

# Postmodern Geographies

The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory



EDWARD W SOJA



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## 1

# History: Geography:Modernity

Did it start with Bergson or before? Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic. (Foucault, 1980, 70)

The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world. . . . The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present-day polemics oppose the pious descendants of time and the determined inhabitants of space. (Foucault, 1986, 22)

The nineteenth-century obsession with history, as Foucault described it, did not die in the *fin de siècle*. Nor has it been fully replaced by a spatialization of thought and experience. An essentially historical epistemology continues to pervade the critical consciousness of modern social theory. It still comprehends the world primarily through the dynamics arising from the emplacement of social being and becoming in the interpretive contexts of time: in what Kant called *nacheinander* and Marx defined so transfiguratively as the contingently constrained 'making of history'. This enduring epistemological presence has preserved a privileged place for the 'historical imagination' in defining the very nature of critical insight and interpretation.

So unbudgeably hegemonic has been this historicism of theoretical

consciousness that it has tended to occlude a comparable critical sensibility to the spatiality of social life, a practical theoretical consciousness that sees the lifeworld of being creatively located not only in the making of history but also in the construction of human geographies, the social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes: social being actively emplaced in space *and* time in an explicitly historical *and* geographical contextualization. Although others joined Foucault to urge a rebalancing of this prioritization of time over space, no hegemonic shift has yet occurred to allow the critical eye – or the critical I – to see spatiality with the same acute depth of vision that comes with a focus on *durée*. The critical hermeneutic is still enveloped in a temporal master-narrative, in a historical but not yet comparably geographical imagination. Foucault's revealing glance back over the past hundred years thus continues to apply today. Space still tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical; time as richness, life, dialectic, the revealing context for critical social theorization.

As we move closer to the end of the twentieth century, however, Foucault's premonitory observations on the emergence of an 'epoch of space' assume a more reasonable cast. The material and intellectual contexts of modern critical social theory have begun to shift dramatically. In the 1980s, the hoary traditions of a space-blinkered historicism are being challenged with unprecedented explicitness by convergent calls for a far-reaching spatialization of the critical imagination. A distinctively postmodern and critical human geography is taking shape, brashly reasserting the interpretive significance of space in the historically privileged confines of contemporary critical thought. Geography may not yet have displaced history at the heart of contemporary theory and criticism, but there is a new animating polemic on the theoretical and political agenda, one which rings with significantly different ways of seeing time and space together, the interplay of history and geography, the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimensions of being in the world freed from the imposition of inherent categorical privilege.

It remains all too easy for even the best of the 'pious descendants of time' to respond to these pesky postmodern intrusions with an antidis-establishmentarian wave of a still confident upper hand or with the presumptive yawns of a seen-it-all-before complacency. In response, the determined intruders often tend to overstate their case, creating the unproductive aura of an anti-history, inflexibly exaggerating the critical privilege of contemporary spatiality in isolation from an increasingly silenced embrace of time. But from these confrontational polemics is also arising something else, a more flexible and balanced critical theory that re-entwines the making of history with the social production of space, with the construction and configuration of human geographies.

New possibilities are being generated from this creative commingling, possibilities for a simultaneously historical and geographical materialism, a triple dialectic of space, time, and social being; a transformative re-theorization of the relations between history, geography, and modernity.

We are not yet sure enough about this incipient spatialization of critical theory to give a comprehensive and confident epistemological account; too much is at stake to attempt a premature totalization of a still shifting discourse. Nevertheless, the development of what I call postmodern geographies has progressed far enough to have changed significantly both the material landscape of the contemporary world and the interpretive terrain of critical theory. The time has come, then, for at least a first round of responsive evaluation of these two changing contexts of history and geography, modernity and postmodernity – one imprinted concretely on the empirical fabric of contemporary life (a postmodern geography of the material world), and the other threading through the ways we make practical and political sense of the present, the past, and the potential future (a postmodern geography of critical social consciousness).

In this opening chapter I will trace a reconfigurative path through the intellectual history of critical social theory from the last *fin de siècle* to the present, picking out the hidden narrative that has instigated the contemporary reassertion of space. My intent is not to erase the historical hermeneutic but to open up and recompose the territory of the historical imagination through a critical spatialization. As will be evident in each subsequent chapter, this reassertion of space in critical social theory is an exercise in both deconstruction and reconstitution. It cannot be accomplished simply by appending spatial highlights to inherited critical perspectives and sitting back to watch them glow with logical conviction. The stranglehold of a still addictive historicism must first be loosened. The narrative task is effectively described by Terry Eagleton in *Against the Grain* (1986, 80):

To 'deconstruct', then, is to reinscribe and resituate meanings, events and objects within broader movements and structures; it is, so to speak, to reverse the imposing tapestry in order to expose in all its unglamorously dishevelled tangle the threads constituting the well heeled image it presents to the world.

### Locating the Origins of Postmodern Geographies

The first insistent voices of postmodern critical human geography appeared in the late 1960s, but they were barely heard against the then

prevailing temporal din. For more than a decade, the spatializing project remained strangely muted by the untroubled reaffirmation of the primacy of history over geography that enveloped both Western Marxism and liberal social science in a virtually sanctified vision of the ever-accumulating past. One of the most comprehensive and convincing pictures of this continuously historical contextualization was drawn by C. Wright Mills in his paradigmatic portrayal of the sociological imagination (Mills, 1959). Mills's work provides a useful point of departure for spatializing the historical narrative and reinterpreting the course of critical social theory.

#### *The silenced spatiality of historicism*

Mills maps out a sociological imagination that is deeply rooted in an historical rationality – what Martin Jay (1984) would call a 'longitudinal totalization' – that applies equally well to critical social science and to the critical traditions of Marxism.

[The sociological imagination] is a quality of mind that will help [individuals] to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within themselves. (1959, 11)

The first fruit of this imagination – and the first lessons of the social science that embodies it – is the idea that the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove. (12)

He goes further:

The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations of the two within society. This is its task and its promise. To recognize this task and this promise is the mark of the classic social analyst. *No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within society, has completed its intellectual journey.* (Ibid., emphasis added)

I draw upon Mills's depiction of what is essentially a historical imagination to illustrate the alluring logic of historicism, the rational reduction

of meaning and action to the temporal constitution and experience of social being. This connection between the historical imagination and historicism needs further elaboration. First, there is the easier question of why 'sociological' has been changed to 'historical'. As Mills himself notes, 'every cobbler thinks leather is the only thing', and as a trained sociologist Mills names his leather after his own disciplinary specialization and socialization. The nominal choice personally specifies what is a much more widely shared 'quality of mind' that Mills claims should pervade, indeed embody, all social theory and analysis, an emancipatory rationality grounded in the intersections of history, biography, and society.

To be sure, these 'life-stories' have a geography too; they have milieux, immediate locales, provocative emplacements which affect thought and action. The historical imagination is never completely spaceless and critical social historians have written, and continue to write, some of the best geographies of the past. But it is always time and history that provide the primary 'variable containers' in these geographies. This would be just as clear whether the critical orientation is described as sociological or political or anthropological – or for that matter phenomenological, existential, hermeneutic, or historical materialist. The particular emphases may differ, but the encompassing perspective is shared. An already-made geography sets the stage, while the wilful making of history dictates the action and defines the story line.

It is important to stress that this historical imagination has been particularly central to critical social theory, to the search for practical understanding of the world as a means of emancipation versus maintenance of the status quo. Social theories which merely rationalize existing conditions and thereby serve to promote repetitive behaviour, the continuous reproduction of established social practices, do not fit the definition of critical theory. They may be no less accurate with respect to what they are describing, but their rationality (or irrationality, for that matter) is likely to be mechanical, normative, scientific, or instrumental rather than critical. It is precisely the critical and potentially emancipatory value of the historical imagination, of people 'making history' rather than taking it for granted, that has made it so compulsively appealing. The constant reaffirmation that the world can be changed by human action, by praxis, has always been the centrepiece of critical social theory whatever its particularized source and emphasis.

The development of critical social theory has revolved around the assertion of a mutable history against perspectives and practices that mystify the changeability of the world. The critical historical discourse thus sets itself against abstract and transhistorical universalizations (including notions of a general 'human nature' which explain everything

and nothing at the same time); against naturalisms, empiricisms, and positivisms which proclaim physical determinations of history apart from social origins; against religious and ideological fatalisms which project spiritual determinations and teleologies (even when carried forward in the cloak of human consciousness); against any and all conceptualizations of the world which freeze the frangibility of time, the possibility of 'breaking' and remaking history.

Both the attractive critical insight of the historical imagination and its continuing need to be forcefully defended against distracting mystifications have contributed to its exaggerated assertion as historicism. Historicism has been conventionally defined in several different ways. Raymond Williams' *Keywords* (1983), for example, presents three contemporary choices, which he describes as: 1) 'neutral' – a method of study using facts from the past to trace the precedents of current events; 2) 'deliberate' – an emphasis on variable historical conditions and contexts as a privileged framework for interpreting all specific events; and 3) 'hostile' – an attack on all interpretation and prediction which is based on notions of historical necessity or general laws of historical development.

I wish to give an additional twist to these options by defining historicism as an overdeveloped historical contextualization of social life and social theory that actively submerges and peripheralizes the geographical or spatial imagination. This definition does not deny the extraordinary power and importance of historiography as a mode of emancipatory insight, but identifies historicism with the creation of a critical silence, an implicit subordination of space to time that obscures geographical interpretations of the changeability of the social world and intrudes upon every level of theoretical discourse, from the most abstract ontological concepts of being to the most detailed explanations of empirical events.

This definition may appear rather odd when set against the long tradition of debate over historicism that has flourished for centuries.<sup>1</sup> The failure of this debate to recognize the peculiar theoretical peripheralization of space that has accompanied even the most neutral forms of historicism is, however, precisely what began to be discovered in the late 1960s, in the ragged beginnings of what I have called a postmodern

1. See Popper (1957), Eliade (1959), Lowith (1949), Cohen (1978) and Rorty (1980), for a sampling of very different approaches to historicism. Rorty, in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (9), makes the interesting comment that traditional Cartesian-Kantian philosophy was 'an attempt to escape from history ... to find nonhistorical conditions of any possible historical development'. The key figures of twentieth-century analytical philosophy espoused by Rorty – Wittgenstein, Dewey, and Heidegger – are then presented as restoratively historicist. Rorty adds: 'The moral of this book is also historicist' (10). Human geography characteristically disappears almost entirely in this modern mirroring of nature, except as an archaic reflection.

critical human geography. Even then, the main currents of critical social thought had become so spatially-blinkered that the most forceful re-assertions of space versus time, geography versus history, had little effect. The academic discipline of Modern Geography had, by that time, been rendered theoretically inert and contributed little to these first reassertions. And when some of the most influential social critics of the time took a bold spatial turn, not only was it usually seen by the unconverted as something else entirely, but the turners themselves often chose to muffle their critiques of historicism in order to be understood at all.

Only a few particularly vigorous voices resonated through the still hegemonic historicism of the past twenty years to pioneer the development of postmodern geography. The most persistent, insistent, and consistent of these spatializing voices belonged to the French Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre. His critical theorization of the social production of space will thread its way into every subsequent chapter. Here, however, I will extract and represent the spatializing projects of two other critical theorists, Michel Foucault and John Berger, whose assertive postmodern geographies have been largely hidden from view by their more comforting and familiar identification as historians.

#### *The ambivalent spatiality of Michel Foucault*

The contributions of Foucault to the development of critical human geography must be drawn out archeologically, for he buried his precursory spatial turn in brilliant whirls of historical insight. He would no doubt have resisted being called a postmodern geographer, but he was one, *malgré lui*, from *Madness and Civilization* (1961) to his last works on *The History of Sexuality* (1978). His most explicit and revealing observations on the relative significance of space and time, however, appear not in his major published works but almost innocuously in his lectures and, after some coaxing interrogation, in two revealing interviews: 'Questions on Geography' (Foucault, 1980) and 'Space, Knowledge, and Power' (Rabinow, 1984, see also Wright and Rabinow, 1982).

The epochal observations which head this chapter, for example, were first made in a 1967 lecture entitled '*Des Espaces Autres*'. They remained virtually unseen and unheard for nearly twenty years, until their publication in the French journal *Architecture-Mouvement-Continuité* in 1984 and, translated by Jay Miskowiec as 'Of Other Spaces', in *Diacritics* (1986). In these lecture notes, Foucault outlined his notion of 'heterotopias' as the characteristic spaces of the modern world, superseding the hierarchic 'ensemble of places' of the Middle

Ages and the enveloping 'space of emplacement' opened up by Galileo into an early-modern, infinitely unfolding, 'space of extension' and measurement. Moving away from both the 'internal space' of Bachelard's brilliant poetics (1969) and the intentional regional descriptions of the phenomenologists, Foucault focused our attention on another spatiality of social life, an 'external space', the actually lived (and socially produced) space of sites and the relations between them:

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another (1986, 23)

These heterogeneous spaces of sites and relations – Foucault's heterotopias – are constituted in every society but take quite varied forms and change over time, as 'history unfolds' in its adherent spatiality. He identifies many such sites: the cemetery and the church, the theatre and the garden, the museum and the library, the fairground and the 'vacation village', the barracks and the prison, the Moslem hammam and the Scandinavian sauna, the brothel and the colony. Foucault contrasts these 'real places' with the 'fundamentally unreal spaces' of utopias, which present society in either 'a perfected form' or else 'turned upside down':

The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible ... they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory. ... Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. The latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation, and I wonder if certain colonies have not functioned somewhat in this manner (1986, 25, 27)

With these remarks, Foucault exposed many of the compelling directions he would take in his lifework and indirectly raised a powerful argument against historicism – and against the prevailing treatments of space in the human sciences. Foucault's heterogeneous and relational space of heterotopias is neither a substanceless void to be filled by cognitive intuition nor a repository of physical forms to be phenomenologically described in all its resplendent variability. It is another space, what

Lefebvre would describe as *l'espace vécu*, actually lived and socially created spatiality, concrete and abstract at the same time, the habitus of social practices. It is a space rarely seen for it has been obscured by a bifocal vision that traditionally views space as either a mental construct or a physical form – a dual illusion that I discuss in greater detail in chapter 5.

To illustrate his innovative interpretation of space and time and to clarify some of the often confusing polemics which were arising around it, Foucault turned to the then current debates on structuralism, one of the twentieth-century's most important avenues for the reassertion of space in critical social theory. Foucault vigorously insisted that he himself was not (just?) a structuralist, but he recognized in the development of structuralism a different and compelling vision of history and geography, a critical reorientation that was connecting space and time in new and revealing ways.

Structuralism, or at least that which is grouped under this slightly too general name, is the effort to establish, between elements that could have been connected on a temporal axis, an ensemble of relations that makes them appear as juxtaposed, set off against one another, in short, as a sort of configuration. Actually structuralism does not entail a denial of time; it does involve a certain manner of dealing with what we call time and what we call history. (1986, 22)

This synchronic 'configuration' is the spatialization of history, the making of history entwined with the social production of space, the structuring of a historical geography.<sup>2</sup>

Foucault refused to project his spatialization as an anti-history but his history was provocatively spatialized from the very start. This was not just a shift in metaphorical preference, as it frequently seemed to be for Althusser and others more comfortable with the structuralist label than Foucault. It was the opening up of history to an interpretive geography. To emphasize the centrality of space to the critical eye, especially regarding the contemporary moment, Foucault becomes most explicit:

In any case I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time. Time probably appears to

2. Structuralism's presumed 'denial' of history has triggered an almost maniacal attack on its major proponents by those imbued most rigidly with an emancipatory historicism. What Foucault is suggesting, however, is that structuralism is not an anti-history but an attempt to deal with history in a different way, as a spatio-temporal configuration, simultaneously and interactively synchronic and diachronic (to use the conventional categorical opposition).

us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space. (Ibid., 23)

He would never be quite so explicit again. Foucault's spatialization took on a more demonstrative rather than declarative stance, confident perhaps that at least the French would understand the intent and significance of his strikingly spatialized historiography.

In an interview conducted shortly before his death (Rabinow, 1984), Foucault reminisced on his exploration 'Of Other Spaces' and the enraged reactions it engendered from those he once identified as the 'pious descendants of time'. Asked whether space was central to the analysis of power, he answered:

Yes. Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power. To make a parenthetical remark, I recall having been invited, in 1966, by a group of architects to do a study of space, of something that I called at that time 'heterotopias', those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others. The architects worked on this, and at the end of the study someone spoke up – a Sartrean psychologist – who firebombed me, saying that *space* is reactionary and capitalist, but *history* and *becoming* are revolutionary. This absurd discourse was not at all unusual at the time. Today everyone would be convulsed with laughter at such a pronouncement, but not then.

Amidst today's laughter – still not as widespread and convulsive as Foucault assumed it would be – one can look back and see that Foucault persistently explored what he called the 'fatal intersection of time with space' from the first to the last of his writings. And he did so, we are only now beginning to realize, infused with the emerging perspective of a post-historicist and postmodern critical human geography.

Few could see Foucault's geography, however, for he never ceased to be a historian, never broke his allegiance to the master identity of modern critical thought. To be labelled a geographer was an intellectual curse, a demeaning association with an academic discipline so far removed from the grand houses of modern social theory and philosophy as to appear beyond the pale of critical relevance. Foucault had to be coaxed into recognizing his formative attachment to the geographer's spatial perspective, to admit that geography was always at the heart of his concerns. This retrospective admission appeared in an interview with the editors of the French journal of radical geography, *Herodote*, and was published in English as 'Questions on Geography', in *Power/Knowledge* (Foucault, 1980). In this interview, Foucault expanded upon the observations he made in 1967, but only after being pushed to do so by the interviewers.

At first, Foucault was surprised – and annoyed – at being asked by his interviewers why he had been so silent about the importance of geography and spatiality in his works despite the profuse use of geographical and spatial metaphors. The interviewers suggested to him:

If geography is invisible or ungrasped in the area of your explorations and excavations, this may be due to the deliberately historical or archeological approach which privileges the factor of time. Thus one finds in your work a rigorous concern with periodization that contrasts with the vagueness of your spatial demarcations.

Foucault responded immediately by diversion and inversion, throwing back the responsibility for geography to his interviewers (while remembering the critics who reproached him for his ‘metaphorical obsession’ with space). After further questioning, however, he admitted (again?) that space has been devalued for generations by philosophers and social critics, reasserted the inherent spatiality of power/knowledge, and ended with a *volte face*:

I have enjoyed this discussion with you because I’ve changed my mind since we started. I must admit that I thought you were demanding a place for geography like those teachers who protest when an education reform is proposed because the number of hours of natural sciences or music is being cut. . . Now I can see that the problems you put to me about geography are crucial ones for me. Geography acted as the support, the condition of possibility for the passage between a series of factors I tried to relate. Where geography itself was concerned, I either left the question hanging or established a series of arbitrary connections. Geography must indeed lie at the heart of my concerns. (Foucault, 1980, 77)

Foucault’s argument here takes a new turn, from simply looking at ‘other spaces’ to questioning the origins of ‘this devaluation of space that has prevailed for generations’. It is at this point that he makes the comment cited earlier on the post-Bergsonian treatment of space as passive and lifeless, time as richness, fecundity, dialectic.

Here then are the inquisitive ingredients for a direct attack on historicism as the source of the devaluation of space, but Foucault had other things in mind. In a revealing aside, he takes an integrative rather than deconstructive path, holding on to his history but adding to it the crucial nexus that would flow through all his work: the linkage between space, knowledge, and power.

For all those who confuse history with the old schemas of evolution, living continuity, organic development, the progress of consciousness or the project

of existence, the use of spatial terms seems to have an air of an anti-history. If one started to talk in terms of space that meant one was hostile to time. It meant, as the fools say, that one ‘denied history’, that one was a ‘technocrat’. They didn’t understand that to trace the forms of implantation, delimitation and demarcation of objects, the modes of tabulation, the organisation of domains meant the throwing into relief of processes – historical ones, needless to say – of power. The spatialising description of discursive realities gives on to the analysis of related effects of power (Ibid.)

In ‘The Eye of Power’, published as a preface to Jeremy Bentham, *La Panoptique* (1977) and reprinted in *Power/Knowledge* (Foucault, 1980, ed. Gordon, 149), he restates his ecumenical project:

A whole history remains to be written of *spaces* – which would at the same time be the history of *powers* (both of these terms in the plural) – from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat.

Foucault thus postpones a direct critique of historicism with an acute lateral glance, at once maintaining his spatializing project but preserving his historical stance. ‘History will protect us from historicism’, he optimistically concludes (Rabinow, 1984, 250).

I will return to Foucault’s provocative spatialization of power in later chapters. For now, I have used his work to illustrate one almost invisible but nevertheless formative career in postmodern critical human geography, a career hidden from explicit recognition as geographical by the persistent hegemony of historicism. Another similarly hidden (historical) geography can be found in the works of John Berger, one of the most influential and innovative art critics writing in English today.

#### *Envisioning space through the eyes of John Berger*

Like Foucault, John Berger dwells on the intersection of time and space in virtually all his writings. Amongst his most recent works is a play entitled *A Question of Geography* and a personalized volume of poetry and prose that conceives visually of love, *And our faces, my heart, as brief as photos* (Berger, 1984). Symbolizing his insistent balancing of history and geography, lineage and landscape, period and region, Berger opens this slim volume by stating ‘Part One is About Time. Part Two is About Space’. The embracing themes follow accordingly: the first part labelled ‘Once’, the second ‘Here’: neither one inherently privileged, both necessarily faceted together. But Berger does make an explicit choice in at least one of his earlier writings and it is upon this assertive choice that I wish to focus attention.

In what still stands today as perhaps the most direct declaration of the



end of historicism, this most spatially visionary of art historians – dare one call him an art geographer? – calls openly for a spatialization of critical thought. In the following passage, from *The Look of Things* (1974, 40), Berger condenses the essence of postmodern geographies in a spatially politicized aesthetic:

We hear a lot about the crisis of the modern novel. What this involves, fundamentally, is a change in the *mode of narration*. It is scarcely any longer possible to tell a straight story sequentially unfolding in time. And this is because we are too aware of what is continually traversing the storyline *laterally*. That is to say, instead of being aware of a point as an infinitely small part of a straight line, we are aware of it as an infinitely small part of an infinite number of lines, as the centre of a star of lines. Such awareness is the result of our constantly having to take into account the *simultaneity and extension* of events and possibilities.

There are so many reasons why this should be so: the range of modern means of communication the scale of modern power the degree of personal political responsibility that must be accepted for events all over the world: the fact that the world has become indivisible: the unevenness of economic development within that world: the scale of the exploitation. All these play a part. *Prophesy now involves a geographical rather than historical projection; it is space not time that hides consequences from us.* To prophesy today it is only necessary to know men [and women] as they are throughout the whole world in all their inequality. Any contemporary narrative which ignores the urgency of this dimension is incomplete and acquires the oversimplified character of a fable (emphases and brackets mine).

This pointed passage pops out of an essay on modern portrait painting in which Berger tries to explain why the historical significance of portraiture, so often in the past the visual personification of authoritative lineage and social (class) position, has changed so dramatically in the twentieth century. To make his point, he turns to an analogous change in the modern novel, a shift in the context of meaning and interpretation which hinges around the impress of simultaneity versus sequence, spatiality versus historicity, geography versus biography. In so doing, he begins to set into place a train of arguments that define the postmodern turn against historical determinations and vividly announce the need for an explicitly spatialized narrative.

The first of these assertively postmodern geographical arguments rests on the recognition of a profound and crisis-induced restructuring of contemporary life, resulting in significant changes in 'the look of things' and, if I may continue to draw upon Berger's captivating book titles, in our 'ways of seeing' (1972). This restructuring, for Berger, involves a fundamental recomposition of the 'mode of narration', arising from a new awareness that we must take into account 'the simultaneity

and extension of events and possibilities' to make sense of what we see. We can no longer depend on a story-line unfolding sequentially, an ever-accumulating history marching straight forward in plot and denouement, for too much is happening against the grain of time, too much is continually traversing the story-line laterally. A contemporary portrait no longer directs our eye to an authoritative lineage, to evocations of heritage and tradition alone. Simultaneities intervene, extending our point of view outward in an infinite number of lines connecting the subject to a whole world of comparable instances, complicating the temporal flow of meaning, short-circuiting the fabulous stringing-out of 'one damned thing after another'. The new, the novel, now must involve an explicitly geographical as well as historical configuration and projection.

To explain why this is so, Berger astutely situates the restructured narrative in a pervasive context and consciousness of geographically uneven development, into a constellation of lines and photography of surfaces connecting every (hi)story to an attention-shaping horizontality that stretches everywhere in its power, indivisibility, exploitation, and inequality. Our urgent awareness of geographically uneven development and the revived sense of our personal political responsibility for it as a product we have collectively created, spatializes the contemporary moment and reveals the insights to be derived from a deeper understanding of contemporary crisis and restructuring in literature and science, in our daily lives and in the conditions of men and women 'as they are throughout the whole world in all their inequality'. I repeat again Berger's provocative conclusion. *Prophesy now involves a geographical rather than historical projection, it is space not time that hides consequences from us.*

What a shattering assertion for those who see only through the spectacles of time. Arising from the recognition of a profound restructuring of contemporary life and an explicit consciousness of geographically (and not just historically) uneven development is an extraordinary call for a new critical perspective, a different way of seeing the world in which human geography not only 'matters' but provides the most revealing critical perspective.

Before jumping to other conclusions, however, let us not forget that this spatialization of critical thought does not have to project a simplistic anti-history. As with Foucault, the reassertion of space in critical social theory does not demand an antagonistic subordination of time and history, a facile substitution and replacement. It is instead a call for an appropriate interpretive balance between space, time, and social being, or what may now more explicitly be termed the creation of human geographies, the making of history, and the constitution of society. To

claim that, in the contemporary context, it is space not time that hides consequences from us is thus both an implied recognition that history has hitherto been accepted as the privileged mode of critical disclosure and discourse, and an argument that this privileged position, insofar as it has blocked from view the critical significance of the spatiality of social life, is no longer apt. It is the dominance of a historicism of critical thought that is being challenged, not the importance of history. Almost as if he were turning Mills's sociological imagination upside down, Berger notes that any contemporary narrative which ignores the urgency of the spatial dimension is incomplete and acquires the oversimplified character of a fable.

Berger thus joins with Foucault in pushing us towards a significant and necessary restructuring of critical social thought, a recomposition which enables us to see more clearly the long-hidden instrumentality of human geographies, in particular the encompassing and encaging spatializations of social life that have been associated with the historical development of capitalism. Foucault's path took him primarily into the microspaces of power, discipline, and surveillance, into the carceral city, the asylum, the human body. Berger's path continues to open up new ways of seeing art and aesthetics, portraits and landscapes, painters and peasants, in the past (once) and in the present (here). To crystallize and expand these spatial fields of insight and to attach postmodern critical human geography even more forcefully and explicitly to the instrumental spatiality of capitalism, the historical narrative must be re-entered at a different place and scale.

### The Deconstruction and Reconstitution of Modernity

In *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, (1982), Marshall Berman explores the multiple reconfigurations of social life that have characterized the historical geography of capitalism over the past four hundred years. At the heart of his interpretive outlook is a revealing periodization of changing concepts of modernity from the formative sixteenth-century clash between the 'Ancients' and the 'Moderns' to the contemporary debates that herald still another conceptual and social reconfiguration, another reconsideration of what it means to be modern. In this concatenation of modernities is a history of historicism that can now begin to be written from a postmodern geographical perspective.

Berman broadly defines modernity as 'a mode of vital experience', a collective sharing of a particularized sense of 'the self and others', of 'life's possibilities and perils'. In this definition, there is a special place

given to the ways we think about and experience time and space, history and geography, sequence and simultaneity, event and locality, the immediate period and region in which we live. Modernity is thus comprised of both context and conjuncture. It can be understood as the specificity of being alive, in the world, at a particular time and place; a vital individual and collective sense of contemporaneity. As such, the experience of modernity captures a broad mesh of sensibilities that reflects the specific and changing meanings of the three most basic and formative dimensions of human existence: space, time, and being. Herein lies its particular usefulness as a means of resituating the debates on history and geography in critical social theory and for defining the context and conjuncture of postmodernity.

Just as space, time, and matter delineate and encompass the essential qualities of the physical world, spatiality, temporality, and social being can be seen as the abstract dimensions which together comprise all facets of human existence. More concretely specified, each of these abstract existential dimensions comes to life as a social construct which shapes empirical reality and is simultaneously shaped by it. Thus, the spatial order of human existence arises from the (social) production of space, the construction of human geographies that both reflect and configure being in the world. Similarly, the temporal order is concretized in the making of history, simultaneously constrained and constraining in an evolving dialectic that has been the ontological crux of Marxist thought for over a hundred years. To complete the necessary existential triad, the social order of being-in-the-world can be seen as revolving around the constitution of society, the production and reproduction of social relations, institutions, and practices. How this ontological nexus of space-time-being is conceptually specified and given particular meaning in the explanation of concrete events and occurrences is the generative source of all social theory, critical or otherwise. It provides an illuminating motif through which to view the interplay between history, geography, and modernity.

#### *Sequences of modernity, modernization and modernism*

In the experience of modernity, the ontological nexus of social theory becomes specifically and concretely composed in a changing 'culture of time and space', to borrow the felicitous phrase used by Stephen Kern (1983) to describe the profound reconfiguration of modernity that took place in the previous *fin de siècle*.

From around 1880 to the outbreak of World War I a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking

about and experiencing time and space. Technological innovations including the telephone, wireless telegraph, x-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile and airplane established the material foundation for this reorientation; independent cultural developments such as the stream of consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, Cubism, and the theory of relativity shaped consciousness directly. The result was a transformation of the dimensions of life and thought. (1983, 1-2)

During this expanded *fin de siècle*, from the aftermath of the defeat of the Paris Commune to the events which would lead up to the Russian Revolution (to choose somewhat different turning points), the world changed dramatically. Industrial capitalism survived its predicted demise through a radical social and spatial restructuring which both intensified (or deepened, as in the rise of corporate monopolies and mergers) and extended (or widened, as in the global expansion of imperialism) its definitive production relations and divisions of labour. Accompanying the rise of this new political economy of capitalism was an altered culture of time and space, a restructured historical geography taking shape from the shattered remains of an older order and infused with ambitious new visions and designs for the future as the very nature and experience of modernity – what it meant to be modern – was significantly reconstituted. A similar reconstitution took place in the prevailing forms of social theorization, equally attuned to the changing nature of capitalist modernity. But before turning to this restructuring of social theory, there is more to be derived from Berman's conceptualization of modernity and the recognition of the parallelism between the past and present *fin de siècle*.

As so many have begun to see, both *fin de siècle* periods resonate with similarly transformative, but not necessarily revolutionary, socio-spatial processes. As occurred roughly a century ago, there is currently a complex and conflictful dialectic developing between urgent socio-economic modernization sparked by the system-wide crises affecting contemporary capitalist societies; and a responsive cultural and political modernism aimed at making sense of the material changes taking place in the world and gaining control over their future directions. Modernization and modernism interact under these conditions of intensified crisis and restructuring to create a shifting and conflictful social context in which everything seems to be 'pregnant with its contrary', in which all that was once assumed to be solid 'melts into air', a description Berman borrows from Marx and represents as an essential feature of the vital experience of modernity-in-transition.

Modernization can be directly linked to the many different 'objective' processes of structural change that have been associated with the ability

of capitalism to develop and survive, to reproduce successfully its fundamental social relations of production and distinctive divisions of labour despite endogenous tendencies towards debilitating crisis. This defining association between modernization and the survival of capitalism is crucial, for all too often the analysts of modernity extract social change from its social origins in modes of production to 'stage' history in idealized evolutionary modellings. From these perspectives, change just seems to 'happen' in a lock-step march of modernity replacing tradition, a mechanical teleology of progress. Modernization is not entirely the product of some determinative inner logic of capitalism, but neither is it a rootless and ineluctable idealization of history.

Modernization, as I view it here, is a continuous process of societal restructuring that is periodically accelerated to produce a significant recomposition of space-time-being in their concrete forms, a change in the nature and experience of modernity that arises primarily from the historical and geographical dynamics of modes of production. For the past four hundred years, these dynamics have been predominantly capitalist, as has been the very nature and experience of modernity during that time. Modernization is, like all social processes, unevenly developed across time and space and thus inscribes quite different historical geographies across different regional social formations. But on occasion, in the ever-accumulating past, it has become systemically synchronic, affecting all predominantly capitalist societies simultaneously. This synchronization has punctuated the historical geography of capitalism since at least the early nineteenth century with an increasingly recognizable macro-rhythm, a wave-like periodicity of societal crisis and restructuring that we are only now beginning to understand in all its ramifications.

Perhaps the earliest of these prolonged periods of 'global' crisis and restructuring stretched through what Hobsbawm termed the 'age of revolution' and peaked in the turbulent years between 1830 and 1848-51. The following decades were a time of explosive capitalist expansion in industrial production, urban growth, and international trade, the florescence of a classical, competitive, entrepreneurial regime of capital accumulation and social regulation. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, however, boom turned largely into bust for the then most advanced capitalist countries as the Long Depression, as it was called, accentuated the need for another urgent restructuring and modernization, a new 'fix' for a capitalism forever addicted to crisis.

The same rollercoaster sequence of crisis-induced restructuring, leading to an expansionary boom, and then to crisis and restructuring again, marked the first half of the twentieth century, with the Great Depression echoing the conflictful system-wide downturns of the past and initiating

the transition from one distinctive regime of accumulation to another. And as it now seems increasingly clear, the last half of the twentieth century has followed a similar broad trajectory, with a prolonged expansionary period after the Second World War and a still ongoing, crisis-filled era of attempted modernization and restructuring taking us toward the next *fin de siècle*. The rhythm has been an insistent one, marking time into what might be described as at least four metamorphic modernizations of capitalism, from the 1830s to the present.

The most rigorous and revealing analyses of this crisis-laden macro-rhythm in the historical geography of capitalism have been made by Ernest Mandel (1976, 1978, 1980). Mandel is particularly effective in connecting the periodicity of intensified modernization with a series of geographical restructurings similarly characterized by the attempt to restore the supportive conditions for profitable capitalist accumulation and labour control. This Mandelian periodization/regionalization of the modernization process plays an important role in the development and interpretation of postmodern geographies.

Berman also insightfully describes the characteristic features shaping these periodically intensified modernizations. He presents the following menu of material forces which contribute to the restructuring of the experience of modernity as a collective sense of the 'perils and possibilities' of the contemporary:

the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle,

immense demographic upheavals, severing millions of people from their ancestral habitats, hurtling them halfway across the world into new lives;

rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth;

systems of mass communications, dynamic in their development, enveloping and binding together the most diverse people and societies;

increasingly powerful national states, bureaucratically structured and operated, constantly striving to expand their powers;

mass social movements of people and peoples, challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain control over their lives;

finally, bearing and driving all these people and institutions along, an ever-expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market. (Berman, 1982, 16)

This awesome catalogue vividly outlines the destructive creativity so closely associated with both the modernization and survival of capitalism

over the past two centuries. It is today being repeated, with variations, once more.

Restructuring and modernization punctuate not only the concrete history and geography of capitalist development but also mark the changing course of critical social theory. To make this connection between the political economy of the empirical world and the world of theory brings us to Berman's conceptualization of modernism. In its broadest sense, modernism is the cultural, ideological, reflective, and, I will add, theory-forming response to modernization. It encompasses a heterogeneous array of subjective visions and strategic action programmes in art, literature, science, philosophy, and political practice which are unleashed by the disintegration of an inherited, established order and the awareness of the projected possibilities and perils of a restructured contemporary moment or conjuncture. Modernism is, in essence, a 'reaction formation', a conjunctural social movement mobilized to face the challenging question of what now is to be done given that the context of the contemporary has significantly changed. It is thus the culture-shaping, programmatic, and situated consciousness of modernity.

Each era of accelerated modernization has been a fertile spawning ground for powerful new modernisms emerging in almost every field of discourse and creativity. Of particular interest to the present narrative are two 'modern movements' which emerged around the turn of the nineteenth century to define separate and competitive realms of critical social theorization, one centred in the Marxist tradition, the other in more naturalist and positivist social science. Like other modern movements of the *fin de siècle*, they arose initially as rebelliously creative avant-garde movements challenging their own inherited orthodoxies with a new sense of what is to be done. To the traditionalists of the time, encased in older structures and strictures of modernity, the avant-garde movements appeared to dwell in a different world, in an alternative modernity, a 'postmodern' identity in the sense that it was no longer confinable within inherited and established traditions.

A Leninist Marxism was one of the most successful modern movements through the turn of the century, a reinvigorating and avant-garde restructuring of historical materialism/scientific socialism in both theory and practice: a modernized Marxism that significantly changed the world. Along with many other successful modern movements, Marxism-Leninism consolidated its victories in that part of the world which it changed most significantly. It also steeled itself against the great mid-century crises of the Great Depression and the Second World War, and moved into the last half of the twentieth century so formidably entrenched that it could no longer be described as avant-garde. The new

became old, the vanguard became old guard: hegemonic, rigid, establishmentarian.

This historical process of rigidification at the core of twentieth-century Marxism split the movement geographically and in its approaches to theory and practice. A more conservative and assiduously pragmatic 'Eastern' mainstream deflected theoretical criticism and innovation to what has come to be called Western Marxism, removed enough from the central orthodoxies of Marxism-Leninism to be distinctive but too close to represent an autonomous modern movement of its own.<sup>3</sup> It is from within this 'peripheral' current of Western Marxism that the reassertion of space and the critique of historicism eventually emerge.

Arising in part as a reaction to the restructuring of Marxism was the consolidation of the Western, Modern, or, from a Marxist standpoint, bourgeois social sciences, a much more compartmentalized and fragmented intellectual division of labour than that which came forward from the modernization of the Marxist tradition. There were, nonetheless, some remarkable similarities. Both arose from the intellectual, political, and institutional struggles that developed in the late nineteenth century as competitive reinterpretations of how best to theorize and induce progressive changes in the modern social order (just as Marx and Comte attempted to do in response to the ending of the earlier age of revolution, after the first systemic modernization of capitalism). The social sciences also developed an internal division between an increasingly orthodox and hegemonic core tradition based largely on an instrumental and increasingly positivist appropriation of natural science methods in social analysis and theorization, and a collation of critical variants constantly pressing against disciplinary rigidification, fragmentation and scientism. This critical social science shared with Western Marxism two additional features. an emancipatory interest in the power of human consciousness and social will to break through all exogenous constraints; and a critical inscription of this social power and potentially revolutionary subjectivity in the 'making of history', in historical modes of explanation and interpretation, confrontation and critique.<sup>4</sup>

3. Precisely defining the boundaries and topography of Western Marxism is still a controversial issue. My definition is roughly the same as Anderson's (1976) for the period up to the 1960s, but closer to Jay's (1984) since then - that is, it encompasses continental and Anglo-American leftist scholars as well as several self-proclaimed non-Marxists of particular prominence, including, as Anderson seems loath to do, Michel Foucault.

4. Hughes (1958) still offers one of the best descriptions of the formation of this social science countertradition around the turn of the century. Twentieth-century critical social science has also mimicked the critical theories of Western Marxism in being too close to the mainstream to be defined as a separate modern movement but distinct enough to establish its own identifiable boundaries, traditions, and topography.

The *fin de siècle* thus brought with it a recomposed culture of time and space and a bifurcated critical social theory that was imbued, in both its major variants, with an invigorated historical imagination. What our accumulated histories of theoretical consciousness do not tell us, however, is that the modernisms which celebrated this historical imagination simultaneously induced a growing submergence and dissipation of the geographical imagination, a virtual annihilation of space by time in critical social thought and discourse. The quiet triumph of historicism has, in turn, deeply shaped Western intellectual history over the past hundred years.

#### *The subordination of space in social theory: 1880-1920*

A distinctively different culture and consciousness of space, time, and modernity emerged in the decades preceding and following the end of the nineteenth century. Although actually lived experience may not have induced such a logical prioritization, at each level of philosophical and theoretical discourse, from ontology and epistemology to the explanation of empirical events and the interpretation of specific social practices, the historical imagination seemed resolutely to be erasing a sensitivity to the critical salience of human geographies. By the end of this period, the ascendancy of a historicism of theoretical consciousness had reached such heights that the possibility of a critical human geography was made to appear inconceivable if not absurdly anachronistic to generations of Western Marxists and critical social scientists.

In the wake of these developments, the discipline of Modern Geography, which also took shape in the late nineteenth century, was squeezed out of the competitive battleground of theory construction. A few residual voices were heard, but the once much more central role of geographical analysis and explanation was reduced to little more than describing the stage-setting where the real social actors were deeply involved in making history. Social theorization thus came to be dominated by a narrowed and streamlined historical materialism, stripped of its more geographically sensitive variants (such as the utopian and anarchist socialisms of Fourier, Proudhon, Kropotkin, and Bakunin, as well as the pragmatic territorialism of social democracy); and a set of compartmentalized social sciences, each on its own becoming increasingly positivist, instrumental (in the sense of serving to improve capitalism rather than transform it), and, with a few exceptions, less attentive to the formative spatiality of social life as a template of critical insight.

In at least one of the disciplinary orthodoxies that consolidated around the turn of the century, the neo-classical economics of Marshall, Pigou, and others, the subordination of space was so great that its most

influential theoreticians proudly produced visions of a depoliticized economy that existed as if it were packed solidly on to the head of a pin, in a fantasy world with virtually no spatial dimensions. Real history was also made to stand still in neo-classical economics and other variants of positivist and functionalist social science (as well as in some versions of modern Marxism), but the logic of time in the abstract was attended to through notions of causal process and sequential change, a comparative statics that rooted itself in natural science models of antecedent cause/subsequent effect and the search for disengagingly independent variables. One might describe this as a mechanistic temporalism rather than an historicism of theory construction, but it tended just the same to expel spatiality.

Outside these disciplinary orthodoxies, in the two major streams of critical social theory, the imprint of historicism centered interpretation around the temporal dynamics of modernization and modernism. Modernization was conceptualized in Marxian political economy first of all in the revolutionary transition from feudalism to capitalism, the most epochal of all societal restructurings of the past and the defining moment for the conjunction of modernity with a particular mode of production. Marx built his critical understanding of capitalism from this transition and from the profound restructuring that took place during the age of revolution. But there was another problematic transition unfolding in the *fin de siècle* that required more than Marx's *Capital* to be understood theoretically and politically. The interpretation of this modernization process, its perils as well as its new possibilities, came to be dominated by a Leninist vanguard responding to the protracted rise of monopoly capital, corporate power, and the imperialist state.

There was great sensitivity to geographical issues in the writings of Lenin, Luxemburg, Bukharin, Trotsky, and Bauer, the key figures leading the early twentieth-century modernization of Marxism. Although not always in agreement, their collective works supplied a rich foundation for a Marxist theory of geographically (as well as historically) uneven development, one which built upon and extended in scope and scale that most geographically revealing of Marx's concepts, the syncretizing and synchronic antagonism between city and countryside, the agglomerative centre and the dissipative periphery. Nonetheless, *fin de siècle* Marxism remained solidly encased in historicism. The motor behind uneven development was quintessentially historical: the making of history through the unfettering struggle of social classes. The geography of this process, when it was seen at all, was recognized either as an external constraint or as an almost incidental outcome. History was the emotive variable container; geography, as Marx put it earlier, was little more than an 'unnecessary complication'. Like capitalism itself, the modern

critique of capitalism seemed to be propelled through an annihilation of space by time. These early theories of imperialism would be resurrected later to assist in the reassertion of space in Marxist social theory, but this was more an act of desperation than inspiration, tapping one of the few areas of modern Marxist thought where geography seemed to matter.

In the critical social sciences, modernization was conceptualized around an at least superficially similar historical rhythm and rationalization, initiated with the origins of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution and moving through another troublesome transition at the end of the nineteenth century. Recomposing some of the same sources inspiring Western Marxism, from Kant and Hegel to Marx himself, critical social science characteristically defined this latter transition as the conclusive and categorical passage from Tradition to Modernity, *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, mechanical to organic solidarity. For the major theoreticians, Modernity (with a capital M) had indeed arrived, for better and worse. Above all, it demanded to be understood as the dominant theoretical and political referant, both at home and abroad.

What Marxists saw as the rise of imperialism via the internationalization of finance capital, the critical social scientists began to interpret as the time-lagged diffusion of development (as capitalist modernity) to the undeveloped, traditional, not yet fully modernized parts of the world. Here too there was a primarily Eurocentric vision which attached modernization everywhere to the historical dynamics of European industrial capitalism, to what Foucault described as 'the menacing glaciation of the world'. But whereas Marxism's theorization of history maintained a singular critical focus, social science rendered its critical historicism in many different versions: the methodological individualism of Max Weber, the sociology of collective consciousness of Émile Durkheim, the neo-Kantian scepticism of Georg Simmel, the intentional phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. In all these approaches, there was some attention given to human geography and to the geographically uneven development of society, but this geography of modernity remained essentially an adjunct, a reflective mirror of societal modernization.

While the two streams of critical social theory battled over the appropriate interpretation of history, the core modern movements of Marxism-Leninism and positivist Social Scientism engaged more pragmatically in changing it. Each coalesced around a different response to the *fin de siècle* restructuring of capitalism, creating hegemonic programmes for social progress that would shape the political cultures of the world throughout the twentieth century. The Marxist modern movement based itself in a revolutionary socialist strategy of vanguard action and a controlled territoriality of class struggle, a strategy that would, in

due course, be successfully reinforced by events in Russia. An equally instrumental and opportunistic social science dedicated itself to the possibilities of scientifically planned reform primarily under the aegis of the liberal capitalist state, a visible hand of social guidance that would also be almost immediately reinforced by the successful reforms of liberalism in the 'progressive era' and, more ambiguously, in the liberal socialism associated with the rise of European social democracies. Both of these contemporaneous modern movements were to be shaken by crisis and doubt within their separate spheres of influence during the Great Depression and the Second World War, but they would emerge recharged, restructured, and even more antagonistically hegemonic in the 1950s.

The key argument I wish to establish in this admittedly broad and sweeping depiction of modernization and modernism is not only that spatiality was subordinated in critical social theory but that the instrumentality of space was increasingly lost from view in political and practical discourse. During the extended *fin de siècle*, the politics and ideology embedded in the social construction of human geographies and the crucially important role the manipulation of these geographies played in the late nineteenth-century restructuring and early twentieth-century expansion of capitalism seemed to become either invisible or increasingly mystified, left, right and centre.

Hidden within the modernity that was taking shape was a profound 'spatial fix'. At every scale of life, from the global to the local, the spatial organization of society was being restructured to meet the urgent demands of capitalism in crisis – to open up new opportunities for super-profits, to find new ways to maintain social control, to stimulate increased production and consumption. This was not a sudden development, nor should it be viewed as conspiratorial, completely successful, or entirely unseen by those experiencing it. Many of the avant-garde movements of the *fin de siècle* – in poetry and painting, in the writing of novels and literary criticism, in architecture and what then represented progressive urban and regional planning – perceptively sensed the instrumentality of space and the disciplining effects of the changing geography of capitalism. But within the consolidating and codifying realms of social science and scientific socialism, a persistent historicism tended to obscure this insidious spatialization, leaving it almost entirely outside the purview of critical interrogation for the next fifty years.

Why this happened is not easy to answer. How it happened is only now being discovered and explored in any detail. Part of the story of the submergence of space in early twentieth-century social theory is probably related to the explicit theoretical rejection of environmental causality and all physical or external explanations of social processes and

the formation of human consciousness. Society and history were being separated from nature and naively given environments to bestow upon them what might be termed a relative autonomy of the social from the spatial. Blocked from seeing the production of space as a social process rooted in the same problematic as the making of history, critical social theory tended to project human geography on to the physical background of society, thus allowing its powerful structuring effect to be thrown away with the dirty bathwater of a rejected environmental determinism.

Another part of the story has to do with the modernist political strategies of the time. Here geography was given another reductionist interpretation and dismissal, not as external environment but as cognitive intuition. Those seeking the demise of capitalism, for example, tended to see in spatial consciousness and identity – in localisms or regionalisms or nationalisms – a dangerous fetter on the rise of a united world proletariat, a false consciousness inherently antagonistic to the revolutionary subjectivity and objective historical project of the working class. Only one form of territorial consciousness was acceptable – loyalty to the socialist state as soon as it came into being, but even that was considered only a temporary strategic convenience. Those seeking reformist solutions to the problems of capitalism were also uncomfortable with localisms and regionalisms which might too impatiently threaten the expectantly benevolent power of the capitalist state and instrumental social science. And there was the added threat of territorial nationalisms breaking the bonds of empire and cutting off the flow of profits so vital to 'metropolitan' reform. Here too only one form of territorial allegiance was cultivated and expected (i.e. to the national state), but national patriotism and citizenship were usually couched more in a cultural than a geographical identity and ideology, another example of the inherently spatial defined as something else. That the state was itself a socially produced space actively engaged in the reproduction of a particular social spatialization was thus rarely seen – and remained conspicuously absent from critical socialist and capitalist theories of state formation and politics.

#### *The mid-century involution of Modern Geography*

By the 1920s, the isolation of Modern Geography and geographers from the production of social theory was well advanced. For most of the next fifty years, geographical thinking turned inwards and seemed to erase even the memories of earlier engagements with the mainstreams of social theorization. Only the ghost of Immanuel Kant effectively remained alive from that distanced past and its privileged apparition was

used to lead the academic discipline of geography into further isolation. After all, who better to wrap Modern Geography in a warm cocoon of intellectual legitimacy than the greatest philosopher in centuries who also professed to be a geographer?<sup>5</sup>

Geography settled into a position within the modern academic division of labour that distinguished it (and rationalized its distinction) from both the specialized and substantive disciplines of the natural and human sciences (where theory was presumed to originate) and from history, its allegedly co-equal partner in filling up 'the entire circumference of our perception', as Kant put it. Geography and history were ways of thinking, subjective schemata which co-ordinated and integrated all sensed phenomena. But by the 1920s, putting phenomena in a temporal sequence (Kant's *nacheinander*) had become much more significant and revealing to social theorists of every stripe than putting them beside each other in space (Kant's *nebeneinander*). History and historians had taken on a crucial interpretive role in modern social theory: an integrative and cross-disciplinary responsibility for the study of development and change, modernity and modernization, whether expressed in the biography of individuals, the explanation of particular (historical) events, or the tumultuous transformations of social systems. The historian as social critic and observer, history as a privileged interpretive perspective, became familiar and accepted in academic and popular circles. In contrast, geography and geographers were left with little more than the detailed description of outcomes, what came to be called by the chroniclers of the discipline the 'areal differentiation of phenomena' (Hartshorne, 1939, 1959).

The exceptional theoretical acquiescence of mid-century human geography was a sideway to disciplinary involution. Here and there, a few geographers individually contributed to theoretical debates in the social sciences and scientific socialism, drawing mainly on the continuing strengths of physical geography and the occasional appeals of historians to limited environmental explanations of historical events. But the discipline as a whole turned inwards, abstaining from the great theoretical debates as if a high wall had been raised around it.

With its Kantian *cogito* mummified in neo-Kantian historicism, Modern Geography was reduced primarily to the accumulation, classification, and theoretically innocent representation of factual material

5. Kant helped to make ends meet by lecturing on geography at the University of Königsberg for nearly forty years. He gave his course forty-eight times, lecturing more often only on logic and metaphysics. Kant saw geography – mainly physical geography – as 'the propaedeutic for knowledge of the world' (See May, 1970, 5). May opens his interesting account with another Kantian assertion: 'The revival of the science of geography ... should create that unity of knowledge without which all learning remains only piece-work.'

describing the areal differentiation of the earth's surface – to the study of outcomes, the end products of dynamic processes best understood by others. Geography thus also treated space as the domain of the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile – a world of passivity and measurement rather than action and meaning. Accurate packages of such geographical information continued to be of use to the state, in the East and West, for military intelligence, economic planning, and imperial administration. These three arenas of intelligence, planning, and administration defined an 'applied' geography almost by default, cementing a special relationship with the state that probably arose first in an earlier age of imperial exploration. The majority of the most prominent mid-century geographers in the United States of America were tied in one way or another with intelligence-gathering activities, especially through the Office of Strategic Services, the progenitor of the CIA, and there still remains an office of 'The Geographer' in the State Department in recognition of dedicated and disciplined service. Without undue exaggeration, the French radical geographer Yves Lacoste – one of those who interviewed Foucault on geography – entitled his book on the field *La Géographie: ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre* (Lacoste, 1976).

Given this attachment to the state, it is not surprising that the subfield of political geography generated the most active attempts at theorization. Sir Halford Mackinder's notion of the Eurasian 'Heartland' as the 'geographical pivot of history' (1904) and his active participation in redrawing the map of Europe after the First World War (see Mackinder, 1919) established and legitimized geopolitics as the primary practical and theoretical focus of human geography. This centrality would last through the interwar years, at least until the aberrant episode of German *geopolitik* made non-fascist geographers think twice about venturing too far into the realms of political theory building. With its theoretical fingers burnt again, human geography as a whole retreated into the calmer climes of mere description, while political geography became what some called the discipline's moribund backwater.

Backed into its neo-Kantian cocoon, the explanation of human geographies took several different forms. One emphasized the old environmental 'man/land' tradition and sought associations between physical and human geographies on the visible landscape, either via the influences of the environment on behaviour and culture or through 'man's role in changing the face of the earth' (Thomas, 1956). Another concentrated on the locational patterns of phenomena topically organized to reflect the established compartments of modern social science. This defined specialized fields of economic, political, social, cultural, and much later, behavioural or psychological geography, but not, one



might add, a geography based in political economy. A third approach aimed at synthesizing everything in sight through a comprehensive and typically encyclopedic regionalization of phenomena, an approach considered by most mid-century geographers to be the distinctive essence of the discipline. Finally, a historical geography roamed freely through all three of these approaches tracing the human geographies of the past as a temporal sequencing of areal differentiation and basking in the intellectual legitimacy and power of the historical imagination. Characterizing every one of these forms of geographical analysis, from the most tritely empirical to the most insightfully historical, was the explanation of geographies by geographies, geographical analysis turned into itself, the description of associated outcomes deriving from processes whose deeper theorization was left to others.

While this involution occurred, the main currents of Western Marxism and critical social science lost touch with the geographical imagination. There were a few small pockets of provocative geographical analysis and theorization that survived through this mid-century spatial acquiescence: in the evolutionary urban ecology of the Chicago School; in the urban and regional planning doctrines that were consolidated in the interwar years (see Friedmann and Weaver, 1979; Weaver, 1984); in the regional historiography and attention to environmental detail of the French *Annales* School, with its continuation of the traditions of Vidal de la Blache; among certain North American and British historians still inspired by Frederic Jackson Turner and other frontier theorists or by the Marxist theories of imperialism; in the work of Antonio Gramsci on the regional question, local social movements, and the capitalist state. For the most part, however, what was being kept alive in these residual pockets was the geographical imagination in retreat of the extended *fin de siècle*. Relatively little that was new was added after the early 1930s and even the preserved remains of the past were encased in an ascendant and confining historicism which consigned its geography to the background of critical social discourse.

In any case, nearly all these residual pockets were to dwindle in impact and importance through the Great Depression and the war years so that by 1960 their specifically geographical insights were only dimly perceptible. At this point, with postwar recovery and economic expansion in full flow throughout the advanced capitalist and socialist world, the despatialization of social theory seemed to be at its peak. The geographical imagination had been critically silenced. The discipline of Modern Geography was theoretically asleep.

### *Uncovering Western Marxism's spatial turn*

Very little has yet been written on the despatialization of social theory up to the 1960s. The sounds of silence are difficult to pick up. The works of Perry Anderson (1976, 1980, 1983), however, offer an excellent critical survey of Western Marxism that almost inadvertently chronicles the loss of spatial consciousness in mainstream Marxism after the Russian Revolution and simultaneously prepares the way, again without necessarily intending to do so, for understanding how and why the pertinent spatiality of social life began to be rediscovered in the late 1960s. To end this chapter and to introduce the next, I will use Anderson's work to locate the origins of what would eventually become a lively and productive encounter between Western Marxism and Modern Geography.

From 1918 to 1968, Anderson argues, a new 'post-classical' Marxist theory crystallized to redirect historical materialist interpretations of what I have called modernity, modernization and modernism. This retheorization was geographically unevenly developed, finding its primary homelands in France, Italy, and Germany, 'societies where the labour movement was strong enough to pose a genuine revolutionary threat to capital' (1983, 15). In Britain and the United States no such revolutionary challenge was apparent, while in the east a rigid Stalinist economism left little room for redirection and reinterpretation. For Anderson, the founding fathers of this countercurrent were Lukacs, Korsch, and Gramsci, while following in their wake were the more modern figures of Sartre and Althusser in France; Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse and others associated with the Frankfurt School in Germany; and Della Volpe and Colletti in Italy.

This Latinized and Frankfurtized movement shifted the institutional and intellectual terrain of Marxist theory, rooting it more than ever before in university departments and research centres, and in a resurgent interest in philosophical discourse, questions of method, a critique of bourgeois culture, and such subjects as art, aesthetics, and ideology (which were lodged in the classically neglected realms of capitalism's superstructure). More traditional infrastructural themes having to do with the inner workings of the labour process, struggles at the workplace over the social relations of production, and the 'laws of motion' of capitalist development tended to be given relatively less attention. The same was true for more conventionally political (and I might add, geographical) topics as the organization of the world economy, the structure of the capitalist state, and the meaning and function of national identity, although here even the classical theorists were often neglectful as well.

To Anderson, Marxism seemed to be moving backwards, from econ-

omics through politics to focus on philosophy, reversing the consummate path taken by Marx. Philosophically understanding the world had taken precedence over changing it. But by the 1970s, this 'grand Western Marxist tradition' had 'run its course' and was being replaced by 'another kind of Marxist culture, primarily oriented towards just those questions of an economic, social or political order that had been lacking from its predecessors' (1983, 20). This restructured Western Marxism also took on a different geography, becoming centred in the English-speaking world rather than in Germanic or Latin Europe. As a result, 'the traditionally most backward zones of the capitalist world, in Marxist culture, have suddenly become in many ways the most advanced' (Ibid., 24).

Anderson's *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (1983) reflects upon his earlier works, his successful and not so successful projections of the fate of this restructured Marxism, with its new zest for the concrete and its re-centred geography.<sup>6</sup> Following an introductory personal scorecard on 'Prediction and Performance', Anderson first retraces and expands upon the essentially French debates on 'Structure and Subject' that he argues led to the current crisis of Latin Marxism; and then moves through a review of German Marxism (focusing mainly on Habermas) to elucidate the even more perplexing debates on the changing relations between 'Nature and History'. Hidden within these chapters, however, is a lateral story-line that Anderson edges towards but fails to see, an emerging postmodern discourse that was seeking not to dismiss Marxism as a critical theory but to open it up to a necessary and overdue spatialization, to a materialist interpretation of spatiality that would match its magisterial historical materialism.

This initial assertion of a postmodern critical human geography was almost entirely confined to the French Marxist tradition, which had always been more open to the spatial imagination than its Anglo-American and German counterparts. Sartre's 'search for a method' in his increasingly Marxist existentialism and Althusser's anti-historicist re-reading of Marx were the primary pre-texts for this Gallic spatialization. The Marxified phenomenological ontology of Sartre represented an hermeneutic that centred on the subjectivity, intentionality, and consciousness of knowledgeable human agents engaged not only in making history but also in shaping the political culture of everyday life in

6. It is not geographically inconsequential that *In the Tracks...* is a publication of the Weltek Library Lectures, given by Anderson in 1982 at the University of California, Irvine. It is also interesting to note how filled these lectures were with resplendent spatial metaphors, despite their underlying historicism. Anderson describes his work as a 'cadastral survey' of the shifting 'terrain', an exploration of the 'shaping of a new intellectual landscape', a 'changing map of Marxism'

modern capitalist society. Althusser's structuralism, in contrast, emphasized the more objective conditions and social forces which shape the underlying logic of capitalist development and modernization. Each contributed to channelling post-war French Marxism into two discordant streams, split by opposing views of the structure-subject relation but both peculiarly open to the possibility of spatialization.

The crisis of French Marxism that Anderson sadly describes as a 'massacre of ancestors' was a crisis of disillusionment that 'exploded' French Marxism into a multitude of fragments, obliterating the orthodoxies of the immediate and more distant past.<sup>7</sup> Faced with this unprecedented heterogeneity, fragments flying every which way (including antagonistic departures from Marxism entirely), Anderson mourned the symptomatic loss of faith. Sartre would turn in his last years to a 'radical neoanarchism', Althusser and Poulantzas to exasperated lamentations on the absence of a theory of politics and the state in historical materialism. The bedevilling (and also 'neo-anarchistic') Foucault – with Derrida and many others – would dilute and diminish Marxism still further, in Anderson's view, promoting a contagious 'randomization of history' and celebrating the triumphant ascendancy of a poststructuralist (and by implication post-Marxist) episteme. With splendid irony, however, Anderson finds one telling exception to this 'precipitous decline' in French Marxism.

No intellectual change is ever universal. At least one exception, of signal honour, stands out against the general shift of positions in these years. The oldest living survivor of the Western Marxist tradition I discussed, Henri Lefebvre, neither bent nor turned in his eighth decade, continuing to produce imperturbable and original work on subjects typically ignored by much of the Left. The price of such constancy, however, was relative isolation. (1983, 20)

Lefebvre is discovered seemingly out of nowhere. Anderson gives little attention to him in his earlier works and little more is mentioned of Lefebvre in the discussion of the contemporary decline of French Marxism. What was of such signal honour, exceptional constancy, imperturbable originality in the works of Lefebvre? I suggest that this perhaps least known and most misunderstood of the great figures in twentieth-century Marxism has been, above all else and others, the incunabulum of post-modern critical human geography, the primary source for the assault against historicism and the reassertion of space in critical social theory. His constancy led the way for a host of other attempted spatializations,

7. See Lefebvre's discussion of *Le Marxisme éclaté* in *Une pensée devenue monde faut-il abandonner Marx?* (Lefebvre, 1980), pp. 16–19 especially

from Sartre, Althusser, and Foucault to Poulantzas (1978), Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984), Harvey (1973, 1985a, 1985b), and Jameson (1984). And he remains today the original and foremost historical and geographical materialist.

Anderson misses this creative recomposition of Western Marxism taking place amidst the great French deconstruction which followed the explosion at Nanterre in 1968. His interpretations of such key figures as Sartre, Althusser, and Foucault too quickly dismiss as retreats from politics their creative, but not entirely successful, ontological struggles with the spatiality of existential being, modernity, and power; and he does not see at all the anglophonic Marxist Geography that Lefebvre and other French Marxists helped to stimulate. Despite his sensitive tapping of francophone Marxist traditions, Anderson still seems trapped in the 'historically centred Marxist culture' of the anglophone world, in which he claims that 'theory is now history, with a seriousness and severity it never was in the past; as history is equally theory, in all its exigency, in a way it typically evaded before.' Adding to history 'and geography' would have made a world of difference.

## 2

## Spatializations: Marxist Geography and Critical Social Theory

The dialectic is back on the agenda. But it is no longer Marx's dialectic, just as Marx's was no longer Hegel's. The dialectic today no longer clings to historicity and historical time, or to a temporal mechanism such as 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' or 'affirmation-negation-negation of the negation' . . . To recognise space, to recognise what 'takes place' there and what it is used for, is to resume the dialectic; analysis will reveal the contradictions of space. (Lefebvre, 1976, 14 and 17)

The discourses of Modern Geography and Western Marxism rarely crossed paths after their formative period in the extended *fin de siècle*. Geography isolated itself in a tight little island of its own, building a storage-house of factual knowledge that was only occasionally broadcast into the public domain. Marxism meanwhile stashed away the geographical imagination in some superstructural attic to gather the dust of discarded and somewhat tainted memories. Only in France, as we have seen, did a vibrant spatial discourse survive the mid-century despatialization, keeping alive a debate that seemed to have disappeared entirely in other, non-Latinate Western Marxisms.

In the early 1970s, however, a resolutely Marxist geography began to take shape from a sudden infusion of Western Marxist theory and method into the introverted intellectual ghetto of anglophonic Modern Geography. It formed a vital part of a nascent critical human geography which arose in response to the increasingly presumptive and theoretically reductionist positivism of mainstream geographical analysis (Gregory, 1978). Although this newborn Marxist geography tended to be inward-looking, unsettled in its critical stance, and perhaps therefore largely unnoticed outside the disciplinary discourse, it shook the foundations of Modern Geography and initiated a debate that would eventually extend well beyond the disciplinary cocoon.

deeper and more radical deconstruction and reconstitution of critical social theory than Giddens has apparently contemplated.

Making sense of contemporary modernity, or postmodernity if you will, cannot be done by simply announcing the logical and methodological equivalence of history, geography, and sociology in their Modernist guises, and extolling the fruitfulness of their nascent reconstructions. The whole fabric of the Modern academic and intellectual division of labour that has defined, enclosed, and reified these disciplines since the late nineteenth century must be radically reshaped. Giddens's residual sociologism thus takes on a new significance, for the Sociology that has been so richly consolidated and expanded by Giddens stands today as one of the many reified disciplinary monuments that need to be deconstructed before we can successfully do anything new.

## 7

## The Historical Geography of Urban and Regional Restructuring

Capitalist development must negotiate a knife-edge between preserving the values of past commitments made at a particular place and time, or devaluing them to open up fresh room for accumulation. Capitalism perpetually strives, therefore, to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs at a particular point in time, only just as certainly to undermine, disrupt and even destroy that landscape at a later point in time. The inner contradictions of capitalism are expressed through the restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes. This is the tune to which the historical geography of capitalism must dance without cease. (Harvey 1985, 150)

David Harvey's restatement of his earlier depiction of urbanization and struggles over the built environment signalled a shift in the scope of his arguments, from the specifically urban to a more comprehensive geographical and analytical landscape. Projected into this larger landscape is a dynamic and contradiction-filled dialectic of space and time, human agency and structural constraint, a historical geography that is played out at many different scales, from the routinized practices of everyday life to the more distant geopolitical shufflings of a global spatial division of labour.

The landscape has a textuality that we are just beginning to understand, for we have only recently been able to see it whole and to 'read' it with respect to its broader movements and inscribed events and meanings. Harvey's inaugural reading focuses on the hard logics of the landscape, its knife-edge paths, its points of perpetual struggle, its devastating architectonics, its insistent wholeness. Here, capital is the crude and restless *auteur*. It strives and negotiates, creates and destroys, never fully able to make up its mind. Capital is seen as two-facedly choreographing the chronic interplay of time and space, history and

geography, first trying to annihilate with temporal efficiency the intransigent social physics of space only to turn around again to buy time to survive from the very spatiality that it seeks to transcend. This stressful ambivalence etches itself everywhere, organizing the landscape's material forms and configurations in an oxymoronic dance of destructive creativity. Nothing is wholly determined, but the plot is established, the main characters clearly defined, and the tone of the narrative unshakably asserted.

The real text, of course, is much more subtly composed and filled with many different historical and geographical subtexts to be identified and interpreted. Capital, above all, is never alone in shaping the historical geography of the landscape and is certainly not the only author or authority. Yet the landscape being described must be seen as a persistently capitalist landscape with its own distinctive historical geography, its own particularized space-time structuration. The initial mapping, at least, must therefore never lose sight of the hard contours of capitalism's 'inner contradictions' and 'laws of motion' no matter how blurry or softened history and human agency have made them. The plot has thickened but not enough to obliterate an enduring central theme.

The 'restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes' that is triggered by the dynamics of capitalist development has been the most important discovery arising from the encounter between Western Marxism and Modern Geography. In the preceding chapters, I have tried in many different ways to communicate the significance of this problematic spatiality and to begin its practical and theoretical exploration – that is, to outline the foundations for a politically-charged empirical interpretation of the historical geography of capitalism. For these purposes, the term 'spatialization' has been applied in both a general sense, to indicate the increasing reassertion of a spatial emphasis in ontological, epistemological, and theoretical discourse and in our practical understanding of the material world; and as a particular phenomenological and ideological process associated with the development and survival of capitalism as a mode of production, a political economy, and a material culture of modernity. The general and particular meanings of spatialization revealingly intersect in the contemporary context, in the formation of postmodern geographies, but do not lose their separable qualities.

It is now possible, however, to begin to generalize about the particularities of capitalist spatialization and to particularize the generalizations of a spatialized critical social theory. The two projects intertwine today primarily in the analysis of urban and regional restructuring, or to use the terminology developed in the previous chapter, the changing configuration and political meaning of the nested hierarchy of regionalized

and nodal locales that has been evolving in distinctive ways since the origins of capitalism. This encompassing and institutionalized spatial matrix is currently in the midst of a dramatic reformation that is itself both generalizable and unique, evocative of past periods of prolonged crisis and restructuring, yet filled with new conditions and possibilities that challenge established modes of understanding. Making theoretical and practical sense of this contemporary restructuring of capitalist spatiality has become the overriding goal of an emerging postmodern critical human geography.

### Observations on the Concept of Restructuring

Restructuring, in its broadest sense, conveys the notion of a 'brake', if not a break, in secular trends, and a shift towards a significantly different order and configuration of social, economic, and political life. It thus evokes a sequential combination of falling apart and building up again, deconstruction and attempted reconstitution, arising from certain incapacities or perturbations in established systems of thought and action. The old order is sufficiently strained to preclude conventional patchwork adaptation and to demand significant structural change instead. Extending Giddens's terminology, one can describe this brake-and-shift as a time-space restructuration of social practices from the mundane to the *mondiale*.

These societal restructuring processes continue to be buried under idealized evolutionary schemata in which change just seems to happen, or arises to punctuate some ineluctable march towards 'progress'. This evolutionary idealism (another form of historicism) disguises the rootedness of restructuring in crisis and in the competitive conflict between the old and the new, between an inherited and a projected order. Restructuring is not a mechanical or automatic process, nor are its potential results and possibilities pre-determined. In its hierarchy of manifestations, restructuring must be seen as originating in and responding to severe shocks in pre-existing social conditions and practices; and as triggering an intensification of competitive struggles to control the forces which shape material life. It thus implies flux and transition, offensive and defensive postures, a complex and irresolute mix of continuity and change. As such, restructuring falls between piecemeal reform and revolutionary transformation, between business-as-usual and something completely different.

That we are currently involved in an ongoing period of intensive societal restructuring seems, with the increasing clarity of hindsight, difficult to deny. There is also widespread agreement among those

attempting to interpret this contemporary restructuring that it was sparked by a series of interrelated crises – from the urban insurrections of the 1960s to the deep worldwide recession of 1973–75 – which marked the end of the prolonged period of capitalist economic expansion following the Second World War. Although less widely agreed upon, it can also be argued that these crises arose primarily in conjunction with the particular institutional structures which sustained and shaped the expansionary capitalist accumulation of the post-war boom years. More specifically, they can be seen as a complex chain of crises: in the established international division of labour and global distribution of political and economic power; in the expanded and now clearly contradictory functions of the national state, in the Keynesian welfare systems and stabilizing social contracts between governments, corporations, and organized labour; in the patterns of uneven regional development that had become so firmly established within countries over the preceding century; in the developed forms of exploitation of women, minorities, and the natural environment; in the spatial morphology, industrialization, and financial functioning of cities and metropolitan areas; in the design and infrastructure of the built environment and collective consumption, in the ways in which capitalist production relations are imprinted into everyday life, from the labour process in the workplace to the reproduction of life, labour, and patriarchal power in the household and home.

Each of these arenas of crisis and restructuring has spawned a growing academic literature and new contexts for critical debate. Each has also generated its own constellation of popular catchphrases trying to capture and define the new forms assumed to be emerging. One of the earliest and most familiar announced the birth of a 'Post-Industrial Society', with its telescoped end to the industrial era and its associated ideologies in the advanced capitalist countries, and the concurrent shift to a new service-based economy as an idealized conclusion to the epochal climb through progressive 'stages of growth'. However, there are many others which by now have filled the popular imagination with projected epithets of restructuring: a 'New International Economic Order' induced by the 'industrial miracles' of the NICS (the 'Newly Industrialized Countries') and the 'Peripheralization of the Core' in an 'Age of Global Capital' recentred around the 'Pacific Rim'; a 'Power Shift' pitting 'Sunbelt versus Frostbelt' arising from the 'Deindustrialization of America' and the growth of 'High Technology' and the 'Electronics Revolution' in new 'Silicon Landscapes'; 'Post-Welfare States' struggling with the 'New Austerity' to create an 'Information-based Society' and 'Post Fordist' industrial systems.

Picking a way through this metaphorical forest is no easy task. Each

of these labels helps somewhat to illuminate the restructuring process, but they often seem to flash so brightly that they prevent us from seeing what may actually be taking place in all its fulsome complexity and inter-contingency. It becomes necessary, therefore, to present a brief reading of where I intend to go in the analysis and interpretation of contemporary restructuring processes.

The starting-point is the assertive connection between restructuring and spatialization. The contemporary moment will thus be looked at as the most recent attempt to restructure the spatial and temporal matrices of capitalism, another search for a survival-aimed spatio-temporal 'fix'. If there is to be a historico-geographical materialism (or, if one prefers, a robust critical human geography), it will come from making theoretical and practical sense of this contemporary spatial, temporal, and societal restructuring.

To emphasize the most conventionally neglected element in this threefold restructuring (and to defend against its submergence in the other folds and creases), I will focus on three major streams of spatial restructuring. The first begins with the ontological restructuring that has advanced the reassertion of space in critical social theory and philosophical discourse, the main theme of the previous chapters. If we need a contemporary epithet for this theoretical restructuring, let it be 'post-historicism'. The second stream has been carried along by the spatialization of Western Marxism and concerns the material political economy of capitalist accumulation and class struggle in the context of urban and regional development. For the present moment, 'postfordism' provides a convenient capsulation of this stream of spatial restructuring. The third stream adds to urban and regional political economy an insistent cultural dimension and critique which stretches restructuring into debates on the nature of modernity, modernization, and modernism. Here the arguments are caught in the assertion of a 'postmodernism' rising Janus-like in response to the pervasive instrumentalities of the contemporary moment.<sup>1</sup>

The three streams will come together most propitiously in the empirical context of an exemplary place, the confluent city-region of Los Angeles. Before looking at Los Angeles, however, I will venture primarily along the second stream to describe some aspects of the political economy of urban and regional restructuring, its spatiality, period-

1. As used here, the asserted prefix *post* indicates 'following upon' or 'after' but does not mean complete replacement of the modified term. Modernism, Fordism, and historicism persist even after their post-defined restructuring. Similarly, certain features of postmodernism, postfordism, and posthistoricism can be found prefiguratively in a more distant past. This usage may confound those who insist upon the application of a categorical logic of temporality and sequence, but that is partly its intent.

icity, and historical geography. It will be a rather sweeping journey without the thick empirical detail and complexity that are necessary to give depth and conviction to the arguments, especially perhaps to the ideographically-minded historian and geographer. But it indicatively sets the scene as a suggestive outline aimed at stimulating further historico-geographical inquiry

### **Regions in Context: on 'Restructuring and the 'Regional Question'**

During the past twenty years, significant changes have been occurring in the patterns of uneven regional development that had become so firmly established within advanced capitalist countries over the preceding century. In much the same way that concurrent developments within the global economy seem to be shattering the neat compartmentalization of First, Second, and Third Worlds and inducing proclamations of a 'New International Division of Labour', so too has the patterned mosaic of subnational regional differentiation become more kaleidoscopic, loosened from its former rigidities. The accelerating shift in industrial production and political power from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt in the USA, for example, has become a sweeping metaphor enclosing and structuring public debate and scholarly research on the 'regional question'. Similarly, attention has been drawn to an emergent 'Third Italy' (Bagnasco, 1977) complicating the simple dualism that had heretofore defined the most classical 'North-South' model of uneven regional development, and to a series of 'role reversals of regions' in many other countries, as once prosperous industrial areas decline in tandem with the rapid industrialization of formerly less developed regional peripheries.

As many have been arguing, the regional question and the analysis of regional restructuring have been placed on the contemporary political and theoretical agenda with renewed force. Consider, for example, the titles of some recent publications: 'Regions in Crisis', 'Capital Versus the Regions', 'The Regional Problem', 'Regions in Question', 'Regional Wars for Jobs and Dollars', 'Regional Analysis and the New International Division of Labour', 'Regionalism and the Capitalist State', 'Uneven Development and Regionalism', 'Global Capitalism and Regional Decline', 'In What Sense a Regional Problem?', 'The North Will Rise Again', 'Regional Development and the Local Community', 'Profit Cycles, Oligopoly, and Regional Development'. Clearly something is afoot, as alternative views jockey for position in an emerging regional political economy, each seeking an appropriate understanding of contemporary regional change.

Four interpretive contexts can be used to situate the contemporary debates on the regional question. The first, and most comprehensive, is the transformative retheorization of space, time and social being, that is currently taking shape in contemporary social theory and philosophy. Little more need be said about this situating context other than to emphasize again that it springs primarily from a reconstructed ontology of human society in which the formation of regions, the patterning of uneven regional development and regionalism, and the formulation of regional theory are directly implanted in an encompassing process of spatialization, the social production of space. Concrete as well as concretizing, historically situated and politically charged, this spatial structuration of society gives an interpretive specificity to regions as part of a multilayered spatiality which stretches in its impact from everyday life in an immediate built environment of social integration to the systemic networks of flows and transactional connections that tie together the global space economy. Subnational regions are thus amongst the many created and constitutive locales of social life, contingent upon social and historical processes while simultaneously formative of society and history.

The second interpretive context arises from a more specific retheorization of the causes and consequences, the nature and necessity, of geographically uneven development. As previously argued (Chapter 4), geographically uneven development is an essential part of capitalist spatiality, of its distinctive spatial matrix and topology. Produced and reproduced at multiple scales, it is inherent to the concretization of capitalist social relations and regionalizations both as medium/presupposition and as outcome/embodiment. Like spatiality itself, geographically uneven development has traditionally been seen as an external reflection of social forces, an illusive mirror of social action and the struggle of social classes. It, too, is now being appropriately reconceptualized in a reconstructed historical and geographical materialism.

Situating the (subnational) regional question in the context of geographically uneven development connects it with the dynamics of changing spatial divisions of labour and with the interplay of regionalization and regionalism. Subnational regions defined in this way are thus the product of a regionalization at the level of the national state, a particularized geographical differentiation that is as tentative, ambivalent, and creatively destructive as any other component of the spatial matrix of capitalist development. Similarly, this subnational spatial division of labour may provide effective channels of exploitation, or it may not – it has no automatic and predetermined functionality to the logic of capital. It is a resultant spatialization arising from competitive struggles and

particular conjunctures, filled with tensions, politics, ideology, and power. Regionalism in turn is a possible response to regionalization, a 'reaction formation' to borrow a term used to describe ethnicity and other communal identities. Regionalism can take on many different political and ideological forms, ranging from an acquiescent request for additional resources to an explosive attempt at secession (Hadjimichalis, 1986).

These dynamics of subnational regionalization and regionalism cannot be easily generalized – or specified – for they are so essentially conjunctural and are periodically substantially restructured. Hence the need to concretize the regional question still further by placing it within a third interpretive context: the periodicity of regionalization in the historical geography of capitalism. This takes us back into Harvey's depiction of the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes and Mandel's 'long wave' periodization of capitalist development. As noted earlier, Mandel's interpretation of the regional question springs from his assertion that the whole capitalist system appears as a hierarchical structure of different levels of productivity – as 'the uneven development of states, regions, branches of industry and firms, unleashed by the quest for superprofits' (1975, 102). This search for superprofits centres around three major sources, two defined primarily around regional differentiation (subnational and international) and the third around sectorally uneven development. All three sources have existed since the origins of capitalism, but Mandel argues that each has achieved particular prominence in different historical periods.

During what he calls the age of 'freely competitive capitalism' (up to the end of the nineteenth century) the dominant form of superprofits derived from the regional juxtaposition of industry and agriculture within the then advanced capitalist countries, a juxtaposition that was deeply imbricated in the relations between city and countryside. Industrial capital and production were concentrated and localized in only a few territorial complexes, surrounded by rings of agrarian regions serving to supply raw materials and food, markets for industrial consumer goods, and reservoirs of cheap labour.

This distinctive regional division of labour was consolidated through the formation of integrated national markets (as in the unification of Germany and Italy in the late nineteenth century) and reinforced hegemony over dependent territories. The classic case of an agrarian 'subsidiary country' was Ireland, whose budding industries, as Marx noted, were destroyed in an early example of the process of capitalist underdevelopment. Other similar subsidiary regions or 'internal colonies' included Flanders, the American South, the Italian Mezzogiorno, many parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, some eastern and southern

sections of Germany (Bavaria, Silesia, Pomerania-Mecklenburg), the agrarian west and centre of France, and Andalusia. What was occurring throughout the nineteenth century was thus a regional restructuring and expansion in scale of the preformative town–countryside relationship and the 'primitive accumulation' which marked the origins of capitalism. The geographical expansion of commercial capital initially paved the way, but the dominant spatializing force was associated with massive urban industrialization.

Nineteenth-century regionalisms developed mainly out of attempts to preserve distinct regional cultures in the face of increasing homogenization or to resist the particular spatial divisions of labour being imposed by expansive market integration and the equally expansive national state. For the most part, this involved subsidiary agrarian regions, but relatively industrialized locales such as Catalonia also responded. Anarchist thought, with its explicit antistate and decentralist principles, found fertile ground in many of these regional territorialities and provided the major radical threat to urban–industrial capitalism during most of the century. But within the national peripheries there also developed powerful new regional hegemonic blocs (to borrow from Gramsci) which welcomed, orchestrated, and benefited from the processes of regional underdevelopment. They helped to consolidate the regional structures of power and to subdue more radical regionalisms.

In the age of imperialism and the rise of corporate monopolies and oligopolies, the primary source of superprofits began to shift. As part of another scale-expanding and crisis-induced restructuring hingeing around the *fin de siècle*, the international juxtaposition of development (in the imperialist states) and underdevelopment (in colonial and semicolonial territories) became more important to the survival of capitalism than subnational regional differentiation. Superexploitation of a newly consolidated global periphery spurred recovery from the late-nineteenth-century depression and led the rapid expansion that occurred in the core countries during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Capitalism did not suddenly internationalize. Mercantile capital had been operating to extract superprofits throughout the world for centuries through commodity trade. Imperialism, however, internationalized another circuit of capital, involved in finance, money, and investment transactions, which more efficiently organized the international economy for larger scale geographical transfers of value than had ever before been possible. The old city–countryside relationship became implanted not only on a national scale but also in a global structure of capitalist core and periphery.

Regional underdevelopment in the core countries did not disappear, nor did the pressure of antagonistic regionalisms. But there was some



significant regional restructuring, shaped largely by the geographically uneven impact of internationalization and imperialist profit-takings, and by the accelerated concentration and centralization of domestic capital (exemplified by the rash of vertical and horizontal mergers around the turn of the century, especially in the USA). Regions containing the main imperialist capitals and the centres of monopoly control (for example, major corporate headquarters) tended to grow much more rapidly than those which may have formerly been at similar levels of industrial development but did not benefit as much from global profit-taking. The major scale for spatial restructuring in the core countries, however, was not international as much as it was intra-urban. The 'inherited' regional divisions of labour within countries probably did not change very much during this period, even when the overall intensity of regional inequalities was significantly reduced. Indeed, this relative stability, if not amelioration, of the structure of uneven regional development was itself an indication of the shrinking relative importance of the superprofits derived from subnational regional differentiation.

The older agrarian peripheries were either partially urbanized or left relatively alone, but their key role in supplying cheap labour, food, raw materials, and markets was increasingly transposed to the 'external' colonies. Where these functions did remain important, such as in Ireland and the Mezzogiorno, peasant rebellions and aggressive regional movements did arise (as did massive outmigration). But the main political and economic action was hierarchically sandwiched around the regions, in the major urban centres 'below' and in the world-scale arena of inter-imperialist rivalry 'above'

This distinctive regime of accumulation, based on the consolidation of an international division of labour partitioned into a dominant-industrial-imperialist world core and a dependent-agrarian-underdeveloped world periphery, as well as on the more centralized corporate structure of monopoly and finance capital, traced a similar path of historical development to that of the competitive-entrepreneurial regime that preceded it. Emerging clearly in the period of crisis and restructuring of the late nineteenth century, it became the foundation for the expansive boom in the early twentieth century, only to plunge into its own crisis and restructuring phase during the Great Depression. Monopoly capitalism did not disappear, however, just as its assertion as a predominant regime of accumulation did not erase its predecessor. What developed was another 'layer', a reorganized regime of accumulation articulated with its residual antecedents and able to coordinate recovery from the deepest depression in capitalist history/geography.

Mandel describes this new regime of accumulation as 'Late Capital-

ism' and argues that its appearance marks a shift in the primary source of superprofits from geographically uneven development to 'the overall juxtaposition of development in growth sectors and underdevelopment in others, primarily in the imperialist countries but also in the semi-colonies in a secondary way' (Mandel, 1975, 103). As he is careful to note, these technological rents – profits originating from advances in productivity based largely on technological developments and the organization of production systems – existed in earlier periods and were essential to the very origins of capitalism. In the absence of high levels of centralization and concentration of capital, however, the appropriation of technological rents tended to be limited in magnitude and of short duration, especially given uncontrolled entrepreneurial competition. Only within Late Capitalism, he argues, do they become predominant and efficiently systemic. The rising importance of technological rents overshadows somewhat the preeminent role played by the exploitation of geographically uneven development in previous regimes of accumulation. But at the same time, they become more central to an understanding of the changing regional divisions of labour and the changing nature of the regional question over the past fifty years. As the sectoral sources of superprofits rise, the spatial sources do not necessarily decline to insignificance, for geographically uneven development can be continuously reconstituted. Indeed, the contemporary search for superprofits, wherever they can be found, is reaching a competitive pitch that is higher than ever before in the history of capitalist development, recreating new and more complex patterns of development and underdevelopment all over the world.

Muted during the Great Depression and in the immediate post-war period, the regional question took on new importance in the 1950s. From the reorientation of the British New Towns programme towards more regional versus exclusively urban problems, to the formation of DATAR in France and the beginnings of spatial planning for the Italian Mezzogiorno and other 'backward' regions in core countries, regional welfare planning was put on the public agenda, often but not always in response to regional unrest and regional political movements. As was true for other forms of planning, and the role of the state more generally, there were two potentially contradictory sides to these promises of improved regional welfare under the aegis of what can be called a regime of state-managed capitalism. Centralized state planning required a sustained social legitimization, especially from those most likely to create political and economic disorder. Promising more balanced regional development accorded well with this objective. At the same time, the state – in no small part because it depended upon tax revenues – had also to facilitate the capitalist accumulation process, which did not

consistently coincide with regional welfare improvements. After all, uneven regional development has always been an important foundation for the generation and extraction of superprofits and continues to be so even in an age when the primary source of superprofitability may have shifted to sectorally uneven development.

This contradictory role of the welfare state and of regional welfare planning remained relatively invisible well into the 1960s, although virtually every major regional development programme aimed at reducing regional economic inequalities met with powerful resistance from some segments of private capital. Even when their initiation could not be blocked, programme activities were at least partially co-opted to benefit highly centralized and concentrated capital interests, often draining resources (and available technological rents) from the 'backward' region into the most developed areas of the national space economy. This was true for the main regional welfare planning experiment in the USA, centred on Appalachia, and was repeated over and over again in France (for Brittany and the south), in Britain (for nearly all the designated regional development areas), in Italy (via the *Casa per il Mezzogiorno*). A similar pattern also operated globally in the 'backward' peripheral countries which increasingly adopted the systematic spatial planning models originating in the core and often promoted by core countries as a postcolonial planning panacea.

Awareness of the countervailing spatial strategies of capital (and of the state) was minimal on the part of both the targeted regional poor and the experts (theoreticians and practitioners) who were shaping regional policy. For the most part, the first group were soothed by the promises proffered even when they were not immediately delivered. At least someone seemed finally to be aware of the regional problem and was proposing to do something about it. The regional planners, enthralled by the new spatial theories of the time, were also inclined to be blissfully accommodative, convinced that their idealistic objectives could be obtained through good intentions and innovative spatial planning ideas.

Regional planning never received especially large public expenditures, but the period from 1950 to 1970 was a golden age of sorts in the history of regional development theory and practice (Weaver, 1984). 'Growth poles' and 'growth centres', regional science and spatial systems analysis, urban systems modelling and other efforts aimed at reconstructing a more balanced and equitable hierarchy of nodal regions, were at the height of popularity. By 1970, virtually every country in the world had adopted some form of spatial planning policy, in some instances placing it as the centrepiece of the national economic development plan. This worldwide expansion of a Keynesian regional

planning signalled an explicit, if often only documentary, commitment by the state to redress regional (and international) inequalities, in effect to change the established spatial division of labour. As long as the promises appeared potentially achievable, antagonistic anti-state regionalisms remained relatively quiescent, waiting for the goods to be delivered.

The series of crises and recessions which marked the end of the post-war economic expansion of core capitalism also destroyed the patient optimism of regional welfare planning. New sectoral and spatial 'liberation' movements arose to challenge the orderly processes of accumulation. Radical nationalist movements (including the Chinese Cultural Revolution) removed more than a billion people from the profitable games of international development and underdevelopment or at least significantly disrupted the smoothness of the play. A resurgence of regionalisms similarly strained the established operations of the welfare states, while new places began to compete successfully to localize, if not liberate, the technological rents being generated by the most propulsive sectors of an increasingly flexible, postfordist, and seemingly 'disorganized' regime of capitalist accumulation (Piore and Sabel, 1984, Scott and Storper, 1986, Offe, 1985, Lash and Urry, 1987). The sequence of spatializations that has marked the historical geography of capitalism moved into another round of crisis and restructuring, churning up a new set of competitive possibilities for reformation and transformation. To continue to make sense of the regional question thus requires a fourth context of interpretation, one that is grounded in the particularities of the contemporary restructuring process.

Not all regional political economists today depend upon the specifically Mandelian conceptualization of long waves, Late Capitalism, and technological rents in their analyses of the contemporary period. Yet there is a remarkably similar emphasis and interpretation evident within the wide range of contemporary regional approaches, from the study of the articulations of 'submodes' of production and the rise of 'global capitalism' (Forbes and Thrift, 1984, Gibson and Horvath, 1983; Gibson et al., 1984); to the French modes of regulation/regimes of accumulation school and its arguments about the 'globalization of the crisis of Fordism' (Aglietta, 1979; Lipietz, 1984a, 1984b, 1986); to the new industrial geography of territorial labour markets, sectoral profit cycles, high-technology-based industrial complexes, and changing spatial divisions of labour (Massey, 1984, Walker and Storper, 1984; Cooke, 1983; Scott and Storper, 1986). There are differences in periodization, terminology, and especially in the specific emphases given to the political implications of contemporary restructuring, but there are significant commonalities that reinforce rather than reduce the strengths

of an emerging historico-geographical materialist perspective on the regional question.

All share a similar crisis model of historical and geographical change; an emphasis on class analysis and the labour process; an appreciation for the relevance of technology and corporate structure in the differentiation of productivity and profits; explicit attention to the interplay between spatiality, politics, and the role of the state; a concern for analysing the internationalization of capital and the associated acceleration of capital mobility and labour migration, and a vision which recognizes, to varying degrees, the general nature and particular distinctiveness of capitalist spatialization. More specific interpretations typically hinge around a historical turning point in the late 1960s or early 1970s and its echoing of Great Depressions of the past; and there is an open acceptance of the general restructuring hypothesis: that we are currently in the midst of a period in which capital and labour are being significantly reorganized in an attempt (not yet completely successful) to restore rising profits and reinforce labour discipline, in part through direct attacks on working-class organization, wages, and standards of living.

There is also general agreement that the 'new' regional and international divisions of labour taking shape over the past twenty years are not total replacements of the 'old' divisions, which remain not only alive, but kicking as well. The historical geography of capitalism has not been marked by grand turnabouts and complete system replacements, but rather by an evolving sequence of partial and selective restructurings which do not erase the past or destroy the deep structural conditions of capitalist social and spatial relations. There is thus no justification for a naive and simplistic 'rush to the post' – to a postindustrialism, post-capitalism, postMarxism – that insists on a finalizing end to an era, as if the past can be peeled away and discarded.

Nevertheless, there have been significant regional changes taking place in the current period of restructuring and these need to be noted. Paradoxical as it may initially appear, one noteworthy change has involved an intensification of pre-existing patterns of uneven regional development in many areas, and a consequent reinforcement of old core and periphery divisions. Several well-established core regions have experienced sustained and even expanded relative economic and political power, while many backward peripheries have plunged deeper into relative impoverishment, in some cases into pandemic famine. These 'intensified continuities', however, are not simply more of the same, for they have been occurring under a new set of sectoral, social, political, and technological conditions that are significantly modifying how geographically uneven development is produced and reproduced. Identifying

and understanding these altered conditions has become the critical focus for contemporary interpretations of regional restructuring.

To illustrate, it is useful to return to the technological rents and sectorally uneven development which Mandel has argued have supplied the major source of superprofits since the Second World War. As noted earlier, technological rents have always been vitally important in the historical geography of capitalism. Since the war, however, their pivotal significance has tended to make regional change and the organization of regional divisions of labour more than ever before a direct product of sectoral dynamics, as particular industries and specific branches and firms within industrial sectors are increasingly differentiated in terms of productivity, profitability, and control over the labour force. Underlying this juxtaposition of rapid growth cycles in some sectors/branches/firms, and decline and devalorization in others, has been a far reaching technological 'fix' stimulated and sustained by state policies (especially via defence and military expenditures in the USA) and putatively aimed at achieving greater flexibility in the workplace and in the organization of the labour process.

Flexible specialization in production, in labour-management relations, in the location of productive activities, has the effect of derigidifying older hierarchical structures and creating at least the appearance of a significantly different order of responsibility and control. For Piore and Sabel (1984), it has defined *The New Industrial Divide*, the most significant economic and political transformation since the origins of industrial capitalism. For Claus Offe (1985), the German theorist of the state, it is part of *Disorganized Capitalism* or, as Lash and Urry (1987) call it, *The End of Organized Capitalism*, a breakdown of planned and managed systems of social power and political authority. For others, it is the essence of postfordism, and the instigator of new modes of agglomeration built around increasingly disintegrated social divisions of labour and a flexible fabric of transactions coagulating in innovative urban and regional production complexes that are located outside the centres of the old Fordist industrial landscape.

Flexible specialization, vertically disintegrated production systems, and the breakdown of rigid hierarchies have been accompanied by accelerated capital mobility to facilitate the search for sectoral superprofits (including those achieved by substantial cheapening of labour costs) anywhere in the world. The geographical search is not always successful, of course, but the aggregate effect of these sectoral restructuring processes has been to derigidify long-established spatial divisions of labour at virtually every geographical scale. Here is where the sectoral and spatial scenarios of contemporary restructuring converge and reverberate together, speeding up the cycles of exploitation in both the

vertical and horizontal planes of uneven development.

The regional repercussions of this, perhaps unparalleled, loosening up of the landscape of capital under its new regime of 'flexible accumulation' (Harvey, 1987) have been dramatic and perplexing. Relatively stable mosaics of uneven regional development have suddenly become almost kaleidoscopic. Once highly industrialized and prosperous core regions – segments of the American manufacturing belt, north-east England and Wales, northern France, Wallonia, the Ruhr – have been experiencing accelerated economic decline and deindustrialization, while many poor peripheral regions (including some of the classical examples of regional underdevelopment) have become new centres of industrial growth and economic expansion. These 'role reversals of regions', as Mandel called them, reflect what has been the most extensive geographical decentralization and internationalization of industrial production since the origins of industrial capitalism, generating a growing list of NICs and NIRs, newly industrialized countries and sub-national regions.

The role reversal of regions is in itself an oversimplification. The regional restructuring that has been taking place is much more complex and unstable. It might better be described as an accelerated regional recycling, with regions moving through several phases of development and decline in association with shifting sectoral superprofits, rounds of intensive labour disciplining, and heightened capital mobility. One of the best analysed examples of this regional recycling is New England (Harrison, 1984), now booming again after an intense internal disciplining of both capital and labour. A similar recovery may also be happening in the Scottish Lowlands and a few other older industrial regions. There is also some evidence to suggest that the industrial 'miracles' of the NIRs and NICs may be equally unstable and short-lived, making such grand descriptive metaphors as the Frostbelt–Sunbelt shift and the New International Economic Order appear increasingly exaggerated and misleading.

What has been happening can be more cautiously described as a significant but not transformative shake-up in long-established regional divisions of labour and the formation of new and still highly unstable regionalizations of national economies. Associated with this restructured regionalization has been a responsive regionalism, as various social movements and regional political coalitions react to this restructuring – to resist, to encourage, to reorganize, to demand more, to press for redirection. These multiple forms of regionalism, whether radical or reactionary, have repoliticized the regional question as a more general spatial question. No longer is regionalism rooted only in resistance to the homogenization of cultural traditions, as it was primarily in the nineteenth

century. It is now part of what Goodman (1979) aptly called 'regional wars for jobs and dollars', an intensified territorial competition that stretches across the whole hierarchy of spatial locales, from the smallest locality to the scale of the world economy.

The growing importance of technological and sectoral restructuring has thus not eliminated the exploitation of geographically uneven development as a source of sustaining superprofits. Nor has it reduced the political and economic significance of the spatiality of social life. On the contrary, the contemporary period of restructuring has been accompanied by an accentuated visibility and consciousness of spatiality and spatialization, regionalization and regionalism. The instrumentality of the spatial and locational strategies of capital accumulation and social control is being revealed more clearly than at any time over the past hundred years. Simultaneously, there is also a growing realization that labour, and all other segments of society peripheralized and dominated in one way or another by capitalist development and restructuring, must seek to create spatially conscious counter-strategies at every geographical scale, in a multiplicity of locales, to compete for control over the restructuring of space. Given the effective empowerment of a neo-conservative opposition bent on burying again the exploitative instrumentality of spatial restructuring, it becomes even more urgent that all progressive social forces – feminism, the 'Greens', the peace movement, organized and disorganized labour, movements for national liberation and for radical urban and regional change – become consciously and explicitly spatial movements as well. For the left, this is the postfordist and postmodern regional challenge.

### **Restructuring and the Evolution of Urban Form**

Contemporary studies of urban restructuring have begun to recapitulate a historical geography that closely parallels the sequence of spatializations just described for regional development. As these retrospective glances accumulate, it becomes increasingly possible to argue that the evolution of urban form (the internal spatial structure of the capitalist city) has followed the same periodizable rhythm of crisis-induced formation and reformation that has shaped the macro-geographical landscape of capital since the beginnings of large-scale industrialization. Looking back from the present fourth modernization, the same three prior periods of accelerated restructuring and modernization stand out from the continuous restlessness. Each begins with the downturns of recession, depression, and social upheaval that have marked the end of long phases of expansive growth in the macro-political economy of

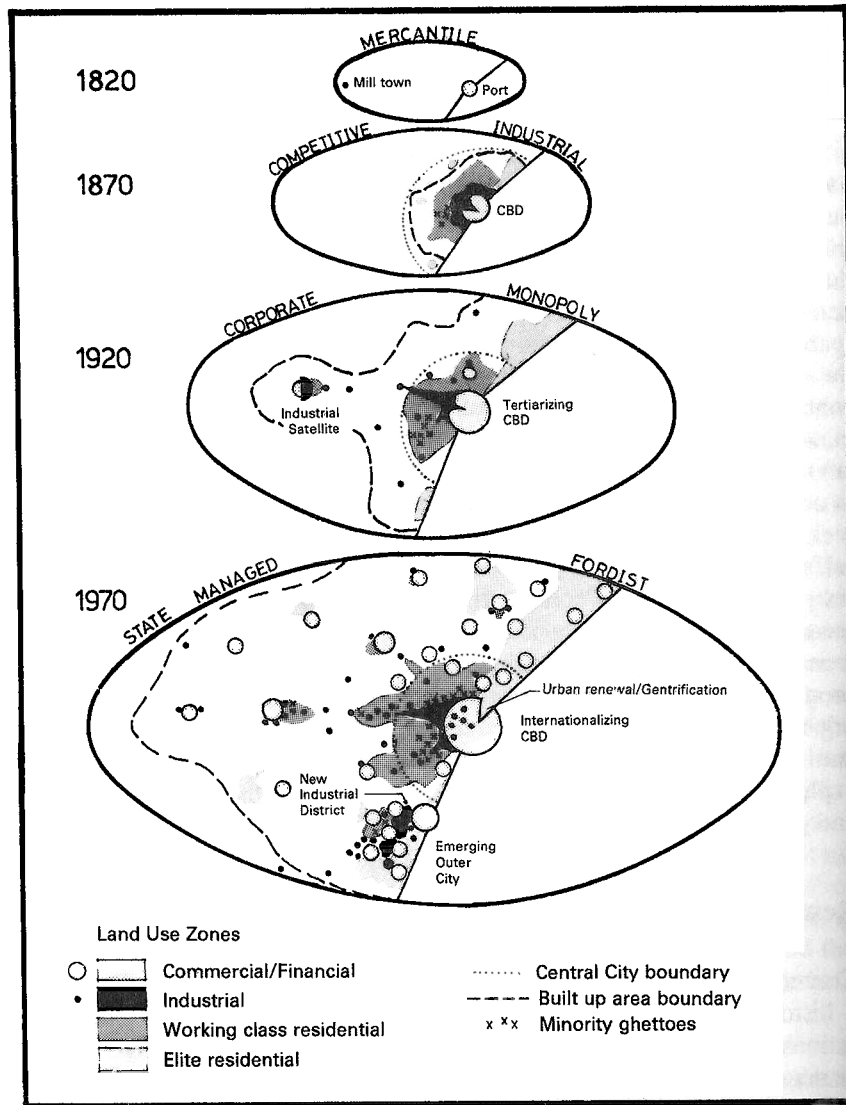


Figure 1 The evolution of urban form: prototypes of the North American city 1820-1970

capitalist development. Each also engenders a significant recontextualization of the spatiality of social life, a different human geography.

The precise dating of these restructuring eras varies from country to country, as do the relative intensities of restructuring. But between 1830 and the mid nineteenth century, during the last three decades

before the start of the twentieth century, and in the period after the Russian Revolution to the end of the Second World War, it seems increasingly clear that the internal form and social regionalization of the capitalist city experienced significant changes almost everywhere. And it is equally clear that we are now embroiled in another round of profound and perplexing urban metamorphosis.

Figure 1 presents a generalized picture of the evolution of urban form through these four restructuring periods. As with regional restructuring, the sequence of urban spatializations is cumulative, with each phase containing traces of earlier geographies, already formed urban spatial divisions of labour which do not disappear so much as become selectively rearranged. If one feels comfortable with the geological metaphor used by Massey (1984) to describe the inter-regional spatial division of labour, the specifically urban spatializations can also be seen as 'layered' one on top of the other to reflect pronounced shifts in the geographies of investment, industrial production, collective consumption, and social struggle. The sedimentation, however, is more complex and labyrinthine than a simple layering, for each cross-section contains representations of the past as well as the contexts for the next round of restructuring.

There are other simplifications in this sequential framing, made necessary by the detail-shedding generalizations required to produce such summative mappings. The base landscape, for example, assumes no pre-existing cities projecting their pre-capitalist built environments into the urban picture. All the schematic descriptions will thus be more directly applicable to areas where urbanization and industrialization originate in conjunction with the spread of capitalism. Where there has been extensive pre-capitalist urbanization, as in Europe and Asia, the picture is much less neat and orderly, although some of the same patternings can be distinguished. The North American city probably provides the closest approximation, allowing for distortions caused by differing local physical geographies. Chicago, for example, will fit better than New York city, just as Manchester will fit better than London. The 'models' shown in Figure 1 thus serve as idealized generalizations meant to illustrate the composite of key restructuring processes which are not always found together or equally vividly in every capitalist city.

The sequence begins with the 'Mercantile City' set in a context of petty commodity production, international trade, and limited industrialization. Its port city focus and sprinkling of small industrial milltowns in a still largely agricultural landscape most closely characterizes the urban situation in the United States before the 1840s. In the exemplifying American case, commercial capital was concentrated in small, dense, mainly coastal settlements occupied by artisans, shopkeepers, farmers, administrators, and traders. New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and

Boston were the primary centres in the North. Savannah, Charleston, Mobile, and New Orleans, much smaller than the big four of the North, served the southern economy and the slave-based cotton production that provided the major national export commodity.

Eighty per cent of the urban population was self-employed and urban life revolved primarily around the activities of the petty bourgeoisie and the nodality of the port focus. Capitalist industrialization, as was true of the early phases of the industrial revolution in Europe, began primarily in the countryside at energy sites connected to the commercial ports by canal, river transport and, increasingly, by rail. Although social struggles tended to be centred around agrarian issues and rural landownership during most of the post-Revolutionary period, rising inequalities of wealth within the mercantile cities became increasingly visible and these inequalities frequently became the source of conflict and social unrest.

David Gordon, summarizing the rich historical literature on early American urbanization, provides a spatially insightful description of the 'contradictions of the Commercial City':

Commercial accumulation tended to generate uneven development among buyers and sellers. Because different socioeconomic groups were living and working closely together in the Commercial Cities, these spreading inequalities became more and more physically evident. . . . It appears that this evidence of inequality generated popular protest against it. As inequalities reached their peak during the 1820s and 1830s, popular protests also seemed to intensify. Most of these protests focused on demands for more equality. Because these protests frequently had political effect, they tended to limit opportunities for further commercial accumulation. (1978, 36)

Gordon adds that this 'dialectic of uneven development and popular protest' demonstrated the 'fundamentally *spatial* aspect to the contradictions of the commercial path to capital accumulation'.

Because the Commercial City retained the precapitalist transparencies of immediate, intimate, and integrated social relationships, commercial capitalist profits could not be masked. The quest for such a disguise – the urgent need for which was so dramatically witnessed in the streets of the Commercial City – played a central role in prompting a turn to a new and ultimately more opaque mode of capital accumulation. (Ibid.)

Similar conditions brought popular protest into the streets of European and other cities in 1830 and 1848, the most explosive moments of the first major phase of urban restructuring.

The period from the 1840s to the early 1870s was a time of extraordinary industrial and urban growth in Europe and in North America.

International trade simultaneously expanded at an unprecedented rate. The 'age of capital', as Hobsbawm called it, had superseded the 'age of revolution' and the pace of capitalist spatialization accelerated at every geographical scale after the significant restructuring of capitalism that culminated in the global crises of 1848–49. The punctuation points of this spatialization were new kinds of cities and hierarchical city-systems which added to the growing traditional functions of social control, commercial accumulation, and political administration an unprecedented, scale-expanding agglomeration of industrial production.

Nodality was particularly important for industrial capital. It brought about much greater returns with each increase than it did for commerce or agriculture and once freed from certain physical and historical constraints the characteristic nodality of human locales exploded to create the distinctive form of the classic '*Competitive Industrial Capitalist City*'. Never before was production so geographically concentrated, so locationally centralized, so densely agglomerated. In the eastern United States, urban industrialization swallowed up the small mercantile cities, either eliminating them entirely or preserving some remembrances in vestigial 'old towns' that have occasionally survived to the present (or have been recreated as simulacra, exact copies for which the original no longer exists). The long-established pre-industrial cities of Europe were much more difficult to disintegrate and digest, but even there the centralization of industrial production began to disassemble the urban cores to accommodate the expansion of the three distinctive elements of competitive industrial capitalism: the industrial factories and associated producer services, the industrial bourgeoisie, and the new urban proletariat, the proximate industrial working class that made the whole system work.

The intensification of land use in the urban centre redefined the form of the city and instigated a remarkable – and more opaque – social and spatial ordering of urban life. Accommodative technologies of transport and building (for example, the railway and the lift) accelerated this intensification and its associated wellspring of agglomeration economies. Rippling out from the Central Business District and employment nucleus was a zoned built environment of residential rings and radial sectors gridded to contain the attenuated daily journeys to work (for the urban proletariat) and the daily journeys to control workers (for the industrial bourgeoisie). The zonation was largely a matter of class, as the antagonistic social structure of competitive industrial capitalism became spatialized in segregated and socially homogeneous urban compartments and enclosures.

The internal regionalization was much more repetitive and neatly mappable than in pre-industrial cities, but the flagrant regularity was not

often seen by scholarly observers at the time. The social and political significance of the spatial organization of society was conveniently fading from view in nineteenth-century social science and only a few perspicacious onlookers, such as Engels in his writings on Manchester, were able to see the increasingly hidden instrumentality of this new urban geography. In its broad outlines of concentricities and wedges, centres and peripheries, as well as in its more intricate web of cells, ranks, enclosures, and partitionings, this was a disciplinary spatialization designed not by some conspiracy of capitalist architects but artfully designed nonetheless.<sup>2</sup>

The Chicago School of urban ecologists uncovered the broad geometry of this particular urban regionalization but buried its powerful instrumentality under an obfuscating ideology of naturalism and/or cultural relativism. Later this instrumentality would be buried even deeper, as the logic of neo-classical economics took hold of urban theory and made it a disciplining space of its own. But well before these developments, the form of the centralized industrial capitalist city had changed dramatically, even in paradigmatic Chicago. The explosion of the Paris Commune in 1871, the financial panic of 1873, the associated loss of 300,000 jobs in the United States, a series of mass evictions and rent riots in New York City, and other shocks to the system had signalled the end of the post-1848 boom and the start of another prolonged period of capitalist restructuring which would last almost until the end of the century.

During this restructuring period, capitalism was markedly intensified through the increasing concentration and centralization of capital in corporate monopolies; and extensified through the expansive internationalization of finance capital in an emerging age of imperialism. The state began to enter more deeply into the economy, especially through fiscal and monetary management and the initiation of urban economic planning. As this was occurring, there were also vigorous working-class protests and strikes, led by growing unions and socialist/labour parties in virtually all the industrialized countries.

Labour unrest in the United States, often instigated by radicalized European immigrants, was first centred on small mining and railway towns, but after 1885 it spread into the centres of the largest cities and

2. Harvey's rich essay on the transformation of Paris, 1850-70 (Harvey, 1985b) explores perhaps the most paradigmatic example of the disciplinary power contained in this instrumental urban spatialization, especially with its extraordinary Haussmanesque elaborations. Foucault begins his explorations much earlier and is more responsible than anyone else for opening our eyes to the instrumentality of space/power/knowledge in the urban context.

exploded with particular vehemence in the three major industrial centres, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago (Gordon, 1984). The efficient geographical centralization of factories and working-class communities which characterized the classic industrial capitalist city seemed to be breeding a strengthened working-class consciousness and militancy, paralleling on a much larger scale the earlier experience of company towns. Not only had capitalist accumulation slowed down, but the disciplinary spatiality of urban life had been weakened. Even Haussman's Paris had been taken over, if only briefly, by the Communards.

The crisis-induced need to restore conditions of profitable capital accumulation and labour control lay behind the intensification and extensification of capitalism that developed through the late nineteenth century. After the world-wide depression of the 1890s, capitalism rebounded with new vigour in the industrialized countries and accompanying this *fin de siècle* turnaround was a selective restructuring of the capitalist city. By the 1920s a new geography had consolidated, more clearly in some cities, to be sure, than in others. I will again use the American city as the archetypal example.

Greater corporate centralization, an increased segmentation of the labour force into monopoly and competitive sectors, new production technologies, and the separation of management and production functions reorganized the spatial division of labour in capitalist urbanization. In the new '*Corporate-Monopoly Capitalist City*', industrial production became less concentrated around the city centre, as factories spread into the formerly residential inner rings and, even more against the old pattern, into satellite industrial centres such as Gary, Indiana, and East St Louis, Illinois. As a result, the old urban cores became increasingly tertiarized, replacing lost industries with an expanding number of corporate headquarters (by 1929, more than half the largest corporate headquarters were located in New York and Chicago alone), government offices, financial institutions, and supportive service and surveillance activities.

Rings of working-class residences and racial and ethnic ghetto enclaves continued to serve a still dominant urban core, and in almost every large American city there remained at least one protected residential wedge stretching from centre to periphery where the highest income inhabitants had their homes. But the cityscape sprawled much further outwards as managers, supervisors, and professionals joined the old industrial bourgeoisie in a surge of suburbanization that broke out of the earlier administrative boundaries of the city. The areal multiplication of separate incorporated municipalities replaced annexation as the major pattern of urban territorial expansion, creating a degree of metropolitan political fragmentation never approached in the past. The urban land-

scape was not only stretched over a much larger area, it was broken into many more pieces.

This fragmented, polycentric, and much more complex urban regionalization assisted industrial capital in escaping from agglomerated working-class militancy. Employers could more easily move away from organized union pressures,<sup>3</sup> the workforce became more segmented and residentially segregated, new assembly-line and related technologies provided less agglomerated ways to capture the positive externalities of industrial production, and a more beneficent local and national state could be tapped more easily for substantial subsidies. The geography was not as neatly ordered as it had been but, especially with the motor car and other forms of mass transit, the urban possibilities for capital accumulation and labour co-optation were significantly expanded. By the time the boom was over, the American city had almost completed its captivating proletarianization. Not much more than a century earlier, the urban population was around 80 per cent self-employed. By 1940, almost 80 per cent were wage and salary workers.

The after-effects of the Russian Revolution and then the onset of the Great Depression shattered the complacencies of the early twentieth-century boom and led to still another round of urban restructuring. Rather than creating any great new turnarounds and reversals, however, this third restructuring seemed to amplify further the same processes that characterized the second modernization: increasing centralization, concentration, and internationalization of corporate capital; increasing segmentation of labour based on a changing organization of the production process; increasing urban political fragmentation and disagglomeration of working-class communities; and an even greater role for the state in both fostering accumulation and maintaining legitimized labour discipline.

Through Keynesian policies of demand stimulation, monetary and fiscal controls, economic planning, state-directed investments in industry, and social welfare programmes (aimed specifically at assuaging working-class pressures and dampening down social unrest), the state intervened more directly and deeply into the production process than ever before. A '*State-Managed Urban System*' began to take shape from the devalorization and restructuring of the Corporate City in the Depression years. After wartime devastation opened still more room for

3. Gordon (1984, 41) cites the president of a contracting firm in Chicago: '... all these controversies and strikes that we have had here for some years ... have prevented outsiders from coming in here and investing their capital ... It has discouraged capital at home ... It has drawn the manufacturers away from the city, because they are afraid their men will get into trouble and get into strikes ... The result is, all around Chicago for forty or fifty miles, the smaller towns are getting these manufacturing plants.'

accelerated accumulation and super-profit making, capitalism boomed again in another guise. A different urban landscape consolidated in the wake of this expansion.

Suburbanization was markedly accelerated after the Second World War. With substantial state support and encouragement, sizeable portions of the working class, blue as well as white collar, settled into suburban tracts and privatized enclosures. Expansive metropolitanization, accompanied by an even greater fragmentation of political jurisdictions and a quickened decentralization (not only of industrial plants but also of corporate headquarters, retail, and other services) contributed further to the selective abandonment of the inner urban core. The old centres of the urban landscape were left with a residual mix of competitive sector firms, older industries, some luxury shops and hotels, key agencies of the state and finance capital, remaining corporate headquarters, and a bloated irregular workforce comprised primarily of minorities and the poorest segments of the metropolitan population – a geographically concentrated and subservient reserve army of labour.<sup>4</sup>

The major devaluation of inner city assets associated with the consolidation of the State-Managed Urban System was linked from the start with persistent and usually state-assisted efforts at downtown 'revitalization' – through urban renewal, gentrification, and changes in land-ownership and regulatory patterns aimed at maintaining a substantial corporate (and managerial) presence. The delicate balance between deterioration and renewal varied from city to city and changed significantly over time, creating an uneasy situation which required massive expenditure by the state in the form of welfare payments for both the poor and the wealthy who remained – added to the subsidization to suburbanize those who moved out. The tensions surrounding this uneasy mix – so redolent of the knife-edge spatial problematic described by Harvey – permeated urban (and to a significant extent, national) politics throughout the post-war period, and not only in the United States.

The ability to sustain this seemingly unstable spatialization and the co-ordinated spatial planning it required derived largely from the expansionary boom that began in the USA during the war and in Europe and Japan some time after. Again, the state was in the forefront. Automobile manufacturing (by state-owned companies in many countries), air transport (most often state-run), the oil industry (heavily subsidized to fuel expanded physical mobility), housing construction (fostered by govern-

4. There were similar processes operating in European cities, but suburbanization, metropolitan political fragmentation, and the abandonment of the inner city (except via wartime destruction) tended to be much less intense.



ment programmes for mortgages and loans), and the production of consumer durables (televisions, washing machines, and other commodities allowing for increased privatization of formerly more collectively organized consumption) led the economic expansion and contributed to major changes in urban form, especially through the concurrent suburbanization process (Walker, 1981).

More than ever before, the social and spatial relations organizing production and reproduction and the conflicts and struggles arising from these relations came to be channelled, absorbed, and managed by the state. Some have called this particular regime of accumulation and mode of regulation 'state monopoly capitalism' Poulantzas often used 'authoritarian state capitalism' and Lefebvre once toyed with calling it a *système étatique*, virtually a state mode of production. For Mandel, 'Late Capitalism' was sufficient. Other soubriquets attached accumulation and regulation to Fordism (Lipietz, 1986) to re-emphasize their rootedness in the industrial labour process. Whatever its most appropriate label, this 'different' capitalism produced a 'different' urban spatialization, a provisional urban spatial fix filled again with new possibilities as well as the seeds of its own recreative destruction. This altered, but still contradiction-filled urban landscape, appearing most vividly in the 1950s and 1960s, was the backdrop for the development of a Marxist urban political economy and urban sociology, a Marxism which for the first time became centred on the specificities of urbanization and spatial change. But before the landscape could be effectively understood, it too began to change.

The onset of the current period of urban restructuring can be traced into the stretched and tensely matted fabric of the state-managed and spatially planned urban systems – the *villes sauvages* Castells called them – that began to be torn apart in the 1960s. The contagious inner-city riots sparked by those groups who benefited least from post-war boom, the urban insurrections in France and Italy in 1968 and 1969, and a multiplying series of urban-based social movements again stirred visions of a specifically urban revolution and signalled the end of post-war business-as-usual. The so-called 'urban crisis', however, was part of a much larger crisis of the state and the whole system of management, planning, welfare, and ideological legitimization that had dragged capitalism out of the Great Depression and propelled it through the prolonged post-war expansion. By the 1960s, the expensive Keynesian welfare policies had become increasingly difficult to sustain, while the financial pressures accompanying the huge expansion of credit that fuelled the boom now started fuelling inflation instead. The global recession of 1973–75 followed a chain of shocks to the system and helped to trigger another concerted round of restructuring.

As before, the very same social and spatial structures of accumulation that had facilitated expansion became the arenas of economic stress and decline. The post-war 'productivity deals' that brought major wage and welfare benefits to organized labour in return for productive peace in the workplace; the demand-driving suburbanization process; the delicately balanced devaluation/renewal of inner cities; the system of state regulation and management, the rapid expansion of government employment, shifted from being part of the solution to being part of the problem. Exacerbated by a rise in petroleum prices and energy costs and successful challenges to American global military hegemony, another political and economic crisis shattered the confidence and optimism that marked the 1950s and 1960s in the USA and other core capitalist countries. The form of the crisis was both old and new. In many ways, it involved the classic problems of overproduction/underconsumption, but complicating a classic interpretation was a reproduction crisis arising primarily from a fiscal crisis of the state and its squeezing effect on both capital accumulation and the ability to maintain effective means of labour discipline and social control. As a result, the need to reconfigure the spatial landscape of capital took on an even more crucial urgency. As this contemporary restructuring advances, it is disassembling not only the urban fabric but the framework of critical interpretation of capitalist development as well.

### Some Contemporary Conclusions and Continuities

It is still too early to make any unequivocal statements about the present phase of social and spatial restructuring. The outcome is still open, a new dye has not been rigidly cast over the restless landscape, and thus the capability to look back on a *fait accompli* is not yet available. It should be remembered that the most acute observers of the three past periods of prolonged restructuring (amongst whom I would include Marx for the first, Lenin for the second, and Mandel for the third) had the great advantage of hindsight, the opportunity to interpret a restructuring that had successfully restored the expansiveness of capitalist accumulation and had begun to consolidate its representative spatialization. A new upswing, however, has not yet begun. We must be satisfied today primarily with the tentative identification of trends and tendencies that appear to be taking hold with particular force, recognizing again that the recovery of capitalism through restructuring is not mechanical or guaranteed, that all that seems solid today may melt – or explode – into the air tomorrow.

If we succeed in being informed by past periods of restructuring,

however, some provisional expectations can be outlined. The contemporary period must be seen as another crisis-generated attempt by capitalism to restore the key conditions for its survival: the opportunity for gaining superprofits from the juxtaposition of development and underdevelopment in the hierarchy of regionalized locales and amongst various productive sectors, branches, and firms. Central to the resurrection of expansive superprofits is, as usual, the institution of invigorated means of labour discipline and social control, for the sustaining logic of capitalist accumulation breeds a competitive political and economic struggle and never proceeds without friction and resistance.

This search for superprofits and enhanced social control can be divided into two broad strategic categories of intensification (the deepening of the division of labour, the generation of new consumption needs, the incorporation of new spheres into capitalist production, the greater concentration and centralization of capital, increased legitimization of the dominant ideology, the weakening of labour organization and militancy) and extensification (a 'widening' of the division of labour, the opening of new markets, geographical expansion to tap sources of cheap labour and raw materials, increasing the scope of exploitation of geographically uneven development through value transfers and unequal exchange). Thus there are many specific paths to choose from. To choose only one as the dominant path is to be foolishly inflexible and politically naive. Furthermore, the particular mix of strategies (and counter-strategies) is itself unevenly developed and never predetermined in its effectiveness.

The same claims can be made for the spatialization which accompanies this restless search for profits and discipline. It has a broad patterning to it, but is highly differentiated and unevenly developed by its very nature, taking a variety of specific forms, not all of which can be seen as 'functional' for the logic of capital or inherently antagonistic to the demands of labour. The sequential picture of the evolution of urban form and uneven regional development that I have presented here is no more than a 'thin' description which has sifted out the particularities and complexities to highlight those instrumental textures of restructuring that can be gleaned from spatial hindsight. Extending the picture to the presently unfolding urban and regional restructuring is more difficult and will require a much more substantial empirical understanding and theoretical adaptation than has yet been achieved.

Nevertheless, looking back from the present moment to the events of the past two decades provides at least a tentative basis for identifying a series of indicative trends characterizing the contemporary restructuring process. Each of these trends has a spatializing impact that has become increasingly evident in the 1980s.

1. One prevailing trend has been the increasing centralization and concentration of capital ownership, typified by the formation of huge corporate conglomerates combining diversified industrial production, finance, real estate, information processing, entertainment and other service activities. This conglomeration process goes several steps further than the horizontal mergers of the late nineteenth century and the later vertical mergers and state-managed monopolies that were so central to the rise of Fordism. Formal management structures are often less centrally controlled and more flexible, while the core production processes have increasingly been broken into separate segments operating, unlike the integrated Fordist assembly line, at many different locations. The multiplication of branches adds further flexibility through parallel production, while more extensive subcontracting expands the vital transactions of the conglomerate even further beyond the bounds of ownership.
2. Added to the corporate conglomeration of ownership has been a more technologically-based integration of diversified industrial, research, and service activities that similarly reallocates capital and labour into sprawling spatial systems of production linking centres of administrative power over capital investment to a constellation of parallel branches, subsidiaries, subcontracting firms, and specialized public and private services. More than ever before, the spatial scope of these production systems has become global, but they also have a powerful urbanization effect through the local agglomeration of new territorial industrial complexes (usually located outside the old centres of Fordist industry). Here again there seems to be a paradoxical pairing of deconcentration and reconcentration in the geographical landscape.
3. Linked to increased capital concentration and oligopoly has been a more pronounced internationalization and global involvement of productive and finance capital, sustained by new arrangements for credit and liquidity organized on a world scale. This transnational or global capital is able to explore and exploit commodity, financial, consumer, and labour markets all over the world with fewer territorial constraints (especially from direct state control) than ever before. As a result, purely domestic capital has been playing a decreasing role in the local and national economies of the advanced industrial countries as these economies increasingly internationalize.
4. The weakening of local controls and state regulation over an increasingly 'footloose' and mobile capital has contributed to an extraordinary global restructuring of industrial production. Large-scale capitalist

industrialization has been occurring in a series of peripheral countries and regions for the first time, while many core countries have been experiencing an extensive regional industrial decline. This combination of deindustrialization and reindustrialization has shattered long-standing global definitions of core and periphery, First-Second-Third Worlds, and created the tentative outlines of a different, if not an entirely new, international division of labour

5. In the USA and elsewhere, the accelerated geographical mobility of industrial and industry-related capital has triggered and intensified territorial competition among government units for new investments (and for maintaining existing firms in place). These 'regional wars for jobs and dollars' (Goodman, 1979) absorb increasing amounts of public funds and often dominate the urban and regional planning process (at the expense of local social services and welfare). As capital increasingly co-operates, communities increasingly compete, another old paradox that is becoming particularly intensified in the present period.

6. Paralleling what has been happening at the global scale, the regional division of labour within countries has been changing more dramatically than it has over the past hundred years. Regions containing the manufacturing sectors that led the Fordist postwar boom (motor cars, steel, construction, civilian aircraft, consumer durables) are being disciplined and 'rationalized' through a varying mix of capital flight and plant closures, the introduction of new labour-saving technology, and more direct attacks on organized labour (deunionization, labour givebacks, constraints on collective bargaining). A selective reindustrialization based primarily on advanced technologies of production and centred on less-unionized sectors is simultaneously either arresting the decline in a few of the more successfully rationalized regions (for example, New England) or focusing industrial expansion on new territorial industrial complexes (typically on the periphery of major metropolitan areas).

7. Accompanying these processes are major changes in the structure of urban labour markets. Deeper segmentation and fragmentation is occurring, with a more pronounced polarization of occupations between high pay/high skill and low pay/low skill workers, and an increasingly specialized residential segregation based on occupation, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, income, lifestyle, and other employment related variables. An overall decrease in the relative proportion of manufacturing employment (due mainly to declining employment in the older, more unionized heavy industries), accompanied by a rapid increase in lower wage tertiary employment, tends to produce significantly reduced

(if not negative) rates of growth in wage levels and real income for workers and curtailed increases in productivity levels in the national economy wherever this shifting sectoral structure is most pronounced.

8. Job growth tends to be concentrated in those sectors which can most easily avail themselves of comparatively cheap, weakly organized, and easily manipulable labour pools and which are thus better able to compete within an international market (or obtain significant protection against international competition from the local or national state). The leading job growth sectors are thus both high and low technology based, and draw upon a mix of skilled technicians, part-time workers, immigrants and women. This creates a squeeze in the middle of the labour market, with a small bulging at the top and an even greater bulging at the bottom (especially if one includes the burgeoning informal economy as well). Only in the United States, however, among all the advanced industrial countries at least, has this dramatic employment restructuring been associated with substantial aggregate job growth.<sup>5</sup>

These and other prevailing restructuring processes have injected a peculiar equivocalness into the changing geographical landscape, a combination of opposites that defies simple categorical generalization. Never before has the spatiality of the industrial capitalist city or the mosaic of uneven regional development become so kaleidoscopic, so loosened from its nineteenth-century moorings, so filled with unsettling contrariety. On the one hand, there is significant urban deindustrialization emptying the old nodal concentrations not only to the suburban rings, a pattern which began as far back as the late nineteenth century, but much further afield – into small non-metropolitan towns and 'green-field' sites or beyond, to the NICs and NIRs. On the other hand, a new kind of industrial base is being established in the major metropolitan regions, with an 'urbanization effect' that is almost oblivious to the locational advantages embedded in the former urban-industrial landscape (Scott, 1983a, 1986). To speak of the 'post-industrial' city is thus,

5. The nature of this 'Great American Job Machine', as some have begun to call it, is still difficult to grasp. Suggestive, however, are two recent lists of the ten fastest growing occupations, published by the Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance at Stanford University. In terms of absolute numbers, the top ten occupations are building custodian, cashier, secretary, general office clerk, sales clerk, professional nurse, waiter/waitress, kindergarten/elementary school teacher, truck driver, and nurse's aide/orderly. The largest percentage increase expected over the next decade (reflecting the past decade) are for computer service technician, legal assistant, computer systems analyst, computer programmer, office machine repairer, physical therapy assistant, electrical engineer, civil engineering technician, personal computer equipment operator, and computer operator.

at best, a half-truth and at worst a baffling misinterpretation of contemporary urban and regional dynamics, for industrialization remains the primary propulsive force in development everywhere in the contemporary world.

Growing, in large part, out of this combination of deindustrialization and reindustrialization is an equally paradoxical internal restructuring of metropolitan regions, marked by both a decentering and recentering of urban nodalities. Sprawling suburbanization/metropolitanization continues but it no longer seems as unambiguously associated with the decline of the downtown centres. Carefully orchestrated downtown 'renaissance' is occurring in both booming and declining metropolitan regions. At the same time, what some have called 'outer cities', rather amorphous agglomerations that defy conventional definitions of urban-suburban-exurban, are forming new concentrations within the metropolitan fabric and provoking a spray of neologisms which try to capture their distinctiveness: technopolis, technoburb, urban village, metroplex, silicon landscape.

The internationalization process has created another set of paradoxes, for it involves both a reaching out from the urban to the global and a reaching in from the global to the urban locale. This has given new meaning to the notion of the 'world city' as an urban condensation of the restructured international division of labour (Friedmann and Wolff, 1982). More than ever before, the macro-political economy of the world is becoming contextualized and reproduced in the city. First World cities are being filled with Third World populations that, in some cases, are now the majority. While these combinatorial world cities increasingly stretch out to shape the international economy in a form of global spatial planning, they also increasingly incorporate internally the political and economic tensions and battlegrounds of international relations.

Neither conventional urban theory nor the Marxist urban political economy that consolidated in the 1970s has been able to make theoretical and political sense of this enigmatic contemporary urban restructuring. Whereas the former tends to overspecify the urban, making the assertion of urbanism take the place of explanation, the latter has tended, for the most part, to underspecify the urban, passing abstractly over its causal power and its integral positioning within the historical geography of capitalism. Both have tended to overemphasize consumption issues and neglect the urbanization effects of industrial production, a narrowing which may have been politically appropriate to the 1960s but is now too short-sighted to contend effectively with contemporary restructuring processes.

In many ways, the same can be said for the neo-Marxist international political economy that evolved in tandem with the urban. It, too, tended

to oversimplify the complexities of capitalist production and labour processes, or to assume that historical materialism had already solved all its riddles. Much was accomplished in exploring the multiple circuits of capital shaping the world system and in retracing their historical origins and geographical development. But the prevailing perspectives were caught short by the dramatic shifts in the international division of labour brought about by an essentially unexpected and world-wide industrial restructuring.

At present, the relatively new field of regional political economy and a reinvigorated and reoriented regional industrial geography seem to be the most insightful and innovative arenas for analysing the macro-, meso-, and micro-political economies of restructuring. Both can be called flexible specializations, for they are less concerned with old boundaries and disciplinary constraints and are thus more open to timely adaptation to meet new demands and challenges. The regional perspective facilitates the synthesis of the urban and the global while remaining cognizant of the powerful mediating role of the national state even as this role dwindles somewhat in the current era. The mutually responsive interplay of regionalization and regionalism provides a particularly insightful window on to the dynamics of spatialization and geographically uneven development, gives greater depth and political meaning to the notion of spatial divisions of labour, and abounds with useful connections to the revamped social ontologies discussed earlier. Just as important, its openness and flexibility, its inclination to try new combinations of ideas rather than fall back to old categorical dualities, makes *critical regional studies* the most likely point of confluence for the three streams of contemporary restructuring. Here is where our understanding of postfordism, postmodernism, and a post-historicist critical social theory may most bountifully take place.