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Source: *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference (Feb., 1992), pp. 115-129

Published by: [Blackwell Publishing](#) on behalf of the [American Anthropological Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656524>

Accessed: 30/11/2010 10:58

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# Space for Everything (A Commentary)

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As we confront an economic and political integration on the scale of the planet . . . shall we be, intimately and subjectively, able to live with others, to live as others, without ostracism but also without levelling?

—Julia Kristeva  
*Strangers to Ourselves*, 1991

[We] constantly have to take into account the simultaneity and extension of events and possibilities. . . . There are many reasons why this should be so: the scale of modern power; the degree of personal 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 exploitation. All these play a part. Prophecy now involves a geographical rather than historical projection: it is space not time that hides consequences from us.

—John Berger  
*The Look of Things*, 1974

Landscapes can be deceptive.

Sometimes a landscape seems to be less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place.

—John Berger  
*An Unfortunate Man*, 1976

On 15 March 1991, at about the same time that the United States was fulfilling its new “post-Vietnam” mission as a late 20th-century imperialist warrior-state, the National Museum of American Art (NMAA) in Washington, D.C., opened its controversial show on the American West: “The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier 1820–1920.” Consisting of 164 paintings, sculptures, and engravings of the ways in which artists, over a hundred-year period, portrayed the expansion and conquest of the West, the exhibition posits that these images are “carefully staged fictions” whose role was to “justify the hardship and conflict of nation building.” The curators subject the iconography of the American frontier, and its mythic status in the American imaginary, to a quite radical, and for the most part quite sensible, reinterpretation; the space of the frontier is, as it were, deconstructed. With all the flag waving and pious talk of freedom and a new world order surrounding the United States’ slaughter of Iraq’s raggedy-arsed army, the NMAA’s curators could not have timed it better. Indeed, the exhibition opens with a masterful piece of mystification and occlusion: a pho-

tograph taken on a rooftop across the river from New York City in 1903 in which Western artist Charles Schreyvogel stands at his easel painting, using a live model, a fully adorned United States cavalryman caught in the act of shooting an Indian some 2000 miles and 40 years distant.

“The West as America” documents a rather important sort of geographical fantasy and projection and uncovers in the process the grizzly repression involved in the great westward pioneer expansion. Not surprisingly, its unflinching account of the brutality of the frontier—a space that, like the frontier experience for the South African Afrikaaner community, has been ideologically formative in the construction of a particular national identity—did not lie well with the jingoistic and nationalist sentiments rampant on the Hill. Senator Ted Stevens (Republican, Alaska), who naturally had not seen the show, declared it “perverse” and generally unfit for human consumption; Senators Simpson and Gorton were respectively “shocked” and “appalled.” Only in the land of the free, opined the *Wall Street Journal*, is it possible to mount an entirely hostile assault on the nation’s founding and history, “to re-cast that history in the most distorted of terms and have the taxpayer foot the bill” (cited in Walker 1990:25). Left-leaning perversion creeps the hallowed halls of the national museum. In the name of public decency, historical veracity, and pioneer goodwill, senators are threatening budgetary retaliation against the Smithsonian complex. The public is flocking to the show, of course, and according to Museum Director Elizabeth Broun, people stand in line to write “whole pages” in the comment books.<sup>1</sup>

A little after the opening of “The West as America,” Robert Schenkkan’s extraordinary nine-part play, *The Kentucky Cycle* (1989), premiered at the Intiman Theatre in Seattle. The cycle spans 200 years of eastern Kentucky history, from the Indian wars of the 1770s to settlement and land speculation to the invasion of mining capital and, finally, to the war on poverty in the 1970s. Appalachia was, in a sense, America’s *first* frontier, but, unlike the West, which is only now subject to a serious revisionist history, it is much more closely affiliated with what dramaturg Tom Bryant (cited in Intiman Theatre Company 1991) calls the precise collision between the dark history of the region and our most cherished national myths. Harry Caudill (1960), one of the oldest defenders of Appalachia, led the struggle in documenting the exploitative configuration of nonlocal mine capital and local politics that produced an enduring regional economic backwardness, underdevelopment, and poverty. Appalachian frontier capitalism simultaneously created, some might say invented, a distinctive regional culture—mountain crafts, hillbillies, and mission schools—“all that is native and fine,” to employ David Whisnant’s (1983) lovely adage. But, all in all, not a pretty story: struggle, naked power, and violence encapsulating an extractive economy of the most rapacious sort. The tragedy of the Cumberlands is how Harry Caudill described it. Yet scarcely a murmur here; the stuff of Matewan is, after all, only a minor blemish on the great screen of American popular consciousness.

Frontiers are, of course, particular sorts of spaces—symbolically, ideologically, and materially. They represent the first wave of modernity to break on the shores of an uncharted heartland. As the cutting edge of state-sponsored forms of

accumulation, frontiers are characteristically savage, primitive, and unregulated. At the margins of state power, they create their own territorial form of law and (dis)order. One thinks in the contemporary epoch of Amazonia, a frontier declared fair game in the 1960s by the Brazilian military junta in the name of national security and border consolidation (against communist infiltration). It subsequently became the site of Indian genocide, wild land speculation, John Wayne shoot-outs between ranchers and colonists (remember Chico Mendes?), and unimaginably barbaric work conditions documented in Sebastião Salgado's harrowing, Bosch-like photographs of Serra Pelada gold miners (1990). But frontiers are also locally encoded in symbolic terms, and often carry a powerful ideological valency, particularly when national identity itself is seen to derive from "frontier stock," or if economic potential ("development") is seen to be wedded to the opening of the frontier.

It is in this sense that "The West as America" exhibition brushes history against the grain (the language is Walter Benjamin's). The West possesses a visceral, mythological power and hence its unraveling touched the raw nerve of post-Vietnam United States patriotism, speaking directly to contemporary debates and struggles over what it means to be American—indeed what America is and how it was made. To reveal that Frederick Remington's classic canvas *Fight for the Water Hole* is a metaphor for the plight of embattled capitalists in an era of strikes and immigration, and hence derived from the multicultural urban milieu in which he lived, is not only to show that artists are susceptible to various social and historical forces but also that art—spatial representations in this case—can help construct, and legitimate, nation building.

At certain historic junctures and sites, these sorts of insights are capable of generating much heat (if not necessarily light). For example, "The West as America" show arrived in Washington, D.C., during a period of intense politicization of university and high school curricula, during the high tide of multiculturalism, and not least, amidst a furor over something called "political correctness," a condition that apparently represents the hegemony of aging 1960s radicals on American campuses who actually prevent debate in the name of political rectitude. As a consequence, 164 images depicting the space of the Western frontier becomes, for conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, a wholesale trashing of national history, indeed nothing less than, God forbid, "the most PC exhibit in U.S. history." Space as a neutral, passive container, indeed!

As Gupta and Ferguson (this issue) note in their introduction, there has been a growing interest in theorizing space over the last two decades, and the spatial lexicon (border, territory, place, mobility) is now part and parcel of debates within social theory and postmodernism. It was Foucault (1972) who noted the organic connection between spatial concepts and the micro-physics of power—the relation between surveillance and the map, for example—and recognized that all territorial concepts imply the exercise of power (cf. Sack 1986). Space for Foucault was a specific sort of site, a container of power, and hence the means by which subjects came to be incarcerated, disciplined, and imprisoned within spaces of social control (see Harvey 1989:211). Giddens's structuration theory

similarly endeavors, I think quite unsuccessfully, to incorporate space—the “locale” as “typical interactions of collectivities” (1981:39)—paying heed to Braudel’s (1984) admonition that all of the social sciences must make room for a geographical conception of mankind.<sup>2</sup> Ed Soja (1989) has rightly observed that this resurgence of space and spatiality stands, ironically, as a reaction to the previous subordination of space in social theory generally, to a privileging of history over geography. However, a growing concern with context and a belated recognition that local socialization is central to the constitution of society has meant that societies must now be seen as constituted in time *and* space. Social structures cannot be separated from spatial structures (Gregory and Urry 1985); as Thrift says, “Social structures *are* geographies—overlapping, partially integrated and messy geographies—and they have to be not just perceived but theorised and even represented as such” (1989:263, emphasis added).

To situate some of the articles in this issue, and some of the issues raised by them, I want to root identity and difference in the substantial geographical literature on space, place, and locality. An appropriate starting point is David Harvey’s (1989:22) grid of spatial practices (see Figure 1), which he adapts from Henri Lefebvre’s discussion of spatial experience, perception, and imagination. As Harvey makes clear, this triad is, in quite complex ways, related internally and dialectically. Particular representations (for example, of the United States Western frontier) emerge from specific material spatial practices and from certain forms of domination and control of space, yet they can become material forces in their own right, a sort of spatial habitus to appropriate Bourdieu’s language (Bourdieu 1977; cf. Moore 1986). These dimensions of the material (flows, patterns, movement), representational (spatial signs, codes, and maps), and the imaginary dimensions of space can be, as it were, refined along certain axes of spatiality: access/distanciation, appropriation/use, domination/control, and social production. Without rehearsing a long and somewhat tedious history of spatial analysis (see Entrikin 1991 and Soja 1989 for good reviews), I think it is fair to say that the strongest geographical suit has been in material spatial practices, what Peet and Thrift have called the political economy approach in human geography (1989:3), documenting the uneven development of capitalism, the social production of spaces and regions, the changing spatial divisions of labor, and the means by which spaces (for example, the city) are appropriated (e.g., gentrification), controlled, and regulated. There has been, admittedly, a long-standing (but intellectually rather shallow) concern with environmental perception, cognitive mapping, and the symbolism of particular places and landscapes (see Meinig 1979), but it is in the realm of representation, and correlatively of spatial experience and meaning, that geography has been at its weakest. In this regard, it is rather apposite that the “new wave” of regional and place-based geographies explicitly calls for ethnography (Sayer 1989), and for an engagement with cultural theory, iconography, and textual analysis (Daniels 1989; Jackson 1989).

I want to identify four broad areas of geographical inspection—(a) the social production of space, (b) the new regionalism, (c) locality, globality, and modernity, and (d) landscapes as ways of seeing or maps of meaning—that intersect with

	<i>Accessibility and distanciation</i>	<i>Appropriation and use of space</i>	<i>Domination and control of space</i>	<i>Production of space</i>
Material spatial practices (experience)	flows of goods, money, people labour, power, information, etc.; transport and communications systems; market and urban hierarchies; agglomeration	land uses and built environments; social spaces and other 'turf' designations; social networks of communication and mutual aid	private property in land; state and administrative divisions of space; exclusive communities and neighbourhoods; exclusionary zoning and other forms of social control (policing and surveillance)	production of physical infrastructures (transport and communications; built environments; land clearance, etc.); territorial organization of social infrastructures (formal and informal)
Representations of space (perception)	social, psychological and physical measures of distance; map-making; theories of the 'friction of distance' (principle of least effort, social physics, range of a good, central place and other forms of location theory)	personal space; mental maps of occupied space; spatial hierarchies; symbolic representation of spaces; spatial 'discourses'	forbidden spaces; 'territorial imperatives'; community; regional culture; nationalism; geopolitics; hierarchies	new systems of mapping, visual representation, communication, etc.; new artistic and architectural 'discourses' semiotics
Spaces of representation (imagination)	attraction/repulsion; distance/desire; access/denial; transcendence 'medium is the message'	familiarity; hearth and home; open places; places of popular spectacle (streets, squares, markets); iconography and graffiti; advertising	unfamiliarity; spaces of fear; property and possession; monumentality and constructed spaces of ritual; symbolic barriers and symbolic capital; construction of 'tradition'; spaces of repression	utopian plans; imaginary landscapes; science fiction ontologies and space; artists' sketches; mythologies of space and place; poetics of space; spaces of desire

**Figure 1**  
David Harvey's grid of spatial practices (1989:220–221).

the articles in this issue, and then turn to what seem to me to be the knotty problems that lie at the confluence of geography and anthropology, at least as they pertain to identity, culture, and difference. To begin with the society-space question (cf. Harvey 1989; Soja 1989), geographers of a Marxist persuasion have attempted to harness the inner dynamics of capitalism with uneven development and spatial differentiation, what Soja calls the "encompassing process" (1985:176) of the social production of space. All of this work has built upon the earlier theorizing by Lefebvre (1974), Poulantzas (1978), and the Situationists (Debord 1983). More than any other person, however, David Harvey has outlined the the-

oretical linkages between space and capitalism quite brilliantly, and he is worth quoting at length.

Capitalism also “encounters barriers with its own nature,” which force it to produce new forms of geographical differentiation. The different forms of geographical mobility [e.g., capital, labor power . . .] . . . interact in the context of accumulation and so build, fragment and carve out of spatial configurations in the distribution of productive forces similar differentiations in social relations, institutional arrangements and so on. In so doing capitalism frequently supports the creation of new distinctions in old guises. . . . It is important to recognise, then, that the territorial and regional coherence that . . . is at least partially discernible within capitalism is actively produced rather than passively received as a concession to “nature” or history. . . . The upshot is that the development of the space economy of capitalism is beset by counterposed and contradictory tendencies. On the one hand spatial barriers and regional distinctions must be broken down. Yet the means to achieve that end entail the production of new geographical differentiations which form new spatial barriers. . . . [1985:11]

A particular regime of capitalist accumulation produces a particular landscape whose very fixity becomes a barrier to be overcome in the next wave of inevitable restructuring triggered by the relentless, competitive pursuit of profit on a global scale. According to Harvey, periods of recomposition or mutation, which in effect endeavor to annihilate space with time, involve massive devalorization, what he, following Schumpeter, calls “creative destruction.” Capitalism’s periodic mutations are, in this view, forms of “space-time compression”—a sort of speeding up, a new, faster form of capitalism (Aggar 1989)—in which capitalism “constructs objective conditions of space and time sufficient to its needs and purposes of material and social reproduction” (Harvey 1990:419). The recursive, serial production of new spaces, practices, and patterns is accompanied by, in other words, new experiences of space and time. To the extent that space and time are constitutive elements of what is broadly termed modernity, then to the same extent the history of capitalism is the story of multiple capitalisms and multiple modernities (Pred and Watts 1992; Soja 1989). As Octavio Paz (1990) says, under global capitalism every society produces its own modernity (see Rofel, this issue). Several of the articles in this issue take this intellectual move one stage further, asking who gets to play with, shape, and debate this modernity? How, and in what ways, does space shape modernity’s constitution?

A second theme pertains to the making and representation of regions. The “new” regional geography breaks sharply from previous forms of areal classification and chorology (cf. Entrikin 1991), from what Gupta and Ferguson (this issue) call the unproblematic division of space, in other words, the presumption that cultures or nations occupy “naturally” discontinuous spaces (see Pudup 1988). Central to this new regionalism has been the work of Massey (1984), who not only asserts that geography and local uniqueness matter, and that space is socially constitutive, but who also charts the changing history and topography of regions in postwar Britain through the successive waves of investment and the changing spatial divisions of labor associated with them. Industrial restructuring

under Thatcher is traced through new investment strategies, new labor processes, and new sectoral movements of capital that fundamentally alter the face of regions: in short, their industrial composition, their labor market structure and employment characteristics, their role in a national, even international, division of labor, and, not least, the symbolism and meaning attached to these regional transformations. In a similar vein, industrial reorganization and the new institutional configurations of labor and capital in the United States over the past two decades ("flexible accumulation") have produced new "industrial spaces" (A. Scott 1988), new "territorial complexes" (Storper and Walker 1989)—route 128 in Boston, Silicon Valley, Orange County—across the American economic landscape. This represents, in effect, the gradual, if uneven, displacement of one spatial form—the state-managed, fordist, or Keynesian city—and the emergence of a post-fordist landscape of Marshallian industrial districts uncontaminated by previous historical experiences of large-scale manufacturing, "spatially agglomerated production complexes together with their dependent labor markets and intercalated human communities" (A. Scott 1988:176). Viewing the region, or the city for that matter, as "a historically contingent process" (the language is from geographer Allan Pred [1984]), permits one not only to locate, say, Appalachia on the larger canvas of American capitalism but also to see how it was, in the process, culturally invented.

The industrial restructuring debate,<sup>3</sup> both in the United States and Britain, also generated a substantial literature on how local economies required both a place- or a site-specific analysis and a grasp of the ways in which they are subject to wider economic processes (Cooke 1990a, 1990b; Savage 1989; Urry 1985). This so-called localities debate has focused on the consequences of de- and re-industrialization on local communities, and, in particular, on local labor markets, housing, and local state planning, and on the role of deeply sedimented community class structures, cultures of work, and gender relations in shaping the rebuilding of place. Locality became the vehicle for wide-ranging discussions about structure and agency, realism and causality, levels of abstraction and the specific way in which locality matters (i.e., what Duncan calls spatial contingency effects, local causal processes, and locality effects [1989:246–247]). Suffice to say, that localities have a material basis in structures of socio-spatial relations, and via local coalitions, can appear active in their own right (Cox and Mair 1989). In this sense, localities are always political and struggled over (cf. Massey 1984), and Cooke (1990a) is right to see locality as a fundamental part of national identity and hence a repository of various rights and memberships that are regularly spoilt and fought over. The proactive nature of localities speaks to several of the articles in this issue that address the questions of how places are made meaningful, and how such meanings are created and contested (see Borneman, this issue).

There is another dimension of locality that takes off from the reality of wider economic, cultural, and political processes being worldwide in scope, and the individual necessarily being enmeshed in global webs in historically unprecedented ways. It is this "critical cosmopolitanism," as Paul Rabinow (1986:258) calls it, that speaks to the lack of fit between the local and the global. Communities

become, as Rouse (1992) notes in his study of Mexican migration to and from the United States, sites in which transnational circuits of capital, labor, and information intersect with one another and with local ways of life, blurring singular identities and imploding the Third World into the First. In what sense, then, can spatial meanings be attached or developed in a lived experience in which “the space of flows . . . supercedes the space of places” (Henderson and Castells 1987:7)? Several articles in this issue talk of deterritorialization, which is presumably what Fred Jameson has in mind when he talks of the insertion of modern selves into a “multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities” in which the “truth of the experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place” (1988:349, 351). Hyper-connectedness, driven by increasingly footloose capital operating on a global scale, does not, however, signal the erasure of local difference or of local identity, but rather revalidates and reconstitutes place and presents new challenges for how places and people give, and are given, meaning (Swyngedouw 1989). In the same way, hyper-mobility, displacement, and homelessness present, under planetary capitalism, new challenges for the construction of place based identities (Malkki, this issue). It is equally true, of course, that globality and inter-connectedness present new opportunities for forging *transnational* (i.e., nonlocal) forms of identity (Gupta, this issue), which demand quite different and much more problematic nonnational and nonlocal forms of imagination and identification. But it is important to recall, nonetheless, that the experience of the “large abstraction we choose to call capitalism” always arrives, as J. Scott notes (1985:348), “in quite personal, concrete, localized and mediated forms” (see Rofel, this issue).

Finally, a word on landscape and meaning. Cultural geographers, traditionally concerned with the morphological characteristics of landscapes, have increasingly turned to the symbolic and cultural meanings invested in them, recognizing that “the place is inseparable from the consciousness of those who inhabit it” (Daniels 1985:151). Landscapes can be explored as “symbolic fields,” as “maps of meaning,” as “ways of seeing,” indeed, read as texts, all of which rests on the presumption that social groups actively produce meanings but do so in ways that can “pinch out emancipatory impulses” (Thrift 1989:151). Cosgrove and Daniels address this multilayered complexity and the dialectical tacking between political economy and representational forms required to unravel the dense meanings encoded in landscapes.

A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, studying or symbolising surroundings. This is not to say that landscapes are immaterial. They may be represented in a variety of materials and on many surfaces—in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone. . . . A landscape park is more palpable, but no more real, nor less imaginary, than a landscape poem or painting. Indeed the meanings of the verbal, visual and built landscapes have a complex interwoven history. [1988:1]

Drawing inspiration from Raymond Williams and John Berger, cultural materialist geography pries open the interwovenness of the verbal, the visual, and the built. Landscape is, for example, a “way of seeing” for Cosgrove (1984), who

locates its origin in the early capitalist areas of the Italian Renaissance city-states. With its basis in the mathematical technique of linear perspective, landscape had affinities with the new forms of capitalist life (bookkeeping, surveying). Yet, built into this idea of landscape was a sort of counterweight, a resistance rooted in shifting investment from finance and trade to land. The landscape gave the impression that it represented a world of harmony rather than a world of commodification and class tensions. Landscapes are, then, sophisticated visual ideologies (cf. Williams 1977), a point also registered in strikingly similar ways by Harvey (1979) in his account of the symbolism of the landscape of 19th-century Paris and by T. J. Clark (1984) in his analysis of the relations between Hausmannization and Impressionist landscape painting. Ferguson's dissection (this issue) of the changing relations between ideas of "the country" and political-economic restructuring in Zambia resonates strongly with geographic research on how spatial tropes are employed in the conception, critique, and constitution of capitalist transformation.

So much for the confluences. What of the residuals, the knotty problems? I want to begin with the question posed by Gupta and Ferguson in their introduction, namely, the construction of difference in historic process. It is proper and right to attempt to "denaturalize" the connection between territory and identity, and to see difference within the confines of a spatially interconnected world. But there remains the problem of simultaneity, as John Berger (1974) calls it, namely, that the existence of global interconnections asserts the simultaneous production of difference within a totality. I have in mind, for example, how one might root questions of shifting, but linked gender identities to certain common circuits of transnational capital. Taking the case of electronics multinationals—the micro-circuits of capital, so to speak—one could chart the contemporaneous symbolic and cultural struggles around gender and domesticity in, say, Malaysia, Java, and the Silicon Valley. Ong (1987) documents spirit possession among Malay women workers as a language of protest mediating the contradictory ideologies of Muslim patriarchy and modernity; Wolf (1992) analyzes how, in a structurally similar site, wage income produces conflicts and new forms of difference, expressed through symbolic negotiations within the family over obligation and autonomy. Judith Stacey (1990), working, as it were, at the origin of the electronics circuit, details the collapse of the "traditional" family, the rise of a postmodern domestic structure in which women turn less to feminism than to fundamentalist church groups as a way of mooring their new silicon lives. At the very least, one has to take the global dimension of difference seriously enough to consider its simultaneous, interconnected effects. This is clearly what the notion of a global public culture—working, say, within the global Muslim diaspora—is designed to engage, though we are far from grasping its shape, its dynamics, its dimensionality.

Second, there is the question of identity, what it means, how we approach it. It is, I think, a signal weakness of much of the postmodernism debate in Geography that there is relatively little consideration of how people define themselves, how identities are cobbled together to act in the new spaces of a postfordist economy. Amidst the shards of modernist fragmentation and disengagement, how can identity be constructed at all? What are we to make of the Korean

Buddhist chemical engineer recently arrived from three years in Argentina, now a Christian greengrocer in Harlem? And what of my neighborhood Chinese restaurant in the Mission district of San Francisco, which has menus entirely in Spanish? What of the state of being Mexican-American?

Who are we exactly? The off-spring of the synthesis, or the victims of the fragmentation; the victims of double colonialism or the bearers of a new vision? . . . What the hell are we? Demexicanized Mexicans, pre-Chicanos, cholopunks, or something that still has no name? [Gomez-Peña 1987:1]

There is much talk of multiple identities, of how identity is labile and sliding. According to Stuart Hall (1989), identity is a meeting point that constitutes and continually reforms the subject so that he or she can act—points of suture, of temporary identification. As he says, identity is rather like a bus, “You just have to get from here to there, the whole of you can never be represented in the ticket you carry but you have to buy a ticket in order to get from here to there” (1989). I am not sure how much we know about buying these bus tickets, about how exactly individuals are interpellated by the multiple and often contradictory cultural and symbolic practices rooted in historically constituted, yet increasing global, sites. What are the processes by which a sense of self-construction is shared with others? Why and in what ways are such representations made more or less appealing, and how are they contested (Radway 1990)?

The same claim might be made about some of the compelling spatial tropes of our time, such as the nation. Balibar (1990:345) rightly points out that nations are reproduced to the extent that a network of practices institutes “a *homo nationalis* from cradle to grave, at the same time as he/she is instituted as *homo economicus, politicus, religiosus*. . . .” This raises a number of exceedingly complex questions pertaining not only to the multiple identities (in what sense are they compatible or contradictory, the shifting “weights” and gravity of each), but also to the historical conditions that make it possible. In this regard, Borneman’s discussion (this issue) of a *failure* to institute a compelling identity in East Germany is instructive. Under some conditions it is not possible, and, hence, the study of identity “failures” (what might this mean after all?) warrants some attention.

There is strong impulse in many of these discussions that globality in the contemporary epoch generates an extraordinary multiplication of difference, involving fantastic combinations of the old and the new as Walter Benjamin (1973) put it. I want to mention two reservations about the concern with the multiplication of difference and the related idea that the border, the margin, the hybrid, the syncretic “is a more adequate conceptualization of the ‘normal’ locale of the post-modern subject” (Gupta and Ferguson, this issue). First, it is easy to assume, as do many critics, that difference, plurality, the multiplication of subject positions is a good in itself. It is as though, as Terry Eagleton (1990:87–88) dryly observes, we are stuck with the dreary monism of the National Front and we need a few more fascist parties; or perhaps, there are in fact too few social classes, and we should strive to generate another clutch of aristocracies. Second, the stress on

hybrid forms of cultural identity that “do not have to appeal to a pure settled past . . . to authenticate themselves” (Bhabha, cited in Asad 1990:472) implies that social identities do not have to be authenticated. There is, in short, a sort of fluidity and continual reinvention out of confused cultural conditions. As Asad (1990:473) properly notes, this is a dangerous position because diverse cultural origins are in no sense a proof that a unity does not exist. Asad is worried by the purported denial of traditions and unified narratives, because “it is a notorious tactic of the dominating power to deny a distinct unity to populations it seeks to manipulate, to assume for itself the status of universal reason while attributing to others a singular contingency” (1990:473). Some practices of multiculturalism can, therefore, act to reinforce centralized state power. Both of these reservations speak, I think, to a wider concern with unity, and especially to the need to integrate a nonessentialist notion of class; specifically, how identity that rests on difference and splitting can produce a common ground for politics (Hall 1989).

Finally, I want to return to spatial representations of modernity, and more generally the question of imagination. The general point I wish to make is that most discussions of nationalism, ethnicity, and various forms of identity invoke “the imaginary,” but again, I am not at all sure whether it has been adequately problematized. Unlike the work of Althusser or Castoriadis on the social imaginary, imagination and territoriality are employed quite loosely, as though individuals or communities cook up some sort of ideal world out of thin air. There is obviously more to imagination than simply invoking the word and latching it onto an appropriate spatial trope. Fred Jameson (1990:51), in his study of imperialism and literature, has pointed out that the spatial disjuncture of colonialism has as its immediate consequence “the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole,” and that national literature and the arts struggle with and engage this “problem of global space,” with the imaginary space between colonizer and colonized. In a sense, the inability to grasp the whole is endemic to all periods of space-time compression, of course—for Paris in the mid 19th century as much as for Los Angeles in 1991. I simply want to conclude with one example that explores this question, namely Kristin Ross’s (1988) book on Rimbaud and the Paris Commune.

She attempts to identify the common structures of everyday life among French oppositional groups in the 1870s and the condensed fiction of Rimbaud’s poetry. What mediates the two is “social space,” a series of spatial displacements in France encapsulated in two spatial tropes: first, the projection of Haussmann’s fantasy of the straight line reflected in new patterns of geographical integration; and second, the realization of urban space as revolutionary space. For Ross, the Commune was a reaction to the new social space of the Second Empire, and Rimbaud prefigured in his poetry a social space adjacent to that activated by the insurgents, “a creative response to the same objective situation in which the insurrection in Paris was another” (1988:32). Rimbaud conceived of space as “a specific form of operations and interactions” (1988:35) in a manner analagous to the way in which space and hierarchy came to be “contested in the imagination of the Communards” (1988:4). There is, in short, a homology between the prose poem and the fashioning of the barricades.

Ross's study is a very suggestive analysis of the way in which one can move between, to return to Harvey's spatial grid that I began with, material spatial practices, perceptions, and representations. It requires a geographic sensibility, the interpretive flair of the humanist and literary theorist, and the ethnographic turn of the anthropologist and social historian. This is a tall order, I realize. But how else are we to grasp the "extraordinary crazy quilt" (Soja 1989:245), "the dazzling . . . patchwork mosaic" (Soja 1989:245; see also Davis 1990) that is the postmodern hyperspace of Los Angeles? Or the unimaginable complexity of the galactic metropolis that is São Paulo? Or, for that matter, the shifting, labile identities of Hutu refugees or Shanghai workers? Some tough shit.

### Notes

*Acknowledgments.* I am grateful for the advice of, and discussions with, Akhil Gupta and Mary Beth Pudup.

<sup>1</sup>Three examples, published in the *New York Times* on 23 June (Barringer 1991:25), are as follows: "Jesse Helms was right all along," "After viewing [the show] . . . all white people, and especially Spaniards, should pack up their bags in 1992 and return to Europe. Of course they won't so I hope they rot in hell," and "History and vision united in the propaganda of an art invented for imperialism."

<sup>2</sup>"The insertion of concepts of space and space relations, of place, locale, and milieu into any of the various supposedly powerful but spaceless social theoretical formulations has the awkward habit of paralysing that theory's central propositions" (Harvey 1985:xiii). See also Jameson (1984) and Urry (1985).

<sup>3</sup>This debate focused on: (a) the way enterprises respond to competition especially through new product lines and labor processes; (b) the creation and destruction of spatial divisions of labor; and (c) the links between uneven development and social relations expressed through locality studies (see Lovering 1989).

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