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Place and space: a Lefebvrian reconciliation

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a dialectical interpretation of place. It argues that much of the confusion in the literature on place stems from its failure to engage with the ontological nature of place. This has led to much research implicitly accepting a restrictive Cartesian view of socio-spatial reality. Entrikin's (1991) 'betweenness of place' thesis is a notable recent illustration. In this paper I suggest that the problematic nature of place and its relationship to space can be resolved through a dialectical mode of argumentation. The spatialized dialectic of Henri Lefebvre offers a fruitful framework for reconciling the interaction between place and space insofar as it strives to overcome dualistic conceptions of capitalist spatiality. Lefebvre's dialectical approach will be counterposed to Entrikin's argument. The paper concludes by outlining the implications of the respective perspectives for robust place theorization and place politics.

KEY WORDS: Place, Spatial theory, Henri Lefebvre, Dialectics, Ontology, Marxism

INTRODUCTION

Arguments centring around the concept of place have reappeared on the agenda of many human geographers in recent years. The insistence that 'place matters' became something of a clarion call during the 1980s (Massey, 1984; Massey and Allen, 1984) and repeated invocations about issues of 'uniqueness', 'contextuality' and 'place perspective' have accordingly intensified within the geographical imagination (Agnew, 1987, 1989; Agnew and Duncan, 1989). Thus the recognition that places differ and that this difference is significant in affecting explanation has gained prominence once again.

Yet lessons have been learned from the earlier days of idiographic regional geography. Recent research on place is, to be sure, much more sophisticated insofar as it has, in broad terms, attempted to reconcile the traditional spatial analyst's concern for space (chorological 'areal differentiation' in Hartshorne's neo-Kantian lexicon), Marxists' concern with social relations and structural factors, and humanists' appeals for subjectivity, place meaning and place experience (see Entrikin, 1991). That this interest in place and region has grown during the last decade is confirmed by the development of the so-called 'new' regional geography (Gilbert, 1988; Jonas, 1988; Pudup, 1988). The recent 'locality'

debate, culminating with the Changing Urban and Regional Systems (CURS) initiative, is, of course, a further attempt to reinstate the importance of place within the geographical agenda (Cooke, 1987, 1989; but see also Massey, 1991; Smith, 1987). Attempts to come to grips with place (and related concepts such as region and locality) have, in short, become widespread and diverse in recent years.

But amid this resurgence of interest in place and eagerness to engage in empirical research on place and locality, certain deep-rooted philosophical and methodological shortcomings have revealed themselves. For me, this boils down to the failure of much research to establish more thoroughly the basic *ontological* nature of place itself. There has, for instance, been a relative neglect of the basic ground rules from which many theorists and researchers construct their understandings of place; which is to say, the manner in which they construct their specific 'object' of inquiry. This neglect is problematic for a number of reasons, not least of which is that it has precluded the formulation of a *dialectical* approach to the question of place and so trapped much research on place (often unwittingly) within a restrictive Cartesian philosophical straitjacket.

The present contribution sets out to expose the tacit Cartesian foundation of certain strands of place research by invoking the necessity for a dialectical

reinterpretation. To do so, I shall draw upon Henri Lefebvre's (1991a,b) pioneering formulations on space and everyday life. Herein I argue that Lefebvre's maverick, non-dogmatic *spatialized* reading of Marx's materialist dialectic (a project he termed *spatiology*) offers the most fruitful route for broaching the problematic of place as well as permitting the formation of a robust politics of place. I propose that a reassertion of an *explicit* dialectical mode of argumentation can make a major contribution to the goal that has hitherto effectively eluded geographers: that of reconciling the way in which experience is lived and acted out in place, and how this relates to, and is embedded in, political and economic practices that are operative over broader spatial scales.

In this light, the argument will proceed as follows: first, I will contrast the dialectical and Cartesian world views. Secondly, I will crystallize the deficiencies and limitations of Cartesianism within geography by briefly examining Entrikin's recent 'betweenness of place' thesis (see Entrikin, 1991). Thirdly, I will offer a corrective to the defects of Cartesian geography by framing the question of place within an explicit dialectical framework. Here the relationship between *space* and *place* will be discussed. Grappling with this interconnection is tantamount to understanding the interaction between the global and the local, and the general and the particular; it holds the key to resolving the thorny issue of deriving universal statements about specific instances and changes in socio-spatial practices. The space-place dilemma can be reconciled, I shall argue, by putting Lefebvre's (1991a) 'spatial triad' through its conceptual paces. Lefebvre's framework can transcend the dualistic Cartesian thinking prevalent in many geographical treatises on place.

THE DIALECTICAL WORLD VIEW

Dialectics is *both* a statement about what the world is and a method of organizing this world for the purpose of study and presentation (Ollman, 1990, 1993). Dialectical argumentation has a long and variegated legacy in philosophy. Its origins – in the Western world at least – stem from the ancient Greek classicists such as Democritus, Plato and Heraclitus, before passing – mainly via Spinoza and Leibniz – through to Hegel and Marx. Despite the diversity of this legacy, a common thread is the concern to address the question of change, different

kinds of change (which may, for example, manifest itself as apparent stasis) and different degrees of movement, interconnection and interaction (Engels, 1934; Ollman, 1990; see also Harvey, 1993a). For most dialecticians, therefore, dynamism is fundamental to *all* matter and reality. Apparent stability can itself be shown to be a peculiar manifestation of change which necessitates explanation. As Ollman (1990, 34) insists, 'given that change is always a part of what things are, the problem for research can only then be *how, when and into what* they change and why they sometimes appear not to change' (original emphasis).

In order to perceive change, dialectics emphasizes process, movement, flow, relations and, more particularly, contradiction. Contradiction has often been singled out as the principal feature of dialectics (Kojève, 1980; Lefebvre, 1968; Mao, 1954); it may be understood as some kind of incompatible development or movement of different elements within the whole whereby each element within a relationship simultaneously supports and undermines the other (see Ollman, 1993).

All contradictions, however, must be viewed relationally within an internally-related holistic framework (Ollman, 1976, 1993). Implicit here is the concept of *totality* (Marx, 1973, 101). From this standpoint, 'each part is viewed as incorporating in what it is all its relations with other parts up to and including everything that comes into the whole' (Ollman, 1990, 38). So it is not possible to understand different interrelated parts of a whole without understanding how the parts relate to each other within this whole. This position simply implies that the manner in which 'things cohere become essential attributes of what they are' (Ollman, 1993, 37). Totality thereby represents 'the way the whole is present through internal relations in each of its parts'; it is a dynamic, emergent and open construct, and is not to be confused with totalization or closure (Lefebvre, 1968, 111). Assumed within dialectical method this sense of totality offers a conceptual device that can be employed for understanding the totalizing nature of capitalism *without itself being a totalizing theory*. It concurs with Haraway's (1990, 223) notion that 'the production of universal, totalizing theory is a major mistake that misses most of reality, probably always, but certainly now'. Failure to assert a commitment to a critical reading of the *totalizing character of the contemporary capitalist system* – which comprehends only the difference and otherness that is expressed

through the market – is, however, another matter. This shortcoming merely succeeds in anaesthetizing critical sensibility and results in an *alienated* reconstruction of the world that ‘lap[s]es into boundless difference and giv[es] up the confusing task of making partial, real connection’ (Haraway, 1990, 202). Consequently there is, following quantum physicist David Bohm (1980, 11), always ‘a need to look on the world as an *undivided whole*’ (original emphasis).

This *relational ontology* contrasts markedly with atomistic, mechanistic, empiricist viewpoints. These latter, Cartesian-inspired, conceptions tend to separate out and ‘thingify’ different aspects of social reality, treating it as consisting of ‘discrete objects’ without any sense of relational interconnectivity. Capra (1982) insists that Cartesianism – which emerged through the philosophical inquiries of Descartes in the seventeenth century – has had an enormous and frequently limiting influence on the social and scientific development of Western civilization. As a method it is analytic, being directly opposed to dialectics, since it consists of the ‘breaking up of thoughts and problems into pieces and in arranging these in their logical order’ (Capra, 1982, 44). The ‘whole’ from this perspective amounts to nothing more than the sum of the parts. Levins and Lewontin (1985, 269) remark that this reconstructs an ‘alienated’ and ‘reductionist’ view of the world. The Cartesian world view holds, furthermore, to a sharp separation between thinking and the material world, between the mind and matter, between the observer and the observed, and between the analyst and the analysed. Most forms of empiricism acknowledge a Cartesian atomized ontology. Cartesianism posits an essentially mechanical and mathematical representation of reality. For Descartes, the universe and living organisms were little more than machines governed by iron laws, much the same as the operation of a clock. Descartes’ atomized and mechanical view of the world profoundly influenced Newtonian physics wherein space was seen, as indeed it frequently is today in much geographical literature (cf. Sayer, 1985), as absolute, a passive empty container independent of physical phenomena (see Capra, 1982, ch. 2; Smith, 1984, ch. 3).¹

Confirmation of geography’s failure to shed its Cartesian baggage may be witnessed in Entrikin’s (1991) recent confrontation with the nature of place in his *The Betweenness of Place*. Although Entrikin’s thesis marks the latest reassertion that place matters,

his declared goal of understanding the ‘full dimensionality of the concept of place’ is restricted owing to its unwitting Cartesian philosophical underpinning. To this end, it is revealing here to outline the central thrust of Entrikin’s viewpoint and pinpoint its limitations – *pari passu* a dialectical conceptualization – for explanation and for praxis.

THE ‘BETWEENNESS OF PLACE’?

Entrikin stresses that geographers have tended to study place by way of a continuum polarized between a *subjective*, idiographic and unique descriptive interpretation and a relatively *objective*, nomothetic and general explanatory understanding. What this engenders is a

large intellectual gap [which] exists between our sense of being actors in the world, of always being in place, and the ‘placelessness’ that characterizes our attempts to theorise about human actions and events. (Entrikin, 1991, 7)

According to Entrikin, geographers throughout the twentieth-century have sought – largely in vain – to reconcile this dualism between science and art, between explanation and description, between a *decentred* universalism and a *centred* particularism, via some middle-ground. Entrikin, too, maintains that a deeper understanding of place requires access to both objective and subjective reality:

From the decentred vantage point of the theoretical scientist, place becomes either location or a set of generic relations and thereby loses much of its significance for human action. From the centred viewpoint of the subject, place has meaning only in relation to an individual’s or group’s goals and concerns. Place is best viewed from points in between. (5)

Drawing upon French philosopher and literary critic, Paul Ricoeur, Entrikin argues that the key element straddling this relationship – or ‘getting between’ place – is the process of *emplotment* (25). This is a form of narrative which gives structure to the particular connections that people have with places and, in so doing, ‘draw[s] together agents and structures, intentions and circumstances, the general and the particular, and at the same time seek[s] to explain causally’. Entrikin readily admits that he is offering neither a method nor an instructional guide for the study of place and, while it can be debated as to whether this failure to provide exemplars of emplotment is a basic weakness of his book (see

Johnston, 1992), my criticism is nonetheless aimed at a slightly different and arguably deeper target: the restrictive philosophical tradition within which the book is couched.

Entrikin's evident starting point is human experience and the meaning given to place by conscious individuals. He aims to hold on to this phenomenological perspective while integrating a more decentred and objective component. But all of this begins with a tacit assumption that place is dualistic to begin with; Entrikin's attempts to reconcile this dualism from the humanist point of view is tantamount to a reversion to the classical Cartesian position, though with a different emphasis.² So even if Entrikin had wished to put his thesis into motion, it would, to my mind, have foundered sooner or later, simply because of the implicit Cartesian foundation.

As noted above, the Cartesian viewpoint assumes a duality between the material (external) world and the (internal) world of human consciousness. Rational knowledge became the potential source of mediation between the body and the mind, between the external and internal world. Duality is, therefore, the leitmotiv of Cartesian reality and this quality carries over into Entrikin's thinking on place. To begin with, Entrikin constructs his argument from the postulation that place can be viewed by *bridging two ends of a continuum*. There is thus a *polarity* between subjective and objective realms of place (as if there is an a priori division); the objective and the subjective are, as he repeatedly insists, 'both sides of this divide' (Entrikin, 1991, 134) (emphasis added). He talks, furthermore, of place being the *fusion* of space and experience (as if the two are divided in the first place) which gives the earth's surface a "'wholeness' or an 'individuality'" (6) (emphasis added). The notion of 'or' here implies that space and experience and wholeness and individuality are in some sense two domains. This is Cartesian thought *par excellence*. A dialectical viewpoint suggests that the earth's surface is 'wholeness' and 'individuality' since, following Hegel (1969, 606), wholeness contains individuality and individuality, 'through its determinateness', contains the whole.

This dualism persists in the way Entrikin deploys emplotment. The 'large intellectual gap' (Entrikin, 1991, 7) (emphasis added) that he perceives between our sense of being actors in place and our attempts to theorize about place, represents a 'basic polarity of human consciousness' (9) (emphasis added). In telling the story of place through the narrative (emplotment), the geographer is thus *forced to occupy a*

position 'between an objective pole of scientific theorising and a subjective pole of empathetic understanding' (113–4) – all of which surely implies that the researcher did not have an *immanent position* in the material world as a fellow thinking subject in the first place. This sounds like Descartes' belief that rational knowledge can be employed to mediate the assumed division between the external material world and the internal world of the mind although, for Entrikin, 'rational' humanist knowledge can somehow 'get between' external place and internal consciousness. Such a dualistic Cartesian conception is further reinforced through Entrikin's assumption that the 'theoretician seeks a level of abstraction and decentredness that diminishes the significance of the specificity of place and period for both the object of study and for the viewpoint taken toward the object' (133). Therein surely lurks an implicit acknowledgement that the observer (*viz.* the viewpoint toward the object) and the observed (*viz.* the object itself) are somehow detached. Again, this is pure Cartesianism, for it seems to posit that intellectual knowledge can be mustered to reconcile this external/internal world dichotomy.

The shortcomings of Entrikin's argument emerge from the ontological nature in which the question is framed. Its central tenets are dualistic and linear rather than unitary and dialectical; by involving the notion of an 'in between' it seeks to understand how *two polar opposites can be brought together* rather than to comprehend how the locus of place is a *unity containing within itself different aspects*.

The dialectical standpoint opposes the reification of fragmentation and the separation of different aspects of reality. Instead, its epistemological and ontological commitment affirms the unity of knowledge and the total character of reality. It is in this sense that a spatialized version of the dialectic can offer a powerful corrective to geographical thought on place that is rooted in the Cartesian tradition.

THE DIALECTICS OF SPACE AND PLACE

Before proceeding, it may be helpful to clarify how dialectical thought remains distinctively unc cartesian. This can best be done by a reconsideration of the conception of *fetishism*, through which Marx developed a dialectical interpretation of the commodity. Marx recognized that, although commodities as material 'things' are produced through a labour process that involves specific social relations, the thing character (the money-form) tends to mask the

underlying social processes once these commodities enter daily life via the market. Marx (1967, 71–83) terms this obfuscation the ‘fetishism of commodities’; at and after market exchange, it is impossible fully to apprehend anything about the social relations, activities or struggles of private labour in the ‘hidden abode of production’ (Marx, 1967, 176). Marx argues that commodities, like other phenomena, are *processes* which appear in the *form* of things – a conclusion difficult to acknowledge in ‘common-sense’ empiricist understandings, since it asserts the bold postulation that the material world is *simultaneously* both a thing and a process.³

Lefebvre’s ‘production of space’ thesis effectively represents a spatialized rendition of Marx’s conception of fetishism.⁴ Thus:

The *ideologically* dominant tendency divides space up into parts and parcels in accordance with the division of labour. It bases its image of the forces occupying space on the idea that space is a passive receptacle. Thus, instead of uncovering the social relationships (including class relationships) that are latent in spaces, *instead of concentrating our attention on the production of space and the social relationships inherent to it* – relationships which introduce specific contradictions into production, so echoing the contradiction between the private ownership of the means of production and the social character of the productive forces – we fall into the trap of treating space as space ‘in itself’, as space as such. *We come to think in terms of spatiality, and so fetishise space in a way reminiscent of the old fetishism of commodities*, where the trap lay in exchange, and the error was to consider ‘things’ in isolation, as ‘things in themselves’ (1991, 90) (emphases added).

Such a conceptualization alerts us to the fact that the material landscape (as fixed capital) is produced, of necessity, as a thing in *place* and becomes imbued with meaning in everyday place-bound social practices. But this physical and social landscape emerges through processes that are simultaneously operative over varying spatial and temporal scales and may have a broader significance within the whole – that is, they are operative over the domain of *space*. The interaction between *space* and *place* here is a crucial one. Equally vital is that while we must distinguish between these different realms if we are to apprehend place construction and transformation, we must simultaneously capture how they are in fact forged together in a dialectical unity. The material landscape and practices of everyday life occurring in different places under capitalism⁵ are inextricably embedded within the global capitalist whole. To

this extent, the global capitalist system does not occur solely in some abstract sense; it has to ground itself and be acted out in specific places if it is to have any meaning (cf. Lefebvre, 1991b). The space of the whole thus takes on meaning through place; and each part (i.e. each place) in its interconnection with other parts (places) engenders the space of the whole.

The capitalist space-place relationship does not arise out of some kind of abstract concrete determination. Space is not a high level abstract theorization separated from the more concrete, tactile domain of place which is frequently taken as synonymous with an easily identifiable reality such as a specific location or ‘locality’.⁶ An attempt to overcome this absolute separation is made here by arguing that both space and place have a real ontological status since they are both embodied in material processes – namely, real human activities. Their distinction must, therefore, be conceived by capturing how they melt into each other rather than by reifying some spurious fissure.

Marx’s discussion on *fixed* and *circulating* capital in the *Grundrisse* is exemplary in framing the dialectical interconnection between space and place. For Marx, all capital is circulating capital in the sense that its nature is one of movement and process (1973, 618–26). Yet while circulating capital is the flow of going from one phase to the next – that is, from commodities to money to capital and so on – at the same time within each phase, it is ‘posited in a specific aspect, restricted to a particular form, which is the negation of itself as the subject of the whole movement’ (26). In short, it becomes fixed capital:

[a]s the subject moving through all phases, as a moving unity, the unity-in-process of circulation . . . capital is *circulating capital*; capital as restricted into any of these phases, as posited in its *divisions*, is *fixated capital*, *tied-down capital*. As circulating capital it fixates itself, and as fixated capital it circulates. (621) (original emphases)

The formal nature of Marx’s understanding here is suggestive for our own discussion: ‘[t]he distinction between *circulating capital* and *fixed capital* appears initially as a formal characteristic of capital, depending on whether it appears as . . . the unity of the process or as one of its *specific moments*’ (621) (latter emphasis added). Marx, therefore, makes a qualitative distinction whereby he identifies ‘fixed’ capital whose *form* directly opposes that of ‘circulating’

capital, despite the fact that one takes on meaning only through the other and, in the end, they are but different 'moments' or characteristic forms of the same – i.e. circulating – capital. In other words, fixed capital is the *apparently static material thing-form* quality of the embodied process of circulating capital.

What, then, does this all mean for space and place? If we have recourse to the above dialectical logic, the following picture emerges. Social space must be posited as a material process. This process represents the rootless, fluid reality of material flows of commodities, money, capital and information which can be transferred and shifted across the globe. Put simply, we can say that capitalist social space is subsumed under the domain of capital, since its command of property, money power, technology and mass media enable it to dominate and appropriate the space of global capitalism. This command is essential if it is to reproduce and expand a system based on commodity production and exchange and the accumulation of capital. From this standpoint, social space becomes a force of production itself (Lefebvre, 1979; Harvey, 1982; Swyngedouw, 1991, 1992), representing simultaneously a *network* of exchange and a *flow* of commodities, communication, energy and resources. This characteristic harks back to the ontological and dialectical proposition that the quality of capitalism as a 'thing' (it appears as a network organized in space) cannot be dissociated from its 'processual' aspects (it is also a diffusive flow over space). Again, quantum theory echoes precisely these notions: all matter, recall, is a *particle* (a concentrated entity in space) and a *wave* (a dispersive non-spatially concentrated process) at one and the same time.

Capital is an inexorably circulatory process diffusive in space which also fixates itself as a thing in space and so begets a built environment. The fixity nature (the thing quality) of the geographical landscape is necessary to permit the flow and diffusive nature of capital; and vice versa. Capital fixity must, of necessity, take place somewhere, and hence place can be taken as a specific *form* emergent from an apparent stopping of, or as one specific *moment* in, the dynamics of capitalist social space. This 'thing' and 'flow' feature of reality implies, too, an inextricable interconnection between time and space since one takes on meaning only through the other and they cannot effectively be distinguished. The process of capital circulation must take place as a thing somewhere so as to combine with other 'things'

(such as labour-power and means of production) which are themselves constituted by specific processes. The *production of space* is thus the process as well as the outcome of the process (i.e. the produced social space); it is the totality of the 'flow' and 'thing' qualities of capitalist material geographical landscape (Lefebvre, 1991a, 86–92). I should point out here, nevertheless, that Castells (1985, 14) fails to comprehend this double-edged dialectical interconnection with his rhetorical phrase that the 'space of flows [is] substituting a space of places'. What Castells fails to recognize is that it is not one or the other – that is, the space of flows *or* the space of places – but rather space is already flow *and* place – it is *simultaneously* a process and a thing. It is only by identifying this feature theoretically, as we shall see later, that a prospective 'place-bound' radical political practice can emerge, since flows do take on a thing form in place and hence are always vulnerable in that place. The problem for this practice is that the processes that embody this fixity are diffusive insofar as they are operative over varying spatial scales.

This 'moment' of apparent fixity of capital in place is never merely uniform as each fraction of capital responds to competitive economically-conditioned exigencies. And while Lefebvre himself rightly accredits significance to the economic sphere, he is also careful to avoid economism.⁷ To be sure, Lefebvre is adamant that this overall process of space and place production is a deeply *political* event. Consequently, space internalizes conflictual and contradictory social forces and social conflict is thereby 'inscribed in place'. This conflict arises from the inextricable tension between the usage and appropriation of place for social purposes and the domination of place (and space) as a productive and commercial force through private ownership. Only class and social struggles, therefore, have the capacity to 'generate differences which are not intrinsic to economic growth' (Lefebvre, 1991a, 55). In the ideal world of capitalism, capital would be just a 'free-floating' flow liberated from any constraints of space and place. The whole space of capitalism would then represent the homogeneous economic space of exchange value. Although individual capitalists may themselves be relatively free-floating, this normative landscape can never be generalized in reality if capitalists are to fulfil their historical roles as *personifications of capital* since actual production, realization and distribution of surplus value is

necessarily place-dependent and hence always vulnerable to political contestation.

It follows here that place is not merely abstract space: it is the terrain where basic social practices – consumption, enjoyment, tradition, self-identification, solidarity, social support and social reproduction, etc. – are lived out. As a moment of capitalist space, place is where everyday life is *situated*. And as such, place can be taken as *practiced space*.⁸ What is practiced is the

clash between a consumption of space which produces surplus value and one which produces only enjoyment – and is therefore ‘unproductive’. It is a clash, in other words, between capitalist ‘utilisers’ and community ‘users’. (Lefebvre, 1991a, 359, 60)

Consequently, spatial contradictions – that is, political conflicts between socio-economic interests and forces – express themselves in place. It is only, *pace* Castells, in place that such conflicts come effectively into play, and in doing so they become contradictions of space (cf. 365). Place is not, therefore, a *tabula rasa* upon which these broader capitalist (economic) forces unfold, for place-specific ingredients and the politics of place are not innocent and passive in the formation of overall capitalist social space; the significance of these qualitative aspects of place and how they, in turn, shape space and political conflicts and meaning centring around everyday life cannot, needless to say, be downplayed.

It is not too difficult to see, furthermore, how this state of affairs could erupt into a political struggle to define place (space): Whose place? What kind of place? Which place? And, as Lefebvre has noted, it ‘hardly seems necessary to add that within this space violence does not always remain latent or hidden. One of its contradictions is that between the appearance of security [is] the constant threat, and indeed the occasional eruption, of violence’ (1991a, 57). Violence is therefore invariably connected with spontaneity of action and hence place-specific contestation (see Lefebvre, 1969). Still, the power of capital to organize, control, counteract contestation, and forge *place* in its own exchange value image is usually predicated on its superior ability to dominate *space* (Harvey, 1989; cf. Ross, 1988). As Lefebvre (56) soberly argues, ‘there is no getting around the fact that the bourgeoisie still has the initiative in its struggle for (and in) space’.

Within the very moment of place, in short, there lies a *copresence* of heterogeneous and conflictual processes, many of which are operative over a

broader scale than the realm of place itself. Place emerges through the interpenetration of objective and subjective forces; it is a ‘state of being’ (Relph, 1989; Seamon and Mugerauer, 1989) as well as a formative political-economic process (cf. Harvey, 1993b). Yet from the dialectical viewpoint these qualities are *different moments of the same unity*. They should not be grasped, as I earlier argued *contra* Entrikin, as the *unification of two different realms*. The basic problematic here lies in understanding the mode of determination between space and place and, specifically, how these two realms are *mediated*. Reconciling the way experience is lived and acted out in place, and how this relates to political and economic developments on a global and national scale, remains a most challenging concern for theoretical endeavour. These difficulties can, however, be overcome by way of an alternative dialectical conceptualization, the germ of which is found in Lefebvre’s *spatialized dialectic*. Lefebvre’s framework is an extremely suggestive and flexible heuristic device for interpreting the mode of mediation between space and place which can shed light on the nature of place and how it, in turn, relates to the broader social whole. Let us, therefore, elucidate Lefebvre’s *spatiology* more closely.

TOWARDS A RECONCILIATION: LEFEBVRE’S SPATIAL TRIAD

Lefebvre’s explorations in *The Production of Space* (1991a) are the culmination of a life-long intellectual project in which he sought to understand the role of space, the nature of the urban and the importance of everyday life in the perpetuation and expanded reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. In *The Survival of Capitalism* (1976) [1973], Lefebvre had earlier made explicit that capitalism was indeed a deeply geographical project:

what has happened is that capitalism has found itself able to attenuate (if not resolve) its internal contradictions for a century, and consequently, in the hundred years since the writing of *Capital*, it has succeeded in achieving ‘growth’. We cannot calculate at what price, but we know the means: *by occupying space, by producing a space* (1976, 21) (original emphasis)⁹

But it wasn’t until the following year with the publication of the *The production of space* that Lefebvre pursued more directly the idea of producing space. Lefebvre’s originality stems from the fact that he invoked the need for a ‘unity theory’

(1991a, 11) between different 'fields' of space which had hitherto been apprehended separately in Western intellectual (Cartesian-Newtonian) practice. Lefebvre's aim was to 'detonate this state of affairs' (24) since he rightly saw fragmentation and conceptual separation as serving distinctively ideological purposes. His approach aimed both 'to reconnect elements that have been separated . . . [and] to rejoin the severed and reanalyse the commingled' (413, emphasis added). Lefebvre strove for a unity theory of space, a *rapprochement* between *physical* space (nature), *mental* space (formal abstractions about space) and *social* space (the space occupied by 'sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias' (12)). Implicated in this project was Lefebvre's own particular brand of Marxism which stressed the importance of everyday life, of alienation and of the writings of the early, humanist Marx.¹⁰ Consequently, his project on space does not simply reduce the mental to the material in a 'vulgar' Marxist fashion. For Lefebvre, the realms of perception, symbolism and imagination, although distinguishable, are not separable from physical and social space.¹¹

According to Lefebvre, bringing these different modalities of space together within a single theory would *expose* space, *decode* space, and *read* space.¹² This could be achieved only by thinking about the dialectical character of their interaction; thinking, in other words, about the manner in which they come together as a conflictual process of creation, as a process of *producing*. At first sight, Lefebvre admits, to speak of 'producing space sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it' (1991a, 15). But the method by which he elucidates this argument is provocative, subtle and, as I hope to illustrate shortly, particularly germane for our own purposes.

Lefebvre immediately urges that if we are to shift our attention from the conception of 'things in space' to the 'actual production of space', our theoretical understanding must capture the generative process of space (37). For Lefebvre, the process of producing space (process) and the product (thing) – that is, the produced social space itself – present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two separable ideas. Thus space as a material product is a *present* space: a moment absorbed in a complex dynamic process which 'embraces a multitude of intersections' (33). Lefebvre attempts to render intel-

ligible the complex interplay between the different aspects of this process in its totality through the use of a 'conceptual triad' (1991a, 33). Incorporated therein are three moments identified by Lefebvre as: representations of space, representational space and spatial practices. Let us ponder each in turn.

Representations of space refers to conceptualized space, the discursively constructed space of professionals and technocrats such as planners, engineers, developers, architects, urbanists, geographers and those of a scientific bent. This space comprises the various arcane signs, jargon, codifications, objectified representations used and produced by these agents. According to Lefebvre, it is always a *conceived* and *abstract* space since it subsumes ideology and knowledge within its practice. It is the dominant space in any society and is 'tied to the relations of production and to the "order" which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to "frontal" relations' (33). Because it is effectively the space of capital, conceived space has a 'substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space' (42) and finds its 'objective expression' in monuments, towers, factories and in the 'bureaucratic and political authoritarianism immanent to a repressive space' (49).

Representational space is directly lived space, the space of everyday life. It is space experienced through the complex symbols and images of its 'inhabitants' and 'users'. This space 'overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects' (39) which may be linked to some underground, clandestine side of social life. Lived representational space has no need to obey rules of consistency or cohesiveness because it is, as Lefebvre (1991a, 42) says, *alive*:

it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time. Consequently it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic.

Equally, it is an elusive space which the imagination (conceived) must seek to change and appropriate. Lived space, therefore, is the dominated, passively experienced space that the conceived, ordered, hegemonic space will intervene in, codify, rationalize and ultimately attempt to usurp. Architects,

planners, developers and the like are, of course, all active in this very pursuit.

Spatial practices are practices that 'secrete' society's space. For Lefebvre the spatial practices of any society are revealed by 'deciphering' its space (38). Spatial practices, however, have close affinities to perceived space. In other words, people's perceptions condition their daily reality with respect to the usage of space: for example, their routes, networks, patterns of interaction that link places set aside for work, play and leisure.¹³ These practices result from a *perceived* space, a space, for example, that embraces both production and reproduction. Spatial practices structure daily life and a broader urban reality and, in so doing, ensure societal cohesion, continuity and a specific spatial competence (33).

Lefebvre is, nevertheless, tantalizingly vague on the precise fashion in which the conceived-lived-perceived triad interrelate. He certainly points to a dialectical as opposed to a causal mode of determination; but this demands further clarification. Lefebvre gives centrality to the *body* in the understanding of the relationship between these different moments. He brings to bear a libertarian, humanist Marxism here which made him acutely sensitive to quotidian lived experience.¹⁴ Bodily experience towards space as lived, he argues, is 'strangely different' from when it is thought of and perceived. And spatial practices are lived directly before they are conceptualized. The relationship to space of a 'subject' who is a member of a group or society implies a certain relationship to their body and vice versa (40). As a result, Lefebvre's discussions on space and the body leave plenty of room for dialogue with both phenomenological perspectives and feminist geographers. For example, he emphasizes (1991a, 286ff) the way in which abstract space is not solely the repressive economic and political space of capital, but it is equally a repressive male space which invariably finds its representation in the phallic aspect of towers – symbols of force, male fertility and masculine violence. 'Phallic erectility', Lefebvre declares, 'bestows a special status on the perpendicular, proclaiming phallocracy as the orientation of space' (287). For Lefebvre, abstract space functions 'objectally' (49) insofar as it is formal, homogeneous and quantitative, erasing all differences such as those which originate in the body (age, sex, ethnicity). In sum, conceived, abstract space is a quintessentially masculine *priapic* space where Logos (logical knowledge) prevails over Eros

(erotic knowledge). Significantly, such a reading implies a political and geographical programme wherein 'reappropriation of the body, in association with the reappropriation of space ... [is] a non-negotiable part of its agenda' (167).

Relations between conceived-perceived-lived moments are never stable and exhibit historically defined qualities, attributes and interconnections. But the problem under capitalism is, according to Lefebvre, that primacy is given to the conceived; all which renders insignificant the 'unconscious' level of lived experience (34). What is lived and perceived is subsumed under what is conceived. The social space of lived experience is crushed, vanquished by what he calls an *abstract* conceived space which dances to the tune of the homogenizing forces of money, commodities, capital and the phallus. It denies the celebration of lived difference, of tradition, of *jouissance*, of sensual *differential* space. Capitalism demands an abstract masculine space of capital accumulation and repression which it conceives in accordance with the exigencies of banks, business centres, productive agglomerations and information networks. Henceforward it is class and social struggle which 'prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences' (55)

Lefebvre here prioritizes the lived and perceived over the conceived. Or, put more accurately, he upbraids their factitious separation under modern capitalism. His fierce invectives on alienation in everyday life invoke the necessity for a reconciliation between thinking and living. For Lefebvre, the distinction has led to a separation of different spheres of human activity and a 'despoliation' of everyday life, since the latter remains in the thrall of abstract space. Hence, for Lefebvre (1991b, 1971), there is no knowledge of everyday life without a critique of everyday life. While, however, there is a powerful phenomenological moment in his writings here, there is, as might be surmised, equally a rejection of the hyper-phenomenology of Heidegger.¹⁵ In consequence, Lefebvre rejected appeals to any atavistic model as a source of 'authenticity'. His nostalgia was firmly for the future and, as an active Marxist within and later outside the French Communist Party, repeatedly pointed to the necessity of revolt.

In itself, though, Lefebvre's conceived-perceived-lived triad does not explain anything about capitalist spatiality. Lefebvre himself admits that it is essentially a hollow, abstract device which has to be

employed in concrete situations. Indeed, if treated solely as an abstract 'model', he argues, it loses all its force and its import is severely limited (1991a, 40). Furthermore,

spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period. (46)

The space-relations identified by Lefebvre, then, take on meaning through, and are permeated by, historically defined social relations (and vice versa). As for unravelling the present dilemma, however, Lefebvre's triad becomes remarkably suggestive when projected onto the space-place problematic. Consider the following scenario.

I suggested earlier that space represented the realm of flows of capital, money, commodities and information, and remained the domain of the hegemonic forces in society. From this viewpoint, place comprises the locus and a sort of stopping of these flows, a specific moment in the dynamics of space-relations under capitalism. Place is shaped by the grounding (the 'thingification', if you will) of these material flows, though it concomitantly serves to shape them too by way of social and class struggle over place necessitating, for example, that abstract capital takes a particular physical and social form in place. I shall now argue that space is always set to a particular *conceived* representation because it is the dominant conception – an ideal type of homogenized global capitalist space – that is tied to the hegemonic relations of production and sexuality. It is the realm of dispassionate 'objects' rationally 'ordered in space'; a deracinated space where representation is simply the representation of the ruling groups, just as the ruling ideas were for Marx. Here, knowledge and power attempt to reign supreme and impose what they know onto lived sensual and sexual experience. Correspondingly, everyday life becomes a practical and sensual activity acted out in place. The battle becomes the moment of struggle between conceiving space through representation and living place through actual sensual experience and representational meaning. Place is synonymous with what is lived in the sense that daily life practices are embedded in particular places. Social practice is place-bound, political organization demands place organization. Life is place-dependent,

and hence the Lefebvrian struggle to 'change life' (borrowing Rimbaud's phrase) has to launch itself from a place platform. Equally, place is *more* than just lived everyday life. It is the 'moment' when the conceived, the perceived and the lived attain a certain 'structured coherence' (to borrow Harvey's term). Lefebvre puts it majestically in *Critique of Everyday Life* (1991b, 6): everyday life in place is 'the supreme court where wisdom, knowledge and power are brought to judgement'.

There are important issues emerging from this. First, while space-place/conceived-lived evinces a separation of human relations, it is only in particular places – in, if you will, particular lived experiences – that this distinction is realized. The dualism is not, as previously noted, indicative of an abstract/concrete affair. What is conceived in thought expresses a specific representation of space, but this is actualized materially only in place. To paraphrase Lefebvre (1991b), it is something which must be everyday, or it will not be anything at all. This is why place (actual daily life) has to be the starting point of theoretical and political analysis. But dialectical inquiry must, as I have suggested, also acknowledge that within place there is an antagonistic movement. There lies within lived experience, for example, an objective force that thinks and mobilizes this knowledge to control a broader domain than simply the lived alone. And it is such an abstract material power that must be woven into an understanding of place and recognized in any political praxis occurring around daily life.

Nevertheless, there is another implication of a Lefebvrian articulation of space-place relationships, involving the nature of spatial practices. If, as Lefebvre insists, spatial practices are fundamental in ensuring continuity and cohesion in terms of overall capitalist social space through the way space is perceived, then they are afforded a certain *mediating* role in reproducing the space-place separation. The corollary of this is that spatial practices are dialectically implicated in both conceived space and lived place. The images, symbols and perceptions of local people, subcultures, gangs, for example, all embrace different spatial practices. This imagery, too, may centre around symbolic representations of landscape (monuments, landmarks) which, while put in place through dominant spatial practices, become imbued with meaning in daily life.¹⁶ So we can witness how spatial practices become blurred with respect to the conceived (space)/lived (place) distinction (see, e.g. Merrifield, 1993, 107–18).¹⁷

All this suggests that spatial practices fulfil an ambiguous regulatory role. They become the pressure point in keeping the space-place relationship together, yet apart. The manner in which space is perceived in place gets played out in daily life. But these daily spatial practices reproduce a spatial and political hierarchy which I have identified as a space-place dualism. Furthermore, the perpetuation of the global space of capitalism is both acted out, and dependent on, these spatial practices operating as they do. Any challenge to this political power must recognize that the political power of represented space over representational lived space is not a detachment of differentiated forces. Lefebvre (1991a, 366) captures this in a vitally important passage for the purpose of the present argument:

It would be mistaken in this connection to picture a hierarchical scale stretching between two poles, with the unified will of political power at one extreme and the actual dispersion of differentiated elements at the other. *For everything (the 'whole') weighs down on the lower or 'micro' level, on the local and the localizable – in short, on the sphere of everyday life. Everything (the 'whole') also depends on this level: exploitation and domination, protection and – inseparably – repression. The basis and foundation of the 'whole' is dissociation and separation, maintained as such by the will above; such dissociation and separation are inevitable in that they are the outcome of a history, of the history of accumulation, but they are fatal as soon as they are maintained in this way, because they keep the moments and elements of social practice away from one another. A spatial practice destroys social practice; social practice destroys itself by means of spatial practice.* (emphasis added)

'A spatial practice destroys social practice; social practice destroys itself by means of spatial practice.' This is an intriguing proclamation. But what does it signify? Understanding its intent, arguably, relates specifically to the manner in which any theory about the space-place interconnection can inform an actual political programme around place, an agenda so clearly at the core of Lefebvre's argument all along.

Lefebvre is speaking here in terms of political strategy, wherein he clearly accords a specific role to spatial practices. For Lefebvre, any emancipatory politics presupposes a *dialectics of space*, a particular set of theoretically informed spatial practices aimed at overcoming separation and dissociation between the global 'whole' and the 'local' everyday. Apprehending that the maintenance of the conceived

global whole is dependent on the local lived level is somehow integral for informing subversive spatial practices. Lefebvre thus points to the baleful effects of thinking and acting out one's daily spatial practices in terms of separation: on the one hand there is the global, and, on the other is the local, the everyday. Taken in this way, the domination of the 'whole' over the 'parts' is actively reproduced. In other words, the sum of the parts is somehow dominant over each part. This latter conceptualization is Cartesian and one from which Lefebvre, as a supreme dialectician, would want to distance himself. As he rightly says, it is 'fatal . . . to keep the moments and elements of social practice away from one another' (1991a, 366). So he is pointing to the way in which, at the level of everyday life, this dualism is perceived and perpetuated by the way localized spatial practices are acted out.¹⁸ This opinion appears to corroborate the argument that the Cartesian atomized world view is deeply ingrained in popular consciousness (Capra, 1982).

Yet Lefebvre certainly holds that social practice and spatial practice are interconnected at whatever scale; and a spatial practice, as he says above, has the capacity to destroy social practice. He argues, furthermore, that those spaces most effectively appropriated are those occupied by symbols: spatial practices are profoundly affected by the perceived, symbolic landscape. The symbolic meaning, for example, of parks and gardens (that emphasize an absolute nature), religious buildings (that symbolize absolute wisdom, reverence and power) and monuments (charged with psychological power, representing desires, past events and battles waged or to come, etc.) are legion. The landscape is thus impregnated with symbols and imagery that have an explicit and insidious impact in spatial practices of everyday life. To this end, for Lefebvre, the symbolic landscape is fecund with myths and legends, and hence remains a formidable means of appropriating space.¹⁹

On the other hand, while the 'micro' level 'does contain both the resources needed and the stakes at issue', it is not always the 'sphere in which contending forces are deployed' (1991a, 366). Recall that place (what we can variously term the 'local' or a 'part') is constitutive of flows and practices that operate over varying spatial scales. For Lefebvre, it follows that challenging the hegemony of the whole must likewise incorporate spatial practices that perceive of how the whole is in fact constituted; and

how, moreover, the foundation and perpetration of this whole is actively based on a Cartesian underpinning that emphasizes separation and dissociation of spheres. This deeper knowledge of the whole and the part, space and place, the global and the local must also be acted upon politically. The utopian element of Lefebvre's arguments on space and political practice are evidence enough.²⁰ But there is still something very important to be learned here. For his message suggests that place-bound spatial practices must be formulated in such a way as to confront the spatial sphere in which hegemonic forces are deployed: in other words, these spatial practices occurring in place have to be mindful of the dominant conceived spatial practices operative over space. Place, therefore, has the resources and capacity to transform space, but it cannot do so from the vantage point of place alone: political practices must thus be organized around place *in form* yet extend *in substance* to embrace space. For Lefebvre, the dialectical interconnection of this ostensible disjuncture poses a pressing dilemma for theorization and, above all, for practical politics. To this degree, a politics that is informed by a theory founded upon dualism and separation – one which divides and fragments space, consciousness and the material world, and the body and spatiality – is, in the last instance, likely to be retrogressive in its praxis. And herein, in short, lie the dangers of Entrikin's 'betweenness' thesis.

SUMMARY

This paper has sought to lay out a philosophical and theoretical framework for understanding the construction, meaning and reconstruction of the geographical landscape in place. Via Lefebvre's spatialized dialectic, I stressed the need for a dialectical mode of analysis, one that questioned Cartesian-inspired geographical formulations and recognized the flow/thing relationship of space and place. In this way, the broader mechanisms through which the built environment is produced, becomes imbued with meaning and undergoes transformation in specific places. I suggested throughout that the task of place theorization is not one of achieving knowledge of the way the dualism between the different realms of space and place is bridged – as with Entrikin's 'betweenness' thesis – but rather in theorizing how space and place are different aspects of a unity – that is, two facets of a dialectical process just

as the wave and particle aspect of matter is assumed in quantum physics. Under these conditions, a distinction between these two realms is made; though only insofar as it represents different 'moments' of a contradictory and conflictual process. The necessity to understand how the space-place, global-local, macro-micro levels are articulated and mediated is, I further argued, vital for theory and for a robust, progressive politics of place.

Here Lefebvre's 'triadic' analysis, which establishes the different dimensions through which capitalist social space is produced and appropriated, can help inform such a project and in the process pioneer the development of a non-Cartesian critical human geography, one that is sensitive to bodily lived experience and is broad and subtle enough to enable a practical project that can embrace, in undogmatic fashion, a class, gender, ethnic and affinity group politics. My purpose in propounding a Lefebvrian formulation was to set up a framework capturing the different moments of space – i.e. phenomenological, perceptual and the material – dialectically in a way that could be projected onto the space-place problematic; without, however, suggesting that the realm we call place can be 'read off' from a different realm we call space in a vulgar materialist and Cartesian mechanistic fashion or, alternatively, to reduce place to the purely phenomenological realm of experience and metaphysical meaning.

'Every social space', Lefebvre (1991a, 110) has written, 'is the outcome of a process with many aspects and many contributing currents.' The goal of theoretical inquiry, finally, must be to grasp how this outcome and internally-heterogeneous process is inextricably bound up with the other. The current difficulties with interpreting the production, meaning and frequent destruction of particular places could, following Lefebvre's dialectical invocation, 'be brought to an end if a truly unitary theory of space were to be developed'. Though this reunification in no way 'aspire[s] to the status of a completed "totality"' (1991a, 413), Lefebvre's intellectual project has strategic objectives and these, as I have attempted to illustrate, are worth spelling out at a time when the spectre of Cartesianism haunts the geographical agenda. Lefebvre's brilliance, to say nothing of his value to the geographer, stems from his realization that the struggle for empowerment, emancipation and the 'right to difference' (for the spatial and social body) is an intensely geographical project: nothing and no one, he implores, can ever avoid a 'trial by space'.

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NOTES

1. Einstein's theory of relativity, for example, which showed the interconnection between time, space and matter, exposed the limitations of Newtonian–Cartesian physics, even though Einstein himself remained a recalcitrant Cartesian as his historic debate with Bohr in the 1920s demonstrated (see Capra, 1982). Today, quantum physics cogently emphasizes the shortcomings of Cartesianism (Bohm, 1980; Bohm and Peat, 1989; cf. Massey, 1992).
2. Cf. Werlen's (1993: 52–6) critique of the phenomenological tradition and the similarities it holds with the Cartesian world view.
3. It is precisely this understanding of matter, incidentally, that informs the epistemological and ontological bases of quantum physics. Moreover, such a viewpoint also cogently demonstrated the limitations of the Cartesian–Newtonian world view (Capra, 1982, ch. 3). Indeed, quantum theory points to the dual nature of matter and light: it can be simultaneously a 'particle' – viz. an entity – and a 'wave' – viz. a process or flow. As Capra illustrates, '[w]hile it [matter] acts like a particle, it is capable of developing its wave nature at the expense of its particle nature, and vice versa, thus undergoing continual transformations from particle to wave and from wave to particle'. This means that neither the electron nor any other atomic 'object' has any intrinsic properties independent of its environment [the error of absolutist Newtonian physics]. The properties it shows – particle-like or wave-like – will depend on the experiential situation [i.e. on the relational context] (68–9) (cf. Bohm, 1980; Bohm and Peat, 1989). See also Kojève (1980) who underscores the similarities between Hegel's dialectical interpretation of science and quantum physics, especially Heisenberg's relations of 'uncertainty' and Bohr's 'complementary notions' between the wave and the particle (177, n2).
4. Lefebvre, rightly in my mind (*pace* Althusser), points to the manner in which Marx's mature scientific conception of fetishism derives its basis from his earlier philosophical writings on alienation.
5. In saying this, though, it is apparent that the space-place dialectic is not uniquely capitalist in orientation since the relationship would seem to hold for non-capitalist social formations. Just, then, as Marx posited that each mode of production did possess a labour theory of value – though of course the particular form and dynamics assumed by this law were historically and geographically specific – it is also evident that the form and constituent processes embodied in the space-place interconnection are likewise specific to particular modes of production.
6. Cox and Mair (1989) also advocate the need to get away from viewing space-place, global-local as an abstract concrete distinction. (See, too, Graham and St Martin (1990) who 'delve' into the philosophical and epistemological 'origins' of these dualistic conceptual formulations.) Cox and Mair argue, for example, that the 'seeming impasse between the abstract and the concrete can be substantially alleviated through the recognition and adoption of different levels of abstraction' (122). Under this agenda, Cox and Mair pinpoint how a methodology incorporating a hierarchy of abstractions – regimes of accumulation, local dependence, local social structure and coalitions, etc. – that refer to various aspects of the locality could be adopted to make more general statements about locality *per se*. These general insights could then inform particular local studies (128). While the method that Cox and Mair invoke may differ from my own, common ground is found because we all recognize the importance of abstract theorization in reconstructing and understanding observable localized processes and, following Smith's (1987, 67) neat summation, that the 'essence of the intellectual enterprise . . . is to construct sustainable generalisations'.
7. Economism is simply the thesis asserting that the economic has absolute priority in any social formation. Yet, by the same token, in eschewing economism it is simultaneously vital that economic factors and their significance in conditioning the geographical landscape of capitalism are not downplayed. Fredric Jameson (1988, 354) is, to my mind, bang on the mark in affirming that 'anyone who believes that the profit motive and the logic of capital accumulation are not fundamental laws of this world, who believes that these do not set absolute barriers and limits to social changes and transformations undertaken in it – such a person is living in an alternative universe'.
8. I have here reversed Michel de Certeau's (1984, 117) formulation where he argues that 'space is a practiced place'. De Certeau's distinction between space and place, however, bears close affinities to my own argument above. According to de Certeau, place (*lieu*) is 'the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things in the same location . . . The law of the "proper" rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its "proper" and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies

- an indication of stability'. Space (*espace*), on the other hand, is 'composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it . . . in relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualisation, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts'.
9. In the Anglo-Saxon world, for example, this is something David Harvey has repeatedly asserted over the last twenty years or so. His concept of 'spatial fix' and space being an 'active moment' were formulated precisely to emphasize this point. See, too, Soja (1989 ch. 2).
 10. This, I should add, also made him something of a heretic in the post-war French Marxist Communist tradition, as his early autobiographical account, *La Somme et le Reste* (1959) confirms. For details see Trebitsch's informative preface to Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life* (1991b). See, too, Kelly (1982) for a critical account of Lefebvre's stormy relationship with the French Communist Party.
 11. I thus find Werlen's (1993, 4–5) accusations – in an otherwise engaging book which offers a non-Marxist challenge to Cartesian 'geo-determinism' within geography – that Lefebvre's formulations of space in *The Production of Space* are a 'reductive materialist view' to be totally unfounded. His suggestions that Lefebvre lapses into 'vulgar materialism' in defining space is so startling that I have to wonder whether he has read the book.
 12. Lefebvre (1991a), in this latter instance, is nonetheless careful to distance himself from a purely semiological 'reading' of space. While he generally concurs with Barthes that it is possible to read space as a text (see 142–44, 159–64), left at such a level this would overlook a vital point: 'space is *produced* before being *read*'; and it was, according to Lefebvre, produced not in order to be read 'but in order to be *lived* by people with bodies and lives' (143) (original emphases).
 13. Cf. Kevin Lynch's seminal text, *The Image of the City* (1960), where he first expounded how the realm of perception conditions an individual subject's actual spatial practices in the city. As Lynch highlighted, the perceptual 'imageability' of the urban landscape – monuments, distinctive landmarks, paths, natural boundaries, etc. – simultaneously aids and deters city dwellers' sense of location and the manner in which they act.
 14. Lefebvre frequently draws on the dialectical interpretations of the body and signs of the body (via mirrors) found in the political and spiritual poetry of Mexican poet and critic, Octavio Paz. *The production of space* is laced throughout with Paz's work.
 15. Though this was never an outright rejection. Indeed, Lefebvre (1991a, 121) acknowledges the important influence of Heidegger's 'ontological excavations' (see Heidegger, 1971) as well as Bachelard's 'moving and emotional' writings on the 'poetics of space' (Bachelard, 1969).
 16. The writings of John Berger (1992) in a different context (rural peasant life in the French Alps) are analogous to Lefebvre's here (accepting that Lefebvre's early studies did focus on Pyrenean peasant rural sociology), as are some of Raymond Williams's. Like Lefebvre, both Berger and Williams concern themselves with how landscapes have the potential to obfuscate and articulate positive lived experience (cf. Daniels, 1989). In this regard all three insist that the 'manipulative' and 'redemptive' dimensions of landscape should be kept in dialectical tension.
 17. An excellent example of this very phenomenon is the Beaubourg (Pompidou) centre in Paris which, although conceived as a bourgeois representation of space (necessitating, incidentally, the partial destruction of Lefebvre's own vibrant neighbourhood of the Marais), the interstitial spaces of the project have become reshaped and thoroughly amalgamated into local neighbourhood and Parsian daily life, becoming in the process something of a 'spectacle of the people' now expressive of a lived *representational* space.
 18. I should point out in this respect that the construction and reproduction of daily life practices is something central to Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. This is a 'generative' mechanism whereby distinctive subjective practices and dispositions reproduce themselves on the basis of their given objective position. Habitus thus conditions the thoughts, perceptions, actions, etc., of individual subjects, complicitously setting the parameters in such a way as to maintain the current objective conditions (Bourdieu, 1977, 95). To illustrate the mode of enactment of habitus, Bourdieu (80) cites Leibniz: 'Imagine,' says Leibniz, 'two clocks or watches in perfect agreement as to the time. This may occur in one of three ways. The first consists in mutual influence; the second is to appoint a skilful workman to correct them and synchronize them at all times; the third is to construct these clocks with such art and precision that one can be assured of their subsequent agreement'. Writers such as Harvey (1987) and Budd (1992) have shown how habitus is a generative principle that structures spatial practices. More specifically, Harvey (1987, 268) suggests that Bourdieu's theorization is a 'very striking depiction' of the constraints to the power of the lived over the conceived.
 19. This was something the Situationists also recognized at the time. So much so in fact that, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, they attempted to redirect dominant urban symbolism and transform and

- reappropriate its meaning for their own subversive ends. Lefebvre himself, while of an older generation, worked with various members of the movement until an acrimonious squabble in 1963 (when the Situationists accused Lefebvre of plagiarism). Notwithstanding, the parallels between positions are clear enough. Focusing on the notion of everyday 'situations' as the battleground for transforming society, the Situationists attempted to construct various novel subversive strategies (artistic and practical), many of which explicitly acknowledged the importance of the built environment and architectural symbolism. *D tournament* (literally 'hi-jacking'), for example, which is 'first of all a negation of the value of the previous organisation of expression' (Debord, 1989, 29), was a case in point. Here, everyday situations, meanings and symbols would be subtended, transformed and reappropriated in order to create new, 'free activity'. Subverting and reappropriating the existing symbolic landscape, giving it a different meaning either through art (graffiti, for example) or through practical occupation was the central objective of *D tournament*. As Debord suggested, such an activity would permit the 'integration of present or past artistic production into a superior construction of a milieu' (22). This would help create a new 'symbolic urbanism' (Chtcheglov, 1989, 24) which would perceive and practice the urban landscape differently. It would be a gesture of contestation, a 'critique of existing human geography', through which individuals and communities could create places and events suitable for their own appropriation (Debord, 1967). This would give rise to a new 'unitary urbanism' which would bring together living, perceiving and imagining into the construction of a dynamic and more humane urbanism. Numerous *d tournament* of buildings, for instance, lay at the core of the Situationists' manifesto on 'unitary urbanism'.
20. 'Nothing is possible', Lefebvre insistently urged, 'without the desire and demand for the impossible.' Thus, 'imagination' must strive 'to seize power'. And his thesis of de-alienated 'total man' (which, notwithstanding its gendered connotations, represented a whole, unfettered human being), 'can only be conceived of as a limit to the infinity of social development' (1991b, 66).
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