publicness and not others, by affording opportunities for some types of address but also placing contextually-realised parameters on its nature and reach.
**List of Figures**

1.1 Time Magazine Cover, December 26, 2011, 178 (25)  
4.1 Research Methods and Case Studies  
5.1 Liverpool in relation to Sydney CBD and the wider metropolitan area  
5.2 Westfield Liverpool in relation to the mall and Northumberland St. before the redevelopment.  
5.3 Westfield Liverpool in relation to the mall and Northumberland St. after the redevelopment  
5.4 Section of Northumberland St purchased from Liverpool City Council  
5.5 Corner of Elizabeth and Bathurst Street.  
6.1 Auburn in relation to Sydney CBD and the wider metropolitan area  
6.2 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque and Auburn LGA  
6.3 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (street view)  
6.4 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (internal mezzanine level)  
6.5 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque (internal ground level)  
7.1 People cross on the corner of Elizabeth St and Martin Place  
7.2 Martin Place and Sydney CBD  
7.3 Office workers and tourists’ sit in the morning sun  
7.4 Armani Store, 4-10 Martin Place  
7.5 People watch the live production of Channel Seven’s *Sunrise* program  
7.6 Anzac Day Ceremony, Martin Place Cenotaph, 1930s  
7.7 Map of Declared and Restricted Areas, APEC Police Powers Act 2007  
7.8 Prohibited Items List, APEC Police Powers Act 2007  
7.9 Police Powers in Declared and Restricted Areas, APEC Police Powers Act 2007  
7.10 Stop Bush Coalition and NSW Police’s Proposed March Routes  
7.11 Timetable of negotiations between Stop Bush Coalition and NSW Police  
7.12 Police ‘roadblock’ barring access to Martin Place from Town Hall  
8.1 Sarah Mason photographed during the Occupy LA protest
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Auburn Gallipoli Mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BID</td>
<td>Business Improvement District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPO</td>
<td>General Post Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPR</td>
<td>National Public Radio (a non-profit public radio network in the USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCYC</td>
<td>Police Citizens Youths Club</td>
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<td>RPG</td>
<td>Retail Property Group</td>
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<td>Retail Property Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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For a grandfather I never knew and to a daughter too young to know why.