

in gardening and tended the plants near to her house. The architects had quite unthinkingly used exactly the same house type for the end of terrace as they had for centre terrace situations, so there was no window in her end gable wall. The public authority had planted particularly generously at this terrace end, and this woman tried for many months to care for these plants. Of course, since she did not overlook the area she could not spot troublemakers who were either intentionally or otherwise damaging the landscape. Actually I discovered through observation that the damage was mainly done by youngsters, who naturally congregated, as they will, at a spot least likely to be supervised by adults. There was nothing malicious in their behaviour; thoughtless and mischievous maybe, but which of us can claim not to have been the same in our time? It is also sadly true that the elderly, and particularly the single elderly woman, may regard their congregation with suspicion, the teenagers in turn encourage this with a little bravado, which can easily overstep the mark. Such was the case here. They were stretching their teenage wings and she was a soft target for their rebellion. However, the situation was to deteriorate further when, after she complained to the authority, they replanted the area with some young trees.

What my poor old lady saw as two tender specimens of flowering tree, the teenagers saw as goalposts! To them they were brilliantly sited – two trees just about far enough apart to make a goal, and conveniently the wall of the house behind would stop the ball. Excellent! Her irritation at the damage caused to the trees became compounded by the incessant noise of the football kicked against the wall of her house. Again she complained, and this time the response of the authority was as stunning a misjudgement of the situation as I have ever seen. A notice was fixed to the wall announcing that ball games were banned. Of course this tin notice made a dramatic ping when hit by any ball, and now became the target for a whole series of new games invented by even younger children to exploit the phenomenon. This might seem an amusing tale, and from one perspective it is. However, the distress caused to this old lady was immense, the inconvenience and work generated for employees of the authority expensive, and the damage to the landscape ultimately unstoppable. All this came about as a result of a little thoughtlessness by an architect about territory. A window in this wall would have given the old lady a nicer house and led to the children finding a more suitable place to gather. Of course the architects should have provided that too, but we shall come to that in a later chapter!

The territory invaded

Vargas suggests that there are three types of territorial trespass, which she calls 'contamination', 'violation' and 'invasion' (Vargas 1986). Contamination is where an invasion has taken place, and either some