Time, space, city and resistance:

Situating Negri's multitude in the contemporary metropolis

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Abstract

Cities are not merely inanimate objects. They are complex living environments, built over time by cultures and civilisations. This thesis argues that cities have a central place in human history and civilisation because they are imbued with meaning and meaningful activity. Thus, cities are inherently political spaces, and it may be reasonably expected that they will be important sites of social transformation in the postmodern era. In order to understand the relationship between urban space and political consciousness, this thesis traces several different interpretive paths within the marxist tradition. First, we examine the work of Henri Lefebvre, who argues for an understanding of urban space as socially produced. Next, the thesis looks at the contributions of Guy Debord, particularly at his understanding of the relation between time and the city. Both writers struggle to understand the urban in the context of the shift to what we now call postmodernity. Despite their many strengths, Debord and Lefebvre ultimately fail to theorise a social subject capable of resisting capitalist domination of the city. As a result, the thesis turns to a consideration of the work of Antonio Negri. Negri's analysis of the fate of contemporary subjectivity has reinvigorated marxist critique with a return to the question of political change. His figure of the multitude takes leave of traditional marxism in challenging and productive ways, and helps us better understand the nature of subjectivity and resistance in a world of immaterial labour and virtuality. Nevertheless, this thesis argues that there is still work to be done before Negri's work can be mapped out onto the contemporary metropolis.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Chapter one

Urbanism and social transformation

> The city and civilisation are inseparable: with the city's rise and spread,
> man at last emerged from the primitive state. In turn, the city enabled
> him to construct an ever more complex and, we would like to believe,
> more satisfying way of life. Some scholars regard the city as second
> only to agriculture among the significant inventions in human history.
> We shall not quibble over the proper ranking due the urban community
> in man's storehouse of great inventions. It is sufficient to recognise that
> it is worthy of intensive treatment (Gideon Sjoberg, 1960, p. 1).

The city and history

Cities are not mere things. That is, they are not inert formations of matter,
indifferent to environments and subjects living within and outside them. Cities
are built objects, with a temporality and a complexity that passes beyond the
horizon of individuals, planners, nations and states. Cities thus inhabit a
curious double world: on the one hand, they are created by people and
communities and are so imbued with intention and meaning. On the other
hand, cities are large and persistent enough that what they are exceeds what
we might intend them to be. If there is one thing about cities that we might say
with certainty, it might be this: though it is clear that cities are part of human
history, questions remain about the role that cities play *in* history.

Urbanisation certainly occupies a central place in the study of culture.
Fundamental binaries of movement and settlement, inside and outside, may
be only prior forms of rural and urban or citizen and stranger. It is difficult,
indeed, to think that there may not be some greater significance to the city.
Could it be that cities are both *like* any other cultural artefact in that they are
subject to interpretations, processes, determinations, and *unlike*, in that cities

might be unique expressions of human history, with some kind of determinative power in themselves? Cities, after all, are associated with the great keywords of civilisation. Anthropologists, cultural theorists and philosophers have variously attributed concepts of citizenship, publicity, democracy and civilisation to the rise of urbanism in human history. At the same time, the development of the city has coincided with the growth of more negative forms of social existence, particularly in the modern age. Writers have blamed urbanisation and cities for mass poverty, crime, alienation and environmental degradation. With its profound connection to economic, cultural and social life, urbanisation lies at the centre of the modern western experience and has therefore long been the subject of theoretical scrutiny.

Lewis Mumford, one of the greatest and most idiosyncratic observers of the urban, hints at this possible meta-significance in his *The City in History,* when he writes of cities using the metaphors of magnet and container:

"Thus even before the city is a place of fixed residence, it begins as a meeting place to which people periodically return: the magnet comes before the container, and this ability to attract non-residents to it for intercourse and spiritual stimulus no less than trade remains one of the essential criteria of the city, a witness to its inherent dynamism, as opposed to the more fixed and indrawn form of the village, hostile to the outsider." (Mumford, p 10)

Despite Mumford's avowed materialism, the intangible nature of the terms magnet and container are nonetheless critical to his understanding of the city's peculiar status. As he points out, the word "magnet" denotes a field of force, a power capable of generating action at a distance, while "container" denotes the status of the city as an inner, human space marked out from the wild and from nature (ibid). That cities might be instances or expressions of such basic categories of human experience might justify their claim to a certain degree of historical power. But what kind of power, and how much? My purpose here is not to provide a definitive answer as to a supposed transcendence of the city in history. Rather, it is draw our attention at the very

2

beginning to the mysterious force that cities have exerted on the critical imagination, because I believe that in order to understand the urban, it is necessary to glimpse, albeit briefly, how the urban has been understood.

My contention is that such understandings may, or may not, be helpful to us as we struggle to understand the meaning of the city in our own times. At the beginning of the 21st century, the city is an unstable concept. From the earliest historical forms of urbanisation in Mesopotamia and Turkey to the cities of the Greek and Roman periods and on to the flourishing of medieval urbanism, what might appear at first as a permanent category of human experience vanishes as quickly as we examine the specific social formations in which the urban object occurs (Sjoberg 1960, Castells 1977). Such categorical difficulties are only compounded in the contemporary age. Beyond the rise of the suburbs (Fishman 1987), global forces of technology and information have reconfigured traditional urban spaces (Castells 2002), while new spatial forms – such as 'Edge Cities' – have surrounded and undermined what we used to think of as cities with wholly new forms of urbanisation (Garreau 1991). Cities themselves have assumed new roles in our economic life, exploding the old polarity between town and country that guided so much classical urban sociological interpretation in the past (Lefebvre 2003). How are we to understand these new forms of urbanisation and what do they reveal to us about the processes that underlie the creation of our urban built environment?

Cities as political spaces

In taking up the city as an object of theoretical scrutiny, we must be conscious of the way in which the very thing we wish to analyse may be internal to our understanding. Henri Lefebvre, the phenomenologist and urbanist, points to the relation of the city to philosophy and critical thought when he writes:

Philosophy is thus born from the city, with its division of labour and multiple modalities. It becomes itself a specialized activity in its own right. … The city linked to philosophy thus gathers by and in its logos the wealth of the territory, dispersed activities and people, the spoken and written… It makes simultaneous what in the countryside and according to nature takes place and passes, and is distributed according to cycles and rhythms. (Lefebvre, 2007 p 89)

Cities have bequeathed modernity with more than merely positive content. With the development of mass industrialisation in the 19th century, urbanisation began to emerge as a specific problem. As urban areas began to concentrate more and more capitalist development, they also accumulated capitalism's social contradictions. As a result, social theorists and critics turned their attentions to urban processes and planning in an attempt to impose order on the chaotic disorder that appeared to characterise modern life (Boyer 1983). Mass unemployment, disease, homelessness and social violence seemed coextensive with the urban and as a result, public authorities began the work of understanding and controlling urban development in the belief that urban social problems could be ameliorated through urban design or through the control of bodies in urban space (Vidler 1993). Although many of these emergent technologies of control were directed toward disease, unrest and poverty, it has also been argued that such measures were in fact aimed at the subjugation of the new mass industrialised workforces located in urban space (Bridge and Watson 2007). In the 20th century, evidence of the social and political importance of urban centres was demonstrated by the extent to which cities and their populations became important targets of military activity during both world wars. Finally, in the post-war period, urban unrest emerged as a major threat to government and power in the world's advanced capitalist countries.

Thus, the development of the city through to our own age has witnessed the rise of the urban as both a geographic and a social site of no small significance. Whether through a mere concentration of population, and/or as the result of the growth of technological and social processes rooted

in the urban, cities are also profoundly political spaces. If this is the case, I will argue throughout this work that urban space is an historically dynamic and contested terrain, socially constituted and susceptible to infinite transformations and definitions. How urban space is built, used, perceived and dreamed about must be explained by examining specific cultural, economic and historical conditions. As I will explain in greater detail in the next section, such a *political* conception of urban space requires an analytic approach that places politics and the question of political transformation at its very centre.

Marxism and the city

A survey of the literature on cities will show that questions about the nature of urban space have spawned a vast amount of theoretical and empirical researches. This same survey will show that many theoretical responses share basic presuppositions. Given the acknowledged historical connections between industrial development and modern urbanisation, it will come as no surprise that a great deal of urban studies owe some allegiance to either avowedly marxist or post-marxist theory (Bridge and Watson 2002). Were it possible to briefly describe what these approaches have in common, it might be that to a greater or lesser extent, both marxist and post-marxist urbanologists believe that a key to understanding urban form and meaning lies in being attentive to materiality as well as to the productive processes of society. In his book *The Urban Question*, Manuel Castells draws our attention to the need to understand the material world via a systematic theory of history:

> Every form of matter as a history or, rather, it is its history. This proposition does not solve the problem of the knowledge of a given reality; on the contrary, it poses that problem. For, to read this history, to discover the laws of its structuring and transformation, one must break down, by theoretical analysis, what is given in a practical synthesis. (Castells 1977, p 7)

Such a programme of research means discarding any thought of cities as somehow removed from history and the vicissitudes of material and social life. Castells argues that, having made our epistemological commitments, we are of necessity plunged into a mode of analysis that takes up the consideration of social processes and antagonisms generally thought of as political. Where, he asks, might we find the proper theoretical tools for this sort of work? As he writes:

> We looked for these tools, mainly, in the Marxist tradition. Why there? Because we had to answer questions linked to topics such as social classes, change, struggle, revolt, contradiction, conflict, politics. These terms and themes refer us back to a sociological theory the heart of which is the analysis of society as a structure of the class struggle. (Castells 1977, p viii)

Thus, for writers as different from each other as Lefebvre (2002), Castells (1972) and even Soja (2002), changes in urban space are related to transformations in production, and relations of production, that are particular to a given phase of social life. While this may appear obvious, it nevertheless presents important explanatory challenges. For instance, while modern urban forms of the 19th and early 20th century present clearly visible spaces of industrial production (factories) and the social reproduction of labour (housing), such a neat bifurcation seems hardly applicable to the contemporary world of multi-centred and relatively dispersed urban space, characterised (at least in the West) by the relative absence of industrialisation as traditionally understood. The result, it would appear, is that contemporary students of the city choosing to work within the marxist tradition ought first to analyse dynamics in our economic and social life and then demonstrate how these dynamics give rise to the spatial forms of urban development.

Such a neat synopsis, however, conceals fundamental differences within the field of marxist urbanism, even amongst the three urban theorists I will be discussing in this chapter. Despite the fact that at one time or another, Henri

Lefebvre, Manuel Castells and David Harvey have all been regarded as within the marxist tradition, they have each produced a distinctive approach to thinking about cities. In what remains of this chapter, therefore, I will examine these differences in the hope of producing the overall question intended to structure this thesis. At this juncture I can only provide a sketch, intended as a rough guide to the work just ahead. Thus, the first of these differences marks a fundamental divide between Lefebvre and the other writers noted above, one recalling what we noted earlier about the peculiar status of the city as a privileged site of history. Unlike Castells and Harvey, Lefebvre regards the urban as akin to a force of production in its own right, one both coextensive with, and beyond, the epoch of industrial capitalism. The unique paths followed by the other two writers are perhaps less unconventional, but they are significant enough to have generated controversy and debate within the discipline. As we will see, Castells passes from an analysis of the ideological status of the concept of the urban, along with a focus on social divisions in the metropolis, to focusing on the role of information and communications technology in the formation of urban space. Finally, geographer David Harvey remains more firmly within the boundaries of traditional marxism in his analysis of the city as a concretion of what we might designate as temporal crises within the sphere of capitalist exchange. Despite the strengths of each approach, a good deal of my argument in this and other chapters will be that none is sufficient for an understanding of the urban and its subject in the contemporary age, but all are necessary.

Lefebvre: urbanism beyond capitalism

We begin with Lefebvre, whose 1970 *La révolution urbaine* opened the field of theoretical urbanism with a materialist and yet deeply philosophical consideration of the city as a fundamental attribute of human life. Lefebvre elaborates a theoretical approach to the city that has its roots in the traditions of dialectics and phenomenology prevalent in postwar France. Central to his work is the idea that we must be able to clarify what the city is by building the city as an object of theory, discarding incomplete and partial notions and

replacing them with concepts constructed with a full attentiveness to the dynamic relation between thought and reality. Without undertaking such a radical epistemological critique, Lefebvre warns, we risk adequate knowledge of an emergent urban order in human existence. With Lefebvre, we are in a realm of theory that seems more rooted in the experience of the individual than in the processes and structures of political economy. Nevertheless, Lefebvre enjoins us to think historically, so that despite our immersion in the epistemic confines of industrial capitalism, we might be capable of recognising the new global urban order. Industrialism, Lefebvre believes, has blinded us to both the possibilities and the actualities of the urban, which is akin to a new kind of global order. As he writes:

> What does our blindness look like? We focus attentively on the new field, the urban, but we see it with eyes, with concepts, that were shaped by the practices and theories of industrialization, with a fragmentary analytic tool that was designed during the industrial period and is therefore *reductive* of the emerging reality. We no longer see that reality; we resist it, turn away from it, struggle against it, prevent its birth and development. (Lefebvre 2003, p 29)

Lefebvre's dialectical urbanism challenges us to see the urban beyond the confines of the present industrial order and beyond the strictures of capitalism. In reality, the urban is not merely a territory but an organised field of social relationships characterised by the dynamics of centrality and socially constituted temporality (Gilbert & Dikec 2008; Bridge & Watson 2007). Lefebvre therefore demands a political urbanism sharply opposed to any romantic conception of the past and fiercely antagonistic to any utopian urbanism as may be depicted by capitalist ideology. As he writes in his later work *The Right to the City*:

> The prescription is: there cannot be a going back (to the traditional city), nor a headlong flight, towards a colossal and shapeless agglomeration. In other words, for what concerns the city the object of science is not given. The past, the present, the possible cannot be

separated. What is being studied is a *virtual object*, which thought studies, which calls for new approaches. (Lefebvre 2002, p 368)

For Lefebvre, writing in the statist and technocratic context of De Gaulle's France, this new approach must transcend the narrow techniques and specialisations of capitalist urbanism by recognising that urbanisation is a site of social and political struggle. As both economic development and class struggle have expanded the field of "rights" available to the working class, so now (in the late 20th century and after), the possibility of a non-exclusive and non-exploitative urbanism presents itself as a "right" to the city that must be an object of struggle for the working class. As we will see a subsequent chapter focusing extensively on Lefebvre's theory of urban space, his demand for urban transformation as well as his emphasis on the complex relationship between urban space and temporality makes his writing singularly important for the present work.

Castells: from the political to the informational

Before the decline of structuralism, Manuel Castells ranked as probably the most influential writer on the city (Bridge and Watson 2002), particularly as a result of his pioneering study *The Urban Question* (1977). In the aftermath of the structuralist enterprise, Castells' work has evolved significantly to take account of the development of communications technology and its impact on the urban. Dissatisfied with available definitions of either the urban or the city, and critical of Lefebvre's phenomenological approach, Castells' *The Urban Question* begins with a careful consideration of the urban as an object of theory, this time cast in a mode of analysis that owes more to Althusser than to Husserl or Heidegger. Castells recognises that most, if not all observers of the city have assumed a theoretical object (the city) without specifying the particular content of that object. As a result, the city becomes a timeless, ideological category that provides a source of explanation for an impossibly wide range of social phenomena, precisely because of its imprecision. As he writes:

'Urban Culture'...is neither a concept nor a theory. It is...a myth...[which]...provide[s] the key-words of an ideology of modernity, assimilated, in an ethnocentric way, to the social forms of liberal capitalism ... it suggests the hypothesis of a production of social content (the urban) by a trans-historical form (the city) ...(but) the city creates nothing...The link between space, the urban and a certain system of behaviour regarded as typical of 'urban culture' has no other foundation than an ideological one ...From this point of view, the problem of the definition (or redefinition) of the urban does not even arise....Such a tendency helps to reinforce the strategic role of urbanism as a political ideology and as a professional practice. (Castells 1977, p 15)

This critique of the status of the concept of "city" allows Castells to dispense with the problematic status of much writing on both modernity and the urban through the figure of the city. Instead of the seeing the city as a transcendent element of human history, Castells holds that urbanism always reflects a particular mode of historical and material existence. It is just this attentiveness to structure and political economy that places Castells in an excellent position to describe the transformations of the capitalist economy as they affect the organisation of urban space in the late 20th and 21st centuries. By the late 1980's, Castells begins to theorise both consumption and technology in the economy in ways that place his thought outside the orthodox Marxism of the time. As Bridge and Watson write of Castells:

One of the key insights in his early work … is to argue that what distinguishes cities in a capitalist economy is their function as providers of bundles of collective consumption (such as public services) that allows a workforce to be sustained. […] Castells' more recent work has identified information and knowledge not just as a facilitator or future accumulation through research and development, but as a regime of accumulation itself and one that crosses all sectors of the economy from agriculture to financial futures speculation. Knowledge has become directly a value producing activity. (Bridge and Watson 2002, p. 110)

At this point, however, we may find ourselves asking if Castells' reduction of the urban to a particular strategy of capitalist accumulation has not lost sight of the city as a unique configuration of space. The emphasis on urban processes as both techniques and regimes appears to dispense with any consideration of an actual urban geography. At the very least, the city appears to dissolve into the immaterial networks of technology and communication. Is there no possibility of a geographical approach to the urban that is yet cognizant of the dangers of eternalizing the city? Can there be no value in reading the city as a field of space? Despite these questions, we will see in later chapters that Castell's insistence on immateriality and the urban will be useful as we consider the prospects of social subjectivity and transformation in the 21st century.

Harvey: from geography to description

We may find the counterpoint to Castells in the writing of David Harvey, a geographer more firmly rooted in the political economy of Marx (see his *Limits to Capital* 1999) than Castells himself. As an urban geographer, Harvey follows Castells in his emphasis on cities as sites of consumption but introduces a new focus on the urban as a specific terrain of accumulation. This is to say that Harvey sees the built environment of the city as a concretised expression of the various cycles of crisis that are characteristic of the capitalist economy. Thus, beyond the geographic separation of the functions of production and reproduction, urban space and its built environment can function in a regulative manner by allowing dangerous surpluses of investment or labour to be "switched" into more productive channels, such as investment in infrastructure or physical buildings (Harvey 1989). However, such switching can only ever be a temporary response to temporalities of cycle and crisis, and as a result, the urban environment presents itself as a series of spatialised temporal fixes to specific problems of accumulation. As Harvey writes:

Capital represents itself in the form of a physical landscape created in its own image, created as use values to enhance the progressive accumulation of capital. The geographical landscape that results is the crowning glory of past capitalist development. But at the same time, it expresses the power of dead labour over living labour and as such it imprisons and inhibits the accumulation process within a given set of specific physical constraints. And these can be removed only slowly unless there is a substantial devaluation of the exchange value locked up in the creation of these physical assets. (Quoted in Bridge and Watson 2002, p. 120)

If the value of Castells is to hold together a consideration of political economy and urban processes, the value of Harvey lies in the manner in which he brings together a concern for space, geography and political economy. At the same time, Harvey pays such close attention to the economic functions of capitalism as they play out in the urban terrain that we may find ourselves yet again gazing at capital as subject, transfixed by capital as a self-creating force that strictly delimits the possibilities of political transformation. Despite his good intentions, in Harvey's writing we appear to lose sight of the transformative subject that would be able to restore a multivalent and non-exclusive field of use values to an urban terrain subsumed in the world of capitalist exchange.

Post-urban morphologies

In my view, the most important feature of American postwar development has been the almost simultaneous decentralization of housing, industry, specialised services and office jobs; the consequent breakaway of the urban periphery from a central city it no longer needs; and the creation of a decentralized environment that nevertheless possesses all the economic and technical dynamism we associate with the city. This phenomenon, as remarkable as it is unique, is not suburbanization but a new city. (Fishman 1987, p 190)

It is often claimed that humanity is moving toward an urban future. Certainly, a superficial glance at the historical data would tend to reinforce such a view: according to the 2007 United Nations report on World Urbanization Prospects, the percentage of the world's population living in urban areas in 1950 stood at just 29.1 percent. By 2010, the report projects that slightly over 50 percent of the world will be urbanised, and, looking forward to the year 2050, 70 percent of the earth's population is expected to live in urban areas (UN WPP 2007). However, the difficulty with this urban proposition lies in the definition of what kinds of geographical space are considered urban. The United Nations study just cited, for example, contrasts urban areas with rural ones, therefore ignoring vast differences in what I shall refer to as the post-urban morphology of the present. Further, a simple comparison between rural and non-rural does not allow us to distinguish the specificity of an urban object, should one exist.

As we will see in further detail when we come to the work of Henri Lefebvre, the problem is compounded by our inability to disentangle ideological and historical definitions of the city from processes of capitalist accumulation producing landscapes that superficially resemble what we might call urban. Thus, exurbs, conurbations and edge cities all possess certain similarities to urban areas. Note that already in this work, we appear to be making a distinction between the city and the urban, the former term describing a bounded and relatively discrete phenomenon in space and time, the latter term gesturing at a more diffuse object that may be more process than thing. I think it possible to derive several consequences from this: the first is that we need to be careful to distinguish processes of urbanisation from places we have historically designated as cities; second, we ought to try to understand what lies behind the processes of urbanisation we observe; and finally, we must uncover, if we can, the specificity of an urban object so that we may understand its dynamic. This will be all the more important as we proceed, for we may discover that processes of urbanisation do not neatly coincide with their material expressions.

As before, Lewis Mumford provides us with an excellent start. Despite his antiquarian fascination with monumentality and civilisation, Mumford's writing on cities points to an important underlying logic of relationality and social process, such that we are given to understand that a city is always much more than a built environment:

> The city, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community. It is the place where the diffused rays of many separate beams of life fall into focus, with gains in both social effectiveness and significance. The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship: it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, the academy of learning. Here in the city the goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded; here is where human experience is transformed into viable signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focused: here too, ritual passes on occasion into the active drama of a fully differentiated and self-conscious society. (Mumford 1997 p 104)

By concentrating on social process of urbanisation, we may find that, far from dispersing the idea of the city into a jumble of tendencies, forces and relations, we may actually be able to extricate the concept of the city from the various non-urban (yet urban-like) morphologies we encounter in the contemporary world. This approach gives us the basis for a critique of endless suburbs, exurbs and metropolitan areas of postmodernity without forcing us to simply resort to definitional frames of past cities. We will begin this task by briefly examining the decline of the classical city of the industrial era and the concomitant growth of suburbs and metropolitan areas.

The end of the classical city

In the West, we are haunted by the cities of the early industrial era. Either in our literature or in our designs for better urbanisms (such as may be found in the New Urbanism movement), cities such as New York, London and Chicago all appear as instantiations of the ideal urban environment. To some extent, as I will argue further on, this haunting points to a disjuncture between the time of theory and that of the present moment. Our thinking about cities has built up over time, and our frames and references derive from historical cities that no longer exist, even if there are still places that bear the same names, or retain features of past built environments. Gideon Sjoberg (1965) warns us that the city is a unique configuration within time and social space, and that, from a strictly historical point of view, there is little we may understand about the world of the medieval city through study of an industrial city overlaying it. More problematically, in the era of late capitalism, we may simply lack the capacity to represent the spatial order of the age (Jameson 1992). As a result of this inability, and faced with indecipherable change, the urban imagination has little choice but take up and valorise what it already thinks it knows. Romance and nostalgia appear to be occupational hazards as far as urban studies are concerned. We know that our ideal cities are passing away, even if we are not certain what they are being replaced with.

However, we may know more about the social forces driving the reorganisation of urban space; and this may give us some clues as to the nature of our posturban landscapes. Many writers, including Daniel Bell (1973), David Harvey (1973) and Manuel Castells (1977) have pointed to the relation between the decline of basic industrial activity as the primary source of societal wealth and end of the relatively compact urban form that corresponded to this period. Thus, though these writers might disagree as to reasons for social and economic change, they all more or less agree that there is a relation between the economic life of a particular era and the shape or morphology of the cities that define that era. It is little wonder then that as the period of industrial manufacture came to an end in the West, new forces of economic production began to remake urban form. The consequences of

such a remaking go well beyond the physical environment. Because these are social changes, they entail profound transformations in the cultural and temporal environment. David Harvey points out that new processes of production result in much more than new types of commodities; they also give rise to new spatiotemporal rhythms and relations that alter human experience. New forms of production and accumulation revolutionise cities as well as the social processes that sustained them. Harvey points to the depth of change implied by deindustrialization:

> A revolution in temporal and spatial relations often entails, therefore, not only the destruction of ways of life and social practices built around preceeding space-time systems, but the "creative destruction of" a wide range of physical assets embedded in the landscape. The recent history of deindustrialization is amply illustrative of the process I have in mind. (Harvey 1989, p 425)

Suburbia

> *Under the present suburban regime, every urban function follows the example of the motor road: it devours space and consumes time with increasing friction and frustration, while, under the plausible pretext of increasing the range of speed and communication, it actually obstructs it and denies the possibility of easy meetings and encounters by scattering the fragments of a city at random over a whole region.* (Mumford 1968, p 312)

Suburbia is not now what it once was. Even as late as the Victorian period, the suburb was thought of as an exclusive precinct for the very wealthy, rather than for the middle class, or people aspiring to be so. As large industrial concerns began to concentrate working class populations near commercial areas in traditional cities, it became desirable for the well-off to maintain a home away from factories and their workers, yet close enough to

the city that business might be carried out without too much difficulty (Fishman 1987). This rather exclusive vision of suburbia continued to be the model for metropolitan development up until the Great Depression and World War Two. From this point onward, urban form changed dramatically:

> If the nineteenth century could be called the Age of Great Cities, post-1945 America would appear to be the Age of Great Suburbs. As central cities stagnated or declined in both population and industry, growth was channelled almost exclusively to the peripheries. Between 1950 and 1970, American central cities grew by 10 million people, their suburbs by 85 million. Suburbs, moreover, accounted for at least three-quarters of all new manufacturing and retail jobs generated during that period. (Fishman 1987, p 171)

By the early 1970's, more people in the United States lived in suburbs than in city centres or rural areas combined. As a landscape and as a metropolitan feature, the word suburb came to be associated with the massive postwar residential developments that were built outside historic city centres. But what exactly was, and what is, suburbia? Baldassare notes that, in addition to its location beyond the city proper, the suburb is a residential, non-agricultural area that "is relatively low in density compared to the major central city, yet is highly populated. The suburban area is characterized by political and economic fragmentation. No municipality serves as the main focus for work or commercial activities. Also, many independent local governments operate with little coordination" (Baldassare 1986, p 5). Importantly, though suburbs are associated with the development of the automobile, it would be a mistake to attribute the geographic form of suburbia to the car. Instead, as Harvey (1985; 1973) reminds us, suburbanisation may be better understood as a response to patterns of consumption and accumulation that emerged after World War Two.

As we well know, this picture of the suburbs began to shift dramatically by the 1980s. Particularly in the United States, patterns of immigration and downward mobility coalesced with rising unemployment and a decline in

social investment. The result was that suburbs were unable to maintain the types of social homogeneity that had characterised their growth since 1945. Instead, as Mike Davis (1990) tells us, the mythical peace and prosperity of suburbs has been replaced by levels of social inequality generally associated with inner cities in the period of their decline. The difference, of course, is that the new suburban inequality is fragmented and diffuse, occurring as it does within a landscape designed to enhance patterns of private accumulation. This new geography of social dislocation is characterised by a marked absence of public space, which as Davis notes, had generally been considered a useful "emollient" of class struggle. At its very worst, this decentred poverty (with its concomitant violence and lack of opportunity) has completely reversed our understanding of the built environment. As Alex Marshall wryly notes,

> The suburbs and the city have reversed historic roles. The city now represents order, stability, community, and the human scale. The suburbs have become the example of constant change, gigantism, uncontrolled technological forces, and the rule of the marketplace. Whereas once the city symbolised a merciless, soulless world, and the suburbs calmness, family and nature, the two worlds have almost completely traded places in what they represent. (Marshall 2000, p 87)

Metropolis as flow and command

We have already noted that suburbs are characterised by a degree of dispersal and diffusion that distinguish them both socially and geographically from more compact industrial-era cities. We also saw that, in terms of governance, the administrative structures of suburbia were not nearly as geographically coextensive or homogenous as those that found within cities. Toward the end of the last century, the response to this disjuncture between governance and territory has been the "creation" of large metropolitan areas that encompass widely divergent social and geographic forms. Thus metropolitan regions generally include historic city centres and associated

residential neighbourhoods, suburbs, exurbs, edge cities and even wholly new urban developments such as the planned communities associated with New Urbanism (Bridge and Watson 2007). These administrative forms have generally signalled the decline of more localised forms of self-governance as social questions in the metropolitan region are addressed through management structures rather than by politicians (Levin 1984; Harvey 2007). However, several writers have linked the development of the metropolis to developments in the global economy, and in particular, to the advent of the immaterial networks of digital information that support this globalised world. In his description of the so-called network society, Manuel Castells provides an excellent view of the relation between metropolitan space and the immaterial global economy, and introduces a new emphasis on the elements of command and social control that defines this space:

> In the network society, a fundamental form of social domination is **the prevalence of the logic of the space of flows over the space of places**. The space of flows structures and shapes the space of places, as when the differential fortunes of capital accumulation in global financial markets reward or punish specific regions, or when telecoms systems link up CBDs to outlying suburbs in new office development, bypassing /marginalizing poor urban neighborhoods. The domination of the space of flows over the space of places induces intra-**metropolitan dualism** as a most important form of social/territorial exclusion, that has become as significant as regional uneven development. (Castells 2007, p 132)

Metropolitan space is increasingly characterised by the infusion of material space with immateriality, the dislocation of the city within the metropolitan region, and the decline of locality in favour of the global. Both Castells and Davis, among others, note that the development of the global information economy has given rise to new patterns of saturation and dispersal, whereby metropolitan centres tend to accumulate the vital network infrastructures within spaces characterised by command, while marginal groups and the areas in which they live are, as seen above, bypassed by

capital flows and the kinds of infrastructure that facilitates them. Sassen has written of the patterns evident in the emerging global cities (metropolitan areas):

> The widely accepted notion that agglomeration has become obsolete now that global telecommunications advances are allowing for maximum dispersal, is only partially correct. It is precisely because of the territorial dispersal facilitated by telecommunications advances that agglomeration of centralizing activities has expanded immensely. This is not a mere continuation of old patterns of agglomeration but, one could posit, a new logic for agglomeration. (Sassen 2007, p 163)

The limits of marxism

We ought now to return to the more theoretical direction of this paper. Though both Manuel Castells and David Harvey are deeply concerned with the prospects of political transformation within our modern urban societies, I will argue that as a result of their particular position in the development of the Marxist interpretive tradition, they read the urban from the top down – that is, they tend to privilege capital as subject. Lefebvre, on the other hand, approaches the urban from a position deeply influenced by phenomenology, emphasising the socially created nature of space and arguing that all people have a "right" to the whole of the city and to the creative and social possibilities that urbanism provides. Lefebvre demands an appropriation of the city (Lefebvre 2002) which is valuable from the point of view of a transformational politics, but I will argue that his phenomenological approach is insufficient for understanding how the nature of urbanism has transformed under capitalism as well as for the thought of the transformational subject that a commitment to political marxism demands.

At issue here is the subject and its relation to contemporary urban form. More specifically, it seems to me that a marxist urbanism must be capable of

thinking the capacity of the subject for political and social change in the present age. Clearly, the attraction of both classical marxist and post-marxist interpretations of the urban lies in more than just the tradition's explanatory power. Aside from its insights into the fields of economic production and culture, we should be able to say that marxism contains a commitment to a transformative politics; one that that seeks to overcome capitalist relations of exploitation. Thus, a robust and relevant marxist urbanism will need to address not just the structure and form of the urban in contemporary Western society but also whether our new urban spaces and populations are capable of producing counter-capitalist political change. From this point of view, the problem of cities and urban form is also a problem of the human subject dwelling within contemporary urban society.

However, it is clear that *traditional* marxist theory will be insufficient to understand the experience of the contemporary subject within what has been termed late capitalism (Jameson 1992). Any approach that ignores the vast developments in the economy, society and theory throughout the last several decades will unable to comprehend the social particularity of the contemporary city. And given that a marxist theoretic is concerned with the identification of social forces capable of contesting capitalism, it seems perverse to cling to a social theory that yet perceives the world through classical dichotomies of proletariat/bourgeoisie and base/superstructure. Many marxist and non-marxist scholars would agree that the postmodern world is enormously more complex than these dualities would allow. The advent of the communication economy or the network society (Castells 1989), of globalisation and most of all, the rise of new social movements based upon understandings of identity and political activity well outside the experience of the traditional industrial proletariat suggest that the tasks of understanding involved are multiple and heterogeneous.

Given this growing complexity of life and resistance under capitalism – or what philosopher Felix Guattari has referred to as a "proliferation of margins" (Guattari 2007) – we still ought to resist the temptation to lapse into a purely eclectic or fragmented analysis of the material before us, as a kind of stylistic

response to the diversity and multiplicity of the postmodern. Such an approach, while often illuminating, risks abandoning a systematic awareness of late capitalism and its cultural forms, along with the discipline to interpret such forms as always historically determined – just as with any other mode of production. Contemporary marxist writers maintain that the task of understanding the post-industrial world still requires a close attentiveness to history and materiality that has long formed the core of the tradition. Writing on his own approach to the cultural and theoretical environment of postmodernity, Frederic Jameson has argued for a critical viewpoint in which such an attentiveness to history is yet sensible to emergent forms of experience and social organisation particular to our times, including such intangible phenomena as emotional tonalities. In his study of the culture of late capitalism, Jameson writes that his

> exposition will take up in turn the following constitutive features of the post-modern: a new depthlessness, which finds its prolongation both in contemporary "theory" and in a whole new culture of the image or the simulacrum; a consequent weakening of historicity, both in our relationship to public History and … a whole new type of emotional ground tone – what I will call "intensities" … (Jameson 1991, p. 12).

This last emphasis on emotionality is particularly relevant to many recent approaches to both the urban and to the experience of subjectivity in modern capitalism, as it signals a shift not only in the world of theory, but also of the social world in which theory is deployed. As Jameson demonstrates, these developments have a profound role in the design and ecology of the built environment. Many observers have noted significant changes in the economic and cultural life of society, with some characterising this new communicative and virtual capitalism as post Fordism (Lazzarato 1996, Virno 2004).

As a result of these developments, traditional forms of opposition to capital are losing ground. The fragmentation of large scale industrial labour and the growth of affective, immaterial labour means that the there can no longer be any recourse to the simple proletarian political dilemma of revolution or social

democracy, because the working class – with its historical forms of cultural and political opposition – no longer exists in the same manner as before. Without the classical antagonistic proletarian, marxist theory has been forced to search the contemporary world for a new subject capable of resisting and transforming capitalist command. The search has led many to examine the connection between the subjective life of affect – including the dynamics of communication – and the world of post Fordist production. While such a strategy yet contains a commitment to materiality and history, it is at odds with more mechanistic or deterministic marxisms that posit the traditional economic sphere as sole source of change in the social world. It may be argued that these older marxisms lack a requisite attentiveness to social change or to new, emergent forms of life. Ironically, therefore, deterministic historical materialism, a theory that insisted on the study of historical change, has become incapable of discerning the transformation of capitalism.

Such mechanistic readings of Marx commit other errors that cut to the core of historical materialism as a political practice, inasmuch as a political theory that is tied to determinist and productivist models of social life under capitalism must inevitably lose sight of the possibility of transformation (Weeks 2005). As Harry Cleaver writes in his introductory essay to the English translation of Antonio Negri's *Marx Beyond Marx*:

> The fascination of Marxists with capitalist mechanisms of despotism in the factory, of cultural domination and of the instrumentalization of the working-class struggle has blinded them to the presence of a truly antagonistic subject. The capitalist class is the only class they recognize. When they do see working-class struggle, it is almost always treated as a derivative of capital's own development. The true dynamic of capitalist development is invariably located in such "internal" contradictions among capitalists as competition. (Cleaver 2005, p. xxi)

Time, space, immateriality and the city

Up until this point, I have assembled a number of issues or problems in the study of the city from a generally marxist perspective. Now I should like to bring these different aspects together in such a way that they might guide the rest of this work. As I hope I have shown, if we wish to understand the city within a framework that prioritises materiality and history, it seems there are theoretical opportunities for us should we choose the path of a broadly conceived marxism. As always when it comes to theory, the more we specify our approach, the more specific the questions we face become. In the work that follows, therefore, each chapter will respond to the particular set of questions posed. But what are these questions? What, specifically, are the issues that must be addressed by this work?

The first set of questions have to do with the changing nature and form of cities, as evidenced in the growth and spread of suburbs, slums and edge cities around the globe. These new forms have overtaken what we have imagined to be our historic city cores. As a result, we will consider the problem of space, paying particular attention to the work of Henri Lefebvre and his theory of the production of space. Chapter three questions the theoretical priority of space and considers the politics of time and the city as developed by Lefebvre's friend and student Guy Debord. Debord's writing on the spectacle and the city provides an important theoretical anticipation of many of the themes later taken up by Antonio Negri and the Autonomists. However, despite the strengths of both Lefebvre and Debord when it comes to understanding the materiality of the urban and the experience of subjectivity, I will argue that neither writer manages to produce a theory of a social subject capable of resisting the domination of late capitalism. As a result, the last two chapters will focus on Antonio Negri, a theorist whose work demands that we rediscover the political imperative behind the critique of capital.

Against the grain of many traditional accounts of capitalist development, Negri's writing forces us to take subjectivity, time, power and

immateriality seriously. Through his writings, we will dwell at some length on the question of temporality and command in late capitalism in order shed some light on the experience of urban subjectivity. The last chapter of this work will continue to interrogate the ideas of Antonio Negri, paying close attention to his concept of the multitude as well as to his interpretation of Marx's general intellect. Although I shall take the position that the concept of the multitude is a fruitful one for social research, I shall have cause to criticise Negri's thought of the relation between the multitude and the contemporary metropolis. It is hoped that by pointing to what remains undertheorised in Negri's writing on cities, we will be in a better position to understand subjectivity in the contemporary city. Through Negri, we will ask after the political prospects of social transformation in the contemporary metropolis, finally ending with a consideration of capitalist urbanism as an attempt to reduce the time of resistance to zero through spatial strategies of command that impose empty, analytic and homogenous time.

Chapter two

Space and the city

> *But what is the nature of this "space" across which and within which such processes operate? The conquest of space first required that it be conceived as something useable, malleable, and therefore capable of domination through human action. A new chronological net for human exploration and action was created through navigation and map making. … Space thus came to be represented, like time and value, as abstract, objective, homogenous, and universal in its qualities.* (David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience,* p 12.)

Introduction: space and understanding

The general work of this thesis aims to uncover relationships between power and capitalism, resistance and the urban, time and space. Given this matrix of intersecting questions, we have so far delved into the work of several marxist writers in order to show that, with its concern for social transformation and critique, there is much to be gained through this approach to the city. In the first chapter, we mapped urban morphology in the present day, examining the development of the global metropolis as well as the growth of slums and suburban sprawl. As we did so, we not only used frames of analysis derived from political economy, but spatial concepts and metaphors that fit well within the discipline of geography. Having surveyed topographies of difference and inequality distributed throughout the urban, we ought to pause and reflect on the spatial quality of both our object and analysis.

Despite the fact that the city appears primarily as a spatial, and hence geographical phenomenon, there is a risk that unless we adequately theorise space in relation to the urban, we will unconsciously import ideas into our

analysis that will affect our understanding of the city in all its complexity. It could be argued, for example, that concepts of space are part of the problem as far as contemporary urban environments are concerned. After all, many geographical and spatial techniques are linked with processes of domination as they play out in the urban milieu, so an uncritical appropriation of the thinking behind such techniques could close our analysis to the possibilities of social transformation we seek (Harvey 1976). The task is then to examine space theoretically, using such knowledge that we may find as a means of understanding the urban. To do so I propose to use this chapter as an opportunity to look at the work of Henri Lefebvre in greater depth than we did in the first chapter. We will begin with a consideration of how space and time appear in both Marx and marxist theory generally, before taking up Lefebvre's theory of spatial production, his use of the dialectic, and finally, his writing on urban order.

Space against time

Although the use of spatial metaphors and analysis is overwhelming today, this certainly has not always been the case. Despite the radical discovery of space in 20th century art and literature, space remained relatively unthought in modern theory, which for the most part was still enmeshed with the 19th century's obsession with time, history and diachronic explanation (Smith 2003; Lefebvre 1991). The lack of spatial awareness was perhaps most acute in marxism, given its interest in historical and economic processes that appeared best conceived through a temporal, rather than a spatial, frame of reference (Harvey 1985). However, given Marx's sophisticated analyses of time – whether of circulation time, production time, turnover time, etc. – it would a mistake to assume that Marx was not concerned with understanding the spatial dimensions of exploitation. The most obvious example of Marx's attempt to think spatially can be found in his studies of the factory, the concrete space of capitalist exploitation *par excellence*. In the following passage from *Capital*, for example, Marx depicts proximities and distances

between workers and machines in an attempt to understand how the division of labour is produced in space:

> So far as division of labour re-appears in the factory, it is primarily a distribution of the workmen among the specialised machines; and of masses of workmen, not however organised into groups, among the various departments of the factory, in each of which they work at a number of similar machines placed together; their co-operation, therefore, is only simple. The organised group, peculiar to manufacture, is replaced by the connexion between the head workman and his few assistants. The essential division is, into workmen who are actually employed on the machines (among whom are included a few who look after the engine), and into mere attendants (almost exclusively children) of these workmen. (Marx 2007, p 459)

In addition to this and other passages in Marx, there is another and more profound spatial aspect to Marx's work that we will encounter further in this thesis, particularly when we turn to the writing of Antonio Negri. In both *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*, Marx develops an analysis of the development of capitalist relations not simply in time, but also in space. The famous passage from formal subsumption to real subsumption is, in fact, a description of both an historical and a spatial relationship between capital as a space of exploitation and all of society. This movement can best be understood as the encroachment of capital on the social world as a whole. For Negri and other contemporary theorists, the spatial domination of capitalism provokes a qualitative transformation in the way that capitalism operates, so that under conditions of real subsumption, aspects of human life that had remained outside the circuit of capital are now immersed in capitalist relations and taken up in commodity production (Read 2003). The spatial component of this analysis is made clear in Jason Read's analysis of the transformation from formal subsumption to real subsumption in Marx's *Grundrisse*:

> The necessary and sufficient conditions of the transition from formal to real subsumption are already given in the expansion of formal

subsumption. As formal subsumption increases the scale of production, bringing more and more workers into the space of production, it begins to transform the social and technological conditions of production. … In real subsumption labor is social labor not simply in the sense that it is undertaken collectively and is necessarily cooperative in the factory but because it involves the products of social activity in general…(Read 2003, p 110)

What should be clear is that Marx is not simply using space as a metaphor; rather, spatiality is a structural component of the phenomenon he seeks to understand. In the passage quoted above from *Capital*, capitalist power not only *extends* itself in space and time, it also organises and produces human relationships through the arrangement of spatial terrain. As we will see when we turn to Negri and contemporary marxism, the inherently spatial dichotomy between formal and real subsumption has emerged as a key to understanding what has been termed late capitalism.

Whatever the force of Marx's spatial analytic, it is clear that it cannot balance the temporal focus in his work (Harvey 1985), and for that reason it is easy to understand why Marx's spatial and geographic thinking has remained undiscovered until recently. However, since the advent of structuralist marxism and Foucault, concern with space has, to all intents and purposes, swept aside considerations of time and temporality within theory and its object, the culture of postmodern capitalist society (Kofman and Lebas 2007). Indeed, the suppression of time and the annihilation of distance has emerged as one of the central problematics of contemporary life, and therefore, as one of the defining characteristics of capitalist domination. Critic Fredric Jameson points to the loss of history and historically durative identities, noting the substitution of space and the saturation of commodities in space as the key challenge to postmodern politics. As he writes:

The new space that thereby emerges involves the suppression of distance … and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and places, to the point where the postmodern body, whether wandering

through a postmodern hotel, locked into rock sound by means of headphones, or undergoing multiple shocks and bombardments of the Vietnam War …is now exposed to a perceptual barrage of immediacy from which all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed. (Jameson 1992, p 413)

Such an unmediated and saturated experience of space is not merely an aesthetic problem; it also signals a broader social effect. If in the postmodern period, the historical relationship between the national state and its subject has broken down, Jameson suggests that the figure of the state is no longer as susceptible to radical transformation as it once was. Assuming this to be true, we might think that localities such as cities could emerge as loci of radical politics. While Jameson suggests this might be possible, he also warns that the very limits of place work against efforts to overcome what is, after all, a globalised space of domination. For Jameson, localized and situated politics run up against the complex overdeterminations and discontinuities that characterise contemporary space, so much so that in the "smooth" spaces of contemporary capitalist domination, it is difficult, if not impossible, to transmit successful political struggles from one place to another. Part of the problem, Jameson suggests, is that at the present time, the spatial nature of our contemporary culture is unrepresentable; we simply do not have the necessary conceptual resources with which to imagine or act in the immediacy of a globalised space (Jameson 1992). We will have cause to return to these ideas in the last chapter of this thesis, but for now, it is worth noting that Jameson ends his study of postmodernity with the suggestion that we look to Lefebvre's theory of space, and this is what I intend to do in the next section.

Towards a philosophy of space: Lefebvre

> *(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or their (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it as compared, for example, with science, representations, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. … Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge. What then is its exact status? And what is the nature of its relationship to production?* (Lefebvre 1991, p 73)

In our first chapter, we briefly contextualised Henri Lefebvre's analysis of the city by placing him alongside two other influential marxist students of urban society, namely Manuel Castells and David Harvey. However, following Jameson's suggestion noted above, in this section I want to back up and re-examine Lefebvre, this time beginning with his broader theory of space as a complex and socially produced matrix of activity, representations and imagination. It is only by addressing Lefebvre's critique of abstract notions of space, particularly as they appear in the epoch of capitalist power, that we can adequately understand his approach to the specific phenomenon of urban space. There is another reason for choosing to begin with Lefebvre's broader theoretical work, and it this: it is, perhaps, too easy to read Lefebvre's "urban" studies without appreciating the extent to which they are based on an acute and creative reading of Marx. By illuminating this aspect of Lefebvre's work, I hope to bring his writing on space and the city into closer proximity with that of Antonio Negri on temporality and resistance. As we will see further in this work, there is much to be gained for our understanding of both writers by bringing them in to conversation with one another. More importantly, I want to show that by bringing Negri and Lefebvre together, we might produce a more

sophisticated understanding of the urban and resistance than would otherwise be possible.

The production of space

> *Capitalism and neocapitalism have produced abstract space, which includes the world of commodities, its 'logic' and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and that of the political state.* (Lefebvre 1991, p 53)

Although it is not now as radical a claim as it once appeared, Lefebvre's major contribution to contemporary theory is the idea that space is produced by people living in determinate social conditions. Far from being a mere absolute, or an envelope that simply contains all that there is, for Lefebvre space can be understood as the result of practices that embed and therefore shape our experience of the world around us. But positing space as the result of a process of social production does not mean that space is simply polycentric or plural in some indeterminate way. Rather, in his landmark book *The Production of Space,* Lefebvre takes issue with any radically heterogeneous and subjective conception of social space, arguing instead that processes of spatial production are characterised by a determinate, logical structure that must be apprehended with analytic rigour (Lefebvre 1991).

What readers of Lefebvre's strictly urban works might miss if they failed to attend to his ideas in *The Production of Space* is that Lefebvre utilises Marx's model of praxis as a model for understanding how human societies produce space. This is no mere opportunistic appropriation of a logical homology, for the real value of Lefebvre from the point of view of contemporary marxist theory lies in how completely he grasps the very complex dynamic that characterises Marx's analysis of production. Let us read Marx on this point from *The German Ideology*:

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production. (Marx 1970, p 42)

The strength of Marx's analysis of production is that it posits a continuous and multi-sided interrelationship between people who produce, the conditions under which they produce and finally, the results of production. More specifically, Marx insists that social theory can never take any part of social reality as given or fixed, because social production always modifies both reality and consciousness of that reality. For Lefebvre, unless we pay attention to Marx's dialectic of praxis, we risk fetishizing space as an immutable given. As an example, Lefebvre criticises theoretical attempts to understand space as unproduced, that is, as something that lies wholly outside the realm of human activity:

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 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. (Lefebvre 1991, p 90)

According to Lefebvre, the fact that space is socially produced demands that we begin with an analysis of the social contradictions that

determine a given spatial practice. We cannot start from an idea of empty, abstract space because the notion of such a space is the historical result of capitalist domination (Lefebvre 1991). In order to pierce through this fetishisation of space, it is necessary to develop a mode of analysis that takes account of the complex materiality of space in all its determinations.

Dialectic and power

At this point, therefore, it will be necessary to consider briefly Lefebvre's use of dialectic in his work on space. There are two reasons for this: the first is that the triadic structure of the dialectic serves as a basis for Lefebvre's analysis of the structure of spatial production, and the second is that Lefebvre, in seeking to retain a concept of social complexity and conflict in the dialectic, breaks with both Hegel and Marx through a critique of teleology. What is of interest to us here is that by expunging the dialectic of any teleological content, even such as may be found in Marx, Lefebvre insists on a logic that emphasises ongoing tension and contradiction (Schmid 2008). As we will see in the next chapter, this foregrounding of both analytic and ontological tension at the expense of any sense of sublation or transcendence brings Lefebvre's work closer to that of Antonio Negri and Italian Autonomism. Sensing that the marxist dialectical logic of opposition yet contains a teleology that closes off the possibility of immediate political transformation, Negri and the Autonomists insist on a logic of permanent antagonism in an attempt to theoretically recuperate political activity in the present (Cleaver 1991). In a similar manner, Lefebvre's recasting of the dialectic produces an openness to the political possibilities of the everyday:

> [Lefebvre] posits three moments of equal value that relate to each other in varying relationships and complex movements wherein now one, now the other prevails against the negation of one or the other. Lefebvre's claim is no longer the construal of becoming, not even the production of becoming, but the analysis of becoming. His analytical method enables the discovery or recognition of a meaning; a horizon of

34

becoming – of possibilities, uncertainties, chances. And it permits the formulation of a strategy – without the certainty of achieving the aim. (Schmid 2008, p 34)

We are now almost ready to turn to Lefebvre's logic of spatial production before ultimately considering his specific analysis of urban space as it appears in contemporary capitalism. Before we do so, we must note one last aspect of Lefebvre's dialectical thinking that will mediate the way that space and production relate to one another, and that is Lefebvre's use of the concept of language. By virtue of his close reading of Nietzsche, Lefebvre develops a theory of language that allows him to recognise the effectivity of the symbolic order in the day-to-day construction social reality (Schmid 2008), thereby providing not only a framework for understanding how space is conceived in the imagination, but also how spatial practice, understood as a kind of linguistic activity, is continuously shaped by relations of power. What I want to point to here is Lefebvre's concern with the manner in which power orders society and social practice, and therefore space. Thus, relations of power are not only strictly speaking, material; they are also symbolic. As Schmid writes: "[Lefebvre] understands society as a space and an architecture of concepts, forms and rules whose abstract truth prevails over the reality of the senses, of the body, of wishes, and of desires" (Schmid, p 35).

The logic of space and spatial production

Now that we have considered Lefebvre's anti-teleological dialectic of production as well as his rather contemporaneous analysis of power and the symbolic order, we are in a much better position to understand his logic of space and spatial production. What follows will be short but somewhat difficult, as Lefebvre's conceptual framework is both enormously complex, and because it develops over time. But as we will see, Lefebvre's essentially relational theory of space is compelling because of the way in which it brings together concepts of materiality, phenomenology, power, symbolic order and

resistance (Harvey 2004; Schmid 2008). Analytically, Lefebvre distinguishes between two triads of spatial concepts, the first having to do with the process of spatial production, and the second having to do with the experience of space. Following Schmid closely (2008), it is important to see these two triads as distinct yet related.

Let us begin with the structure of spatial production: here, borrowing from his concern with language and the linguistic production of signs, Lefebvre sets out *spatial practice*, the *representation* of space and the *spaces of representation* as three separate but mutually determinative moments. By *spatial practice*, Lefebvre means to indicate the system of rules that govern how space is used. *Representations of space* are scientific, artistic and technical depictions of space such as maps and drawings, and include elements of the built environment that determine how space is perceived. Finally, *spaces of representation* refers to lived spaces, or the day-to-day experience of space (Harvey 2004; Milgrom 2008; Ronneberger 2008).

The second triad of spatial analysis relates more specifically to the different levels of spatial experience. They should be understood as continuously active within the sphere of the individual and as part of a broader, social reality. They are: *perceived* space, *conceived space* and *lived space*. *Perceived space* is accessible to the senses and thus possesses a degree of bodily immediacy and sensuousness. *Conceived space* refers to that space that is only accessible through thought, such as through maps and geometry. Finally, *lived space* refers to the lived experience of space by people in their everyday life Clearly these three dimensions of space both overlap with, and are determined and determinative of, the first triad of spatial production. (Harvey 2004; Prigge 2008; Schmid 2008).

Rather honestly, Harvey (2004) has admitted that it is tempting to organise hierarchically the parts of each triad, or the triads themselves, in order to produce a clearer picture of space and its production. But to do so, Harvey argues, would mean losing the real complexity governing production and experience of space, in addition to jettisoning the critical power gained by

keeping each moment in tension with all the others. Most importantly, Lefebvre's work contains an analysis of space that allows us to think the possibility of resistance into the very mechanisms of space. Lefebvre achieves this embedding of resistance by virtue of his close attention to spatial practice as akin to a form of discursive activity, his analysis of power and language along with their roles in spatial production, and finally, through his phenomenological and dialectical understanding of production that always allows for the possibility of immeasurable excess. (Ronneberger 2008). For Lefebvre, therefore, despite the systematic efforts of capital to render space completely homogenous and alienable at the same time, day-to-day lived experience always produces an excess that, in terms of space, can be understood as *differential space*: a practice of spatial appropriation and generation that continually resists the forms of space dictated by capital (Lefebvre 1991). We will have more to say about difference, excess, unmeasurability and resistance in subsequent chapters, particularly so when we examine Negri's writing on multitude and the temporality of resistance.

Space, power and the urban

Whereas at the beginning of this chapter I had argued that it was essential to understand the roots of Lefebvre's theory of the production of space before reading his works on the urban, it is also true that his theory of space is inextricably bound up with his reflections on the urban. Thus, despite his analyses of the topologies of power and knowledge that mark his work as similar in many ways to that of Foucault, Prigge (2008) argues that Lefebvre is known more as an urban critic than anything else because he locates the critical topological site of contemporary power in the city. Writing on the concern of both writers with spatial domination, Prigge notes that

> Lefebvre, however, connects the thesis of the dominance of the spatial
> to the present stage of capitalist societalization that is characterized,
> according to him, by the totalizing tendency of urbanization, and that,
> therefore, must cause an epistemological shift. It is no longer the

industrial and its disciplines focusing on capital and labor, classes and reproduction that constitute the episteme (the possibility of knowing the social formation), but the urban and its forms focused on everydayness and consumption, planning and spectacle, that expose the tendencies of social development in the second half of the twentieth century. (2008, p 49)

What is important to point out here is that like others writing in the aftermath of Stalinism and the failure of transformation in the developed West, Lefebvre is not content to deploy marxist analyses *pro forma* when it is clear that contemporary social life is not at all what it was when Marx penned *Capital*. However, unlike those theorists who turned to language, semiotics or to a pure microphysics of power in order to understand social life, Lefebvre remains theoretically committed to the materiality of production as the key to explaining not only space, but domination itself. But rather than freeze the analysis of production within the order of the industrial era, Lefebvre senses that the conditions of capitalist order are shifting. Thus, what defines the present epoch is the end of the industrial order and the emergence of a new, globalised (i.e., universal) urban order that significantly modifies capitalist society (Smith 2003). The question remains, then, as to the dynamics that shape this urban order.

Conclusion: centre and periphery

> *And thus the city is an* oeuvre, *closer to a work of art than to a simple material product. If there is production of the city, and social relations in the city, it is a production and reproduction of human beings by human beings, rather than a production of objects. The city has a history; it is the work of a history, that is, of clearly defined people and groups who accomplish this* oeuvre, *in historical conditions. Conditions which simultaneously enable and limit possibilities, are never sufficient to explain what was born out of them, in them, by them.* (Lefebvre 2007, p 101)

In the first chapter, I drew our attention to the curious status of the city in the theoretical imagination. Perhaps as a result of the persistence of cities over time, or because of the sense in which they are sites of collective experience, cities are often depicted in transcendent terms. However, to the extent that cities are theorised as either beyond or outside the materiality of human history, such accounts would lie outside marxist theory and could further be accused of treating in ideology. On the other hand, as we glimpsed in the writing of Lewis Mumford, it might be possible to develop a theory of the city in history that would take account of the materiality and history of the imaginative and symbolic order. Such a theory might move within the dialectic of production, in which human activity is productive of both materiality and consciousness, as well as within a conception of relationality and power. Such a theory, I would argue, is precisely what Lefebvre manages to achieve by bringing together materiality, language and practice. As we turn to Lefebvre's dynamic – and *seemingly* immaterial – conception of urban space, it will useful to bear this theoretical complexity in mind.

Lefebvre, as we have seen, posits the emergence of an urban order (understood as definite system of spatial power) that irreversibly modifies capitalist production, such that we now live within a globalised system of urban space. This global urban order replaces the era of capitalist industrialism (Lefebvre 2003). The argument is not, therefore, that we have

transcended capitalism, but that the urban order is a global technique for the production of capitalist order and value through the total domination of space. As Lefebvre writes:

> The urban phenomenon has a profound effect on the methods of production: productive forces, relationships of production, and the contradictions between them. It both extends and accentuates, on a new plane, the social character of productive labour and its conflict with the ownership (private) of the means of production. It continues the 'socialization of society,' which is another way of saying that the urban does not eliminate industrial contradictions. (Lefebvre 2003, p. 167)

I think it is possible to read this passage as an indication that Lefebvre, like other theorists, is cognizant that what we knew as modernity has ceased to be. But rather than simply designate the emergent order as postmodern (and thereby empty our analysis of any political critique), Lefebvre instead names this new reality as the urban, which I will suggest stands for the complete immersion of the social world within the global space of capitalism. At the same time, it is important to understand that for Lefebvre, the new global urban order does not simply consist of cities. Instead, cities are mere instances of a re-ordering of society through the spatial dynamics of centre and periphery. As we will see in the last chapter, this binary spatialises the question of access to power and knowledge in the contemporary West, and holds the key to understanding both urban form and the possibility of dissent within the new global order.

Chapter three

Time and the city

> *Despite the internet, we do not ask ourselves whether or not we can urbanize real time, whether or not the virtual city is possible. If the answer is no, then we are setting ourselves up for an accident, the accident of history… If, through the globalization of telecommunications, we cannot urbanize the real time of exchanges – that is, the live city-world – the real-time city-world will be at stake. (Paul Virilio 1991, p 192)*

Introduction: from the immaterial to the multitude

In the first chapter of this work, we departed from the realm of theory to examine for ourselves the morphology of the contemporary urban world. In so doing, we noted the growing dominance of three particular forms of urban organisation: the metropolitan region; the suburb / edge city; and finally, the slum. We also saw that the study of the global urban order is incomplete without a consideration of the emergent immateriality of cities in the present day. In our analysis of social disparity and segregation within metropolitan and global cities, for example, we discovered that much contemporary urban form can be understood as a spatial consequence of stratified, "virtual" networks of power and information. These networked flows of global capital, knowledge and communication are at once material and immaterial. Immaterial, in that they do not exist in the same manner as monuments, buildings or even newspapers; material, in that such networks possess a materiality both in their political and economic function as well as in their social effects. My contention is that understanding cities requires that we understand the networks of power and communication that underlie and connect them.

In chapters five and six, I will argue that similar attention be paid to the analysis of resistance and social transformation in light of the virtual networks that are tending to dominate our experience of metropolitan life in late capitalism. While social theorists such as Paul Virilio, quoted above, worry that the advent of the digital world threatens the life of the traditional polis, there are many others – including Negri and other theorists of the multitude – who counter that it is precisely these virtual networks that offer the greatest opportunity for the transformation of social life beyond the confines of capital. As we will see, such a prognosis begins from an analysis of the total immersion of social life within the world of capitalist relations. For Negri and others, the consequence of such an immersion is that capital is no longer able to contain resistance and dissent within the traditional spatial order of the industrial era. In the last chapter of this thesis, we will interpret contemporary suburbs and edge cities as examples of how a radically diffuse and decentred capitalism seeks to suppress possibilities of resistance through the establishment of these and other spatial orders.

Regardless of the importance of digital networks of communication, there are risks in placing too much emphasis on networks and technology. If we are still committed to a social analysis that prioritises production, history and structural inequality, we must be wary of any approach that bestows too much in the way of autonomy and determination upon technology. In what follows, therefore, I will take as my starting point the position that technology is inherently political and material. Despite the lattices of digital information that crisscross the urban order, we are still within a material and historical regime of power and accumulation founded upon the capture of value and the reproduction of inequality. Though we might imagine knowledge and information to be purely immaterial, and thus beyond the realm of history, in reality both function as entirely alienable commodities. Though knowledge and information are inherently social products, they are produced, appropriated and exchanged by capital as factors in its own reproduction and extension. As these products circulate along new vectors within the global economy (themselves a new kind of capital good), they reproduce not only capital, but also the social relations of capitalist production (Wark 1994). Thus,

virtuality and the networks that make virtuality possible cannot escape the materiality of contemporary social relations because, on the one hand, they are products of capitalist enterprise, and on the other, because no technology or mechanism can operate in a social or cultural vacuum. Although the promise of virtual networks is one of transcendence (Haraway 1991), the reality is otherwise, as capital seeks to "capture" all new value created within the virtual. As theorist Pierre Bourdieu puts it, although perhaps in a slightly different theoretical idiom:

> Once a system of mechanisms has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion … the dominant class has only to let the system they dominate take its own course in order to exercise their domination. (Bourdieu 2002, p 190)

I want to use this chapter as an opportunity to examine the work of Guy Debord and his book, *The Society of the Spectacle*, because I believe his writing provides a valuable resource for thinking about immateriality, time and the city. Debord sees the city as a form of capitalist territorial production designed to enhance the receptivity of populations to a regime of spectacular commodity fetishism and consumption. Against Lefebvre, however, Debord argues that what characterises the contemporary metropolis is not so much the alienation of space, but of time. Debord's point is that it is precisely through the urban organisation of spectacular consumption (which we will read as the emergence of immateriality) that the alienation of time is perfected. However, as I will show, an economic system of immateriality is impossible without a fundamental reconfiguration of subjectivity from the era of mass industrialism. I believe that we can bring more detail to the picture by following Negri's analysis of real subsumption, which links the emergence of new forms of subjectivity to the extension of capitalist relations throughout all of society. This occurs at the same time as a form of mass intellect – what Marx referred to as the general intellect – emerges from the system of automated manufacture. The appearance of the general intellect implies a profound transformation of social subjectivity that may be taken as a starting

point for understanding the multitude, Negri's antagonistic subject of our own times.

Debord and Lefebvre

In chapter three, we saw that Henri Lefebvre posits the emergence of an urban order superseding the spatial logic of industrial capitalism. This urban order is characterised as an effect of power, one producing both centres and peripheries that function as parts of a spatial matrix for the capture of value (Prigge 2008). For Lefebvre, there is a complex relationship between physical space and power, where power may be thought of as an historically produced field of force capable of producing particular spatial effects. While such an approach to the urban cannot easily be discounted, it does raise at least two important and ultimately interrelated questions, both of which are taken up by Guy Debord either implicitly or explicitly in his influential *Society of the Spectacle*.

The first question one might pose to Lefebvre has to do with the apparent prioritisation of space over time in his account of urban experience. Although Debord agrees that the organisation of urban space is conducive to capitalist exploitation, for the founder of the Situationist movement, it is the particular form of the social appropriation of time in a class society that matters most. Further, and most helpfully for our present work, Debord recognises not only that the appropriation of time is linked to the form of production, but also that it provides a means of thinking about the production of subjectivity itself in advanced capitalism (Debord 1983). This leads us to Debord's second, and perhaps more implicit, critique of Lefebvre and the analytic prioritisation of space over time. If we can accept Debord's argument that the alienation of time is fundamental to late capitalism (and I will argue throughout this chapter that we must), then it seems clear there are consequences for our thinking about resistance and the urban. As I will show, despite the acute analyses of capitalism and the urban offered by Lefebvre

and Debord, both writers ultimately fail to produce a workable theory of a social subject capable of resistance. For this, I will suggest in the following chapter that we turn to the Italian autonomists and Antonio Negri to see if the concept of the multitude will suit our purposes.

Society of the spectacle

> *The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life. Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world. Modern economic production extends its dictatorship extensively and intensively. In the advanced regions, social space is invaded by a continuous superimposition of geological layers of commodities. At this point in the "second industrial revolution," alienated consumption becomes for the masses a duty supplementary to alienated production.* (Debord 1983, 44)

Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* links the emergence of spectacular consumption to social and technological transformations within capitalism during the latter part of the 20th century, and perhaps as a result, there is a currency to Debord's work in relation to the presence of the virtual within today's urban landscape. Additionally, as we will see below, Debord structures his work within a powerful social and political critique that marks his writing as well beyond the thought of more contemporary theorists (Goonwardena 2003, p 170), particularly in terms of its relevance for understanding how resistance to capitalist order might be possible within an urban milieu. However, in order to fully appreciate the theory of the spectacle, it is important to realise that for Debord, the concept is rooted in a critique of capitalist ideology that does not fit so easily into the contemporary theoretical environment of poststructuralism. This does not necessarily mean that Debord's work is either irrelevant or dated, so much as it contains a political imperative in addition to features recalling the debate about base and superstructure. This being the case, I should like to tread a little carefully

before bringing Debord's concept of the spectacle fully to bear upon the metropolis of today.

Debord begins his analysis of the spectacle by carefully inserting his polemic within the main currents of marxist philosophy and political economy, and as a result, *The Society of the Spectacle* achieves a remarkable theoretical consistency, despite the fact that the analysis appears to be an engagement with a wholly new feature of social life. Such a view of the spectacle would be a mistake, however, because by virtue of his careful reading of political economy, Debord argues that the spectacle is not so much something new as it is the perfection of a tendency that has always constituted the ultimate aim of the capitalist mode of production. As he writes:

> The spectacle, grasped in its totality is both the result and the project of the existing mode of production. It is not a supplement to the real world, an additional decoration. It is the heart of the unrealism of the real society. In all its specific forms, as information or propaganda, as advertisement or direct entertainment consumption, the spectacle is the present model of socially dominant life. It is the omnipresent affirmation of the choice already made in production and its corollary consumption. The spectacle's form and content are identically the total justification of the existing system's conditions and goals. (Debord, Thesis 6)

What, then, is the spectacle? Debord's definition of the term explicitly diverges from a merely technical specification of the term and asks us to focus instead on the spectacle's political and social content. On the one hand, the spectacle can be thought as the gradual perfection of techniques of visual representation and reproduction, including the development of mass audiences, while on the other, the spectacle is also the mode of life of modern capitalism, a mode that can be defined as separation. Debord begins his analysis on this latter side of the spectacle's definitional divide: "in societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has

moved away into a representation" (Debord, Thesis 1). In Debord's view, the spectacle begins where the development of capitalist relations severs historical relations with life experienced as unity. What was directly lived has moved away – or separated – into a distinct but overwhelmingly powerful environment of mediation and representation. Although Debord has been criticised regarding his apparent nostalgia for a past experience of unity (Merrifield 2002), I think it worth pointing out that Debord is also setting down a precise marker of a social process that begins with the advance of the commodity form and ends with the perfection of the spectacular. Thus conceived, we can trace the logic of separation and alienation governing the spectacle as something always already present within the dynamic of the commodity. In his most succinct formulation, Debord defines the spectacle as "not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (Debord 1983, 4). Obviously, such a formulation evokes Marx's definition of the commodity as something more than just a physical object. As Marx writes in *Capital:*

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. (Marx 2007, p 45)

For Marx, a commodity is both a material and immaterial object; not merely a physical thing, but possessing a curious dual nature such that it bears real but invisible social relations. This "spectral" doubling – one that provides a great deal of the force of Marx's writing (Derrida 1994) – clearly influences Debord's invocation of the spectacle, but with a fundamental difference. As Debord writes, the spectacle "is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image" (Thesis 34), which means that in the spectacle, capital at last discovers the means whereby it may take up the standpoint of pure immateriality. As we will see below, this quality of

independent immateriality has specific consequences for both contemporary temporality and the urban.

At this point, however, it would be worth asking if, despite the recourse to Marx's analysis, the above is enough to account for the power of the spectacle. Though Debord allows us to follow the temporal development of the spectacle from the beginnings of commodity production to the contemporary world of late capitalism, such an evidently historicist path would be deemed by some as insufficient to explain the prevalence of the spectacular society. Similarly, we cannot depend upon the simple advance of technology to explain the establishment of the spectacular order, for as we saw above, it would be a mistake to attribute a determinative power to technology when what we want to do is explain its use in a particular social and political context. It is at this point that Debord turns to an analysis of both the modern city and the temporal order of commodity capitalism in an attempt to demonstrate that the spectacle is, in the language of Althusser, overdetermined. This is to say that, far from being a unique phenomenon, or something standing in an ambiguous relation to social reality, the spectacle is in fact enmeshed within a larger structure of relations that includes both urban terrain and the experience of time in modern society. If we can show that this is the case, we will then be in a position to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the metropolis in contemporary capitalism. By this account, contemporary experiences of time, spectacle and immateriality do not simply rest upon the surface of the urban; rather, all three are essential aspects of a capitalist ordering of space that is built upon a logic of separation and isolation.

Time against space

When analyzing the spectacle one speaks, to some extent, the language of the spectacular itself in the sense that one moves through the methodological terrain of the very society which expresses itself in the spectacle. But the spectacle is nothing other than the sense of the total practice of a social-economic formation, its use of time. It is the historical movement in which we are caught. (Debord, Thesis 9)

As we saw, Henri Lefebvre broke new ground in urban theory by giving an analytical priority to the consideration of space. Reacting against the overwhelming emphasis on time and history prevalent in critical philosophy at the time, Lefebvre's work appeared to indicate that capitalist appropriation of space was a key source of alienation in contemporary life. Although he had been Lefebvre's pupil and was his friend (Merrifield 2008), Debord differed with Lefebvre on the significance of time within the urban order, arguing that despite the importance of space, the principle source of capitalist domination lay in "the spectacle's seizure and denigration of history and memory" (Merrifield 2002, p 105). For Debord, the abstraction of space was a moment of a much larger process; that of capital's establishment of a universal and equivalent time of the commodity. Demonstrating both the proximity and divergences between Lefebvre and Debord, Merrifield writes that "Lefebvre had brought the commodity form to bear on everyday life, and extended abstract time (value) to incorporate abstract space; now, suggested Debord, everyday abstract space was but one aspect of the spectacle itself" (p 103).

The difference between the two writers turns upon Debord's critique of production as it appears within class society. While Lefebvre produces a sophisticated analysis of the production of space, Debord shows that the production of time is an intrinsic aspect of capital itself. Beginning with the temporal experience of pre-capitalist societies, Debord sees the social appropriation of time as fundamental to domination. As he writes: "the class which organizes the social labor and appropriates the limited surplus value, simultaneously appropriates the temporal surplus value of its organization of

social time: it possesses for itself alone the irreversible time of the living" (Thesis 128). Whereas pre-capitalist society expropriated the time of living labour openly, either through coercion of force or tradition, the great achievement of capitalism is that it manages to build the appropriation of time into the process of production itself, albeit invisibly. As David Harvey writes, time "is a vital magnitude under capitalism because social labor time is the measure of value and surplus social labor time lies at the origin of profit" (1989 p 425). Thus hidden within the cloak of production, the advantage to capital is that it accumulates surplus labour-time voluntarily, without recourse to constant coercion. To manage this, however, capital must organise all time so that it reflects the logic of equivalence that is the very secret of commodity production. Debord writes that:

> The time of production, commodity-time, is an infinite accumulation of equivalent intervals. It is the abstraction of irreversible time, all of whose segments must prove on the chronometer their merely quantitative equality. This time is in reality exactly what it is in its exchangeable character. In this social domination by commodity-time, "time is everything, man is nothing; he is at most the carcass of time" (Poverty of Philosophy). This is time devalued, the complete inversion of time as "the field of human development." (Thesis 147)

Capitalism thus replaces cyclical times of traditional societies with its own ordering of time, one characterised by the positing of an homogenous temporal "direction" or linearity to the flow of time itself (Russell 2002, p 197). By irreversibility, Debord means to indicate that capital struggles to impose a unified time over the entire field of social subjectivity, thus annihilating any other temporal order that might threaten the domination of capital. The accumulation of abstract, empty and exchangeable time becomes the teleology of capitalist progress, and history becomes capitalist history: all other conceptions of time are swept before the onset of capitalist commodity production.

With the development of capitalism, irreversible time is unified on a world scale. Universal history becomes a reality because the entire world is gathered under the development of this time. But this history, which is everywhere simultaneously the same, is still only the refusal within history of history itself. What appears the world over as the same day is the time of economic production cut up into equal abstract fragments. (Thesis 145)

Despite the unprecedented force and clarity of his thesis, it could be argued that there is little at this point to distinguish Debord's analysis of temporality from the writing of Lefebvre (Russell 2002) or even, should one look carefully enough, from that of Marx himself in the *Grundrisse*. But it is exactly here that Debord strikes out in an entirely new direction, one that will have significance for our understanding of the relation between capitalism, temporality and the city. As we saw above, one of Debord's great insights is to recognise that the nature of the capitalist order has changed fundamentally from what it was in Marx's day. Now, Henri Lefebvre was also attentive to the transformation of capitalism in the late 20th century, but situated this transformation in the emergence of an urban order. Debord, on the other hand, argues that it is the appearance of the spectacle that defines contemporary capitalism. While this distinction might appear simple, in reality it is more complicated than it seems. *The Society of the Spectacle* links the advent of the spectacular order to the development of the modern capitalist city, and as a result, it might appear as though Debord and Lefebvre have simply arrived at different ways of expressing the same thing. However, the consequence of Debord's position is that he sees the urban as a spatialisation of the spectacular order, so much so that it is the spectacle's logic and temporal structure that determines urban reality in late capitalism.

What is most innovative about Debord's approach is that he is not simply arguing that it is the temporal logic of the classic commodity that determines the physical landscape of the urban. Were this the case, we would need only understand the temporality of classical commodity production in order to grasp the way in which urban space conforms to, and reproduces, the

domination of capital. Such an approach fits within the scope of much traditional marxist political economy, concerned as it is with the analysis of the temporal rhythms of capital. It might even be argued that much of David Harvey's urban geography proceeds in this direction; that is, despite his careful understanding of both space and time, in essence his work imports temporality through the deployment of classical marxist political economy. In his 1973 *Social Justice and the City* as well as in his 1985 *Consciousness and Urban Experience*, Harvey exhaustively analyses the relational character of time and space as it relates to urban geography through a deft grasp of marxist economics. While I am certainly not arguing against this method of approach, I am saying that we need to be careful that our understanding of political economy keeps pace with transformations of late capitalism. The strength of Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* is that it develops our understanding of marxist political economy and the temporality of capitalism by positing the spectacle as a new form of the commodity, one that modifies the conditions of capitalist production and temporality.

As an illustration of the specificity of this spectacular time, let us turn now to a final aspect of Debord's work, one having to do with his account of how capital struggles to impose its temporality upon all of social life. For Debord, the imposition of capitalist time is akin to a form of "primitive accumulation" or expropriation. However, once capital asserts its social and temporal dominance, it begins the work of returning carefully delimited temporality to the producers in a manner that is more complex than the simple imposition of abstract and homogenous time discussed above. How does it work? Debord understands that this gift of time is not given freely by capital. Rather, as capitalism passes beyond the era of basic industrial manufacture, producers must be gradually converted into consumers. Debord writes that,

> "The preliminary condition required for propelling workers to the status of "free" producers and consumers of commodity time" was the violent expropriation of their own time. The spectacular return of time became possible only after this first dispossession of the producer. (Thesis 159)

In the section titled "Spectacular Time," Debord notes that, with the full development of the spectacular society, a particular form of cyclical time is re-introduced into the temporal experience of capitalism. According to Conrad Russell, "in the 'spectacle', linear 'commodity time' acquires a cyclical double. The surviving rhythms of everyday life do not 'hang in tatters' – they are reconstructed as commodified products. As abstract and homogeneous as commodity time itself, they constitute its 'consumable disguise'" (Russell 2002, p 198). Thus, in addition to abstract and homogenous commodity time, the spectacular order imposes what Debord calls "pseudo-cyclical" time, a time that corresponds to the temporality of the spectacle and one that therefore helps define urban terrain. Reading Debord, it is not difficult to see how the temporal order of spectacular time maps out onto our contemporary urban areas:

> Consumable pseudo-cyclical time is spectacular time, both as the time of consumption of images in the narrow sense, and as the image of consumption of time in the broad sense. The time of image-consumption, the medium of all commodities, is inseparably the field where the instruments of the spectacle exert themselves fully, and also their goal, the location and main form of all specific consumption… The social image of the consumption of time, in turn, is exclusively dominated by moments of leisure and vacation, moments presented at a distance and desirable by definition, like every spectacular commodity. Here this commodity is explicitly presented as the moment of real life, and the point is to wait for its cyclical return. What was represented as genuine life reveals itself simply as more genuinely spectacular life. (Debord, Thesis 153)

Spectacular city

As we have seen above, Debord maintains that urbanism is an ideology (Merrifield 2008) that masks the capitalist organisation of territory in its own interests. Similarly to Lefebvre, Debord insists that we view the city as a specific technique of capitalist power in the present, and not as a transcendent object throughout time. Despite the survival of architectural forms, for example, the capitalist city is a unique configuration that can only be understood through a critique of contemporary social relations. As Debord writes:

> The society that molds all of its surroundings has developed a special technique for shaping its very territory, the solid ground of this collection of tasks. Urbanism is capitalism's seizure of the natural and human environment; developing logically into absolute domination, capitalism can and must now remake the totality of space into its own setting. (Debord, Thesis 169)

Debord writes that the city is the outcome of capitalism's unceasing development of separations: use-value from exchange-value, producer from product, life from spectacle. In terms of understanding urban morphology, Debord's thesis of the connection between mass culture and spectacle is significant because it emphasises an interpretation of urban space in terms of capital's systematic need for isolation and separation. The logic of separation is contained in the very essence of capitalist production, and as a result, the development of capitalist power entails the production of a specific urban terrain that facilitates this logic. However, the reproduction of separation does not proceed without limits; in reality, the development of urban space produces new tensions and oppositions that necessitate the deployment of spectacle as a means of negating dissent (169). As a result, and despite the possibilities of combination and cooperation that exist in factories and districts, many urban places and activities that we might assume to bring people together actually serve to establish psychic isolation within the performance of spectacle:

The general movement of isolation, which is the reality of urbanism, must also include a controlled reintegration of workers depending on the needs of production and consumption that can be planned. Integration into the system requires that isolated individuals be recaptured and isolated together: factories and halls of culture, tourist resorts and housing developments are expressly organized to serve this pseudo-community that follows the isolated individual right into the family cell. (Debord, Thesis 172)

It would be a mistake, however, to think that Debord sees separation and urbanism in purely negative terms. As we can just discern in the above passage, the manufacture of isolation not only mitigates the possibility of revolution, it facilitates the penetration of capitalist relations into aspects of social life that were previously held as independent. As a result of his analysis of urbanism and the spectacle, Debord identifies the extent to which capitalism subsumes all of social life, in addition to the key role that management of subjectivity plays in late capitalism. Viewed through a contemporary theoretical lens, we can perceive a similarity to themes and concerns developed within Autonomist literature. But there may be a deeper, structural homology at work here: Debord's work, like that of the Autonomists, signals a valuable transition from a rigid structuralism (one that sees the spectacle as a specific and negative instantiation of ideology) to a more poststructuralist (i.e., polyvalent) consideration of the subject within late capitalism. Thus, although Debord begins his consideration of the spectacle in the classical marxist register of alienation, as the analysis develops it is clear that he recognises a fundamental shift in the relation of capital to subjectivity, in which the coordination of desire, consumption and subjectivity begins to outpace the coercion of production from simple proletarians:

In the advanced regions, social space is invaded by a continuous superimposition of geological layers of commodities. At this point in the "second industrial revolution," alienated consumption becomes for the masses a duty supplementary to alienated production. It is all the sold

labor of a society which globally becomes the total commodity for which the cycle must be continued. (Debord, Thesis 42)

By virtue of these insights alone, Debord's theoretical work on the city constitutes a necessary first step in our consideration of the urban in the era of immaterial labour. As we noted above, *The Society of the Spectacle* is also a hinge between structuralist and poststructuralist thought that will be helpful to us as we delve into the question of the relation between multitude, immateriality and metropolis further on. Debord's analysis of temporality and the city situates *The Society of the Spectacle* as one of the more important – if now somewhat neglected – theoretical works on the contemporary city. His relentlessly political interpretation of the production of urban space serves as an excellent counterpoint to the writing of Antonio Negri, because as we will see, despite Negri's multitude – an inherently antagonistic and political subject – his thinking about cities remains relatively undertheorised. However, making the link between Debord and Negri raises the question of resistance within the spatiotemporal environment of the contemporary city. In the final section of this chapter, I want to consider briefly how the question of resistance figures in the work of both Debord and Lefebvre. As we will discover, despite the manifestly political critique both authors mount against capitalist urbanism, my contention is that neither manage to produce an adequate theory of a political subject capable of resisting and reversing the processes they describe. Ultimately, we will have to look to Antonio Negri's multitude for a more complete theorisation of countercapitalist change, even if we must interrogate his conception of urbanism and cities with a somewhat critical eye.

Resistance without subject

> *The oldest social specialization, the specialization of power, is at the*
> *root of the spectacle. The spectacle is thus a specialized activity which*
> *speaks for all the others. It is the diplomatic representation of hierarchic*
> *society to itself, where all other expression is banned. Here the most*
> *modern is also the most archaic. (Debord, Thesis 23)*

As we have seen, both Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord develop acutely critical analyses of contemporary urban life under capitalism, and both, to at least some degree, sketch out what it might mean to produce an urbanism beyond capitalist domination. What is particularly important for us today is that, despite the fact that Lefebvre and Debord were immersed in a time when most anticapitalist politics were dominated by Leninist-inspired organisations devoted to the capture of state power and the imposition of work, both writers were profoundly dissatisfied with the strategies and tactics on offer from the traditional communist movement (Merrifield 2008; Smith 2003). Against the official communist conception of what it might mean to oppose capitalism, both writers are critical of the structure of rigid economic determinism prevalent within marxist theory of the time, and both support their thinking of resistance with analyses of capitalism's polyvalent and multiple presence in social life. However, this does necessarily mean that either writer produces a comprehensive theory of a social process or subject capable of reversing capitalist temporality.

Clearly, both Debord and Lefebvre were very much aware that a theory of resistance was critical, all the more so because they were writing at a time when many of the West's most acute social struggles appeared to take root in the urban milieu (Merrifield 2002). Despite their friendship, both writers were critical of each other's work on precisely this issue. Debord felt that although Lefebvre's dialectic of spatial production appeared to offer a way of thinking resistance into the very dynamic of urban space, it ultimately failed to show a way beyond the present order (Kofman & Lebas 2007). On the other hand, whereas Lefebvre was concerned with a recuperation of quotidian life, there is

a sense in which his work is directed more toward the explanation of capitalist power than toward opposition to that power. As Aronowitz writes of Lefebvre, "his investigations were directed to the key question of why and how global capitalism, despite a century of unrelieved wars, revolutions, economic crises and political turmoil in both the 'advanced' and developing world, managed to survive (Aronowitz 2007, p 135). Meanwhile, Lefebvre believed that Debord's "Situationist" politics of *détournement* and situation were too individualised to provide anything like a basis upon which to build the social movement necessary for change. Ultimately, however, the failure of both Debord and Lefebvre to develop an adequate theory of resistance may lie in their tendency to write in a romantic register as a response to a sense of melancholic loss for a temporality of fullness and unity. Conrad Russell points to the fact that the romanticism that characterised Debord, Lefebvre and the movement they inspired, produced a particular political limit:

> Romanticism is a subterranean tradition within modernity, seeking escape into a world beyond modern reification and abstraction. Committed to the Romantic project of releasing the full richness of the self, our authors frequently reveal a Romantic nostalgia for a lost past, in which the flow of duration was richer and fuller than modernity's calculated time. From these starting points, they sketch out (if only in pessimistic or tentative terms) a different future. (Russell 2002, p 196)

Thus, despite their many insights into the spatio-temporal reality of capitalist urbanisation, in the next chapter I will argue that we must look to the writing of Antonio Negri and the Autonomist tradition if we wish to find a social subject ready to take on the capitalist order of our times.

Chapter four

Negri and the autonomist current

In each of the preceding chapters, we appear to have run up against various limits as we have attempted to get to grips with urbanism and subjectivity in the present era. After examining the urban and its relation to history and culture in the first chapter, I argued that the connection between the material world and political subjectivity required a consideration of marxist urbanism. Such an urbanism places political transformation at the centre of its hermeneutic project. I next detailed the approaches of three leading, but very different, writers in the field of marxist urban studies. Each of these writers faced their own limits, particularly in accounting for changes in the social world now understood as symptomatic of postmodernity. From there, we examined in some detail the work of Henri Lefebvre on space and the city, followed by Guy Debord's writing on time and the city. I argued that both writers were unable to produce a social subject capable of resisting capitalism.

Understood properly, I believe that each of the limits we encountered not only reveals a necessary imperfection in the link between social theory and its object, but also, a certain temporal relation between theory building and social change. Try as we might to understand the city, we are always both slightly behind the change we seek to understand and sometimes, if we are very lucky, slightly ahead in our anticipations. As Ernesto Laclau (2007) argues in his reading of Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, the consequence of such an understanding of theory comes at the expense of the orthodox and deterministic marxism that characterised the 19th and much of the 20th centuries. However, despite the fact that an awareness of the limits to theory opens up a terrain of "undecidability", at the same time it also signals the possibility of a return to a political project of emancipation that does not rely upon the supposed immanent collapse of capitalism (Laclau 2007). Instead, I would argue, the marxist project needs to pay closer attention to social

change simply because such change can reveal deeper processes that must be understood if we wish carry out the work of social transformation.

As the following will show, social change in the 20th century has, in a sense, carried out a far more ruthless critique of traditional economic determinism than have armies of scholars and activists within marxism. The rise of communications technologies, knowledge-based economic production and the decline of industrial labour in the West has demonstrated the necessity for reconfiguring any rigid separation between subjectivity and material life. Within the broad current of contemporary marxist theory, no writer has taken on more fully the challenge of thinking the complex and inherently political unity of social, subjective and material life as Antonio Negri. This chapter will attempt to get beneath his more rhetorical and popular works such as *Empire* and *Multitude* by presenting him as a scholar in dialogue with others in a dynamic and intensely creative political and intellectual milieu. In what follows, I want to uncover at least three key concepts in his work that will help us better understand the relationships between subjectivity, social transformation and the urban environment. These three concepts are: 1) the real subsumption of labour; 2) immaterial labour, and 3) the multitude. While Negri's work will constitute the largest part of this chapter's terrain, we will also examine the contributions of some of Negri's contemporaries: Mario Tronti, Paulo Virno and Maurizio Lazzarato. Let us begin, then, in the microclimate of Italian radical thought that helped form the thought of Antonio Negri.

Roots

Negri's roots begin in the unique soil of the Italian Autonomist and Workerist movements of the late 1960s and 70s. It was precisely the critique of determinist Marxism with its separation of the political from the economic that helped distinguish activists and theoreticians associated with so-called workerist or autonomist groups such as *Potere Operaia* (Workers' Power) and *Autonomia* (see Lotringer, 2004; Mouliere, 2005). As a general approach

shared by a multitude of writers, Autonomism grew out of the social upheavals that rocked Italy during these stormy times. As a radical and politically committed intellectual, Antonio Negri and others attempted to articulate the intense political and economic struggles breaking out in the country's heavily industrialised northern cities. These struggles possessed a unique character, both in their profound creativity and in their rejection of traditional forms of authoritarian political leadership such as could be found in the powerful Italian Communist Party. At the same time, leading theoreticians with *Autonomia* began to analyze new forms of work – and subjection – emerging in the highly developed automotive factories in Turin and Milan as well as around the petrochemical centre of Venice (Hardt 2005).

A question of perspective

A key theme in Negri's writing from this period, and one that survives into his latest works, including the best-selling *Empire* (2002) is that of the interpretive and political emphasis on the development of new forms of working class identity and its antagonism to capitalism and capitalist forms of work. For Negri, the secret of capitalist dynamism does not lie in a mysterious creative power residing wholly within the capitalist process, but within the struggles of the working class against capitalist labour and subjection. The beginnings of this shift in perspective can be found in Mario Tronti's groundbreaking 1965 essay *The Strategy of Refusal.* Taking issue with the view of the "official working class movement" that the worth of the worker resided in the fact that s/he was a provider of labour, Tronti argued that the consequence of positing the worker as only the embodiment of a capacity to work was that it attributed the creative power of capital solely to the capitalist. Instead, for Tronti, the capitalist had to be theorised as one pole of an inherently political and irreducibly antagonistic relationship. It was this class relationship between the worker and the capitalist that was not only responsible for the conditions of production, but also for the relationship of domination that transformed labour into capital. Such a view stressed the processes of *valorisation*, that is, the conditions under which the capacity for

labour could be expressed as either use value or exchange value. As Tronti wrote:

> The truth of the matter is that the person who provides labour is the capitalist. The worker is the *provider of capital*. In reality, he is the possessor of that unique, particular commodity which is the condition of all other conditions of production. (Tronti 2007, p. 30)

If according to Marx, capital was nothing other than dead (or accumulated) labour, then the task was to understand the political conditions allowing for the capture and conversion of labour by capital. To put it another way, how was it that so-called living labour became productive of capitalist exchange value and therefore, of capital itself? The force of the question lay in its demand for the political recuperation of the present. Intellectuals and activists were not permitted to await the unfolding of the dialectic, but were tasked with the immediate project of transformation (Cleaver 1991). The analytic consequences of such a view were manifold, but here we can underline at least three, all taken up by Negri in his subsequent intellectual trajectory. The first, hinted at above, was a focus on the primacy of labour in its relation with capital. The second was an emphasis on the quality of domination and antagonism characterising this relation. Finally, and in light of these two interpretive standpoints, it was obvious that the separation of the political from the economic that so defined Marxist theory and practice since the end of the 19th century made little sense. For Tronti, Negri and the rest of the theoreticians sympathetic to Autonomism, the path beyond this old debate began by recognizing capitalist work as an imposition of power by the capitalist. By this reading, capitalist labour had never been a merely economic form of exploitation. It was also a social relation containing both power and antagonism (Read 2003). Further, and contrary to the "productivist" ethic of much socialist theory, the secret content of working class struggle lay in the rejection by workers not only of the imposition of labour by the capitalist, *but of work itself* (Weeks 2005).

Social subjectivities

We are now in a better position to trace the emergence within Negri's thought of the concepts identified at the beginning of this chapter. To do so, I propose beginning with a few of his early works, some cast more in the mould of political economy than of social theory. It is in these writings that we can grasp a sense of the originality of Negri's approach, as both he and others attempted to think through changes in the economy and society that were not only transforming the conditions of labour, but social subjectivity itself. This search for emergent forms of subjectivity required a commitment to a renewal of paradigms and theories that had long been held immutable. On the one hand, a stress on subjectivity meant rejecting the determinist Marxism of the Second International, while on the other hand, it was vital to understand subjectivity as immanent to prevailing material and historical conditions. It is difficult to imagine now how controversial this work appeared at the time, so it may be useful to commence our reading of Negri's work with some consideration of how arduous the task of innovation in theory can be. As a weary Negri wrote in 1989, looking back on the early period of his writing:

> Marx tells us in every page of Capital that every law of development and the class struggle is tendential. His insistence on this matter even becomes somewhat tiresome: it seems he found his contemporaries (economists and politicians) complete idiots and considered them incapable of understanding the present as something that is always producing new players, and capitalist development as a continuous transformation and adaptation of methods of subjugation. (Negri 1989, p. x)

Let us start in the year that Europe exploded into a revolt of new subjectivities. In his 1968 *Marx on Cycle and Crisis*, Negri reads the development of capitalism, particularly in the twentieth century, as a series of shocks and adaptations to periods of intense working class activity. This reading allows him to develop a critique, not only of the state form as it developed during the period of classical Keynesianism, but more broadly, of the social forms of subjectivity during this same period. In both *Keynes and Capitalist Theories of the State* (1968) and *Crisis of the Planner-State* (1974)

Negri traces the results of working class struggle and capitalist adaptation through a study of various theories of state and law corresponding to this period. He discovers that the key to understanding the Keynesian state lies in the composition of the working class as it emerged during the interwar period through to the restructuring of capitalism in the mid 1970s.

Negri characterises the working class of the late 19th century as one led by a skilled, highly organised industrial proletariat. This hegemonic leadership engaged in a series of highly successful struggles such as the limitation of the working day and recognition of unions in the workplace. Capital's response was to de-skill the labour process as much as possible, often through the discipline of Taylorism as well as through the introduction of assembly line production. The results, however, went beyond what capital intended. Although the de-skilling of the proletariat smashed the power of the skilled labour aristocracy, it also produced a massification of the proletarian subject and a general extension of working class power throughout society as a whole. This new class subject – what Negri terms the mass worker – in turn began to articulate new demands and mount further campaigns against capital (Negri 1974).

The 1989 *Politics of Subversion* traces the recomposition of the working class subject from the era of the mass worker to that of the socialised worker. And it is precisely here, with the concept of a worker-subject that extends throughout society, where Negri's thematic of the encroachment of capitalist command becomes significant. The argument is that technologies of communication and production are now so complex they require a level of social co-operation that is both unprecedented and fundamentally creative, instituting a synthesis between the collectivity of work and the collectivity of knowledge required for work. The "high degree of interdependence of these processes", writes Negri, "means that the collective worker represents not simply a function, however subjugated, but a qualitative evolutionary … change of nature" (Negri 2004 p. 82). At the same time, it is apparent that the locus of production is no longer simply within the factory. Instead, for Negri: "Work abandons the factory in order to find, precisely in the social, a place

adequate to the functions of concentrating productive activity and transforming it into value" (Ibid p. 89). This new realm of productive potential is society itself, but a society that reaches the very limits of capitalist exploitation in its attempt to maintain the semblance of measure for the extraction of surplus value. This is the world of real subsumption.

Formal subsumption and real subsumption

Reading capitalism historically, it was possible for Marx to follow capitalism from its origins through to the maturation of the system in the late 19th century. Through the modality of theory, Marx was able to discern capitalist development as a dynamic force that gradually subsumed pre-capitalist social relations within its growing logic of exchange. Logically, therefore, at certain periods in history there remained a world, or aspects of the world, outside capitalist production, even if only temporarily. Marx designated the phase during which capitalist relations had not encompassed all of society as the period of formal subsumption. Negri's highly original *Marx Beyond Marx* reads the passage from formal subsumption to real subsumption, or the gradual immersion of all social relations within capitalism, through the pages of Marx's *Grundrisse*. In Marx's formulation, there is a binary structure of inside and outside during the period of formal subsumption that provides much of capital's motive force, as the system seeks to expand the scope of its relation throughout the world and society. Corresponding to this binarism is a separation or conflict between the world of use value and that of exchange value. This opposition will be important to us in the chapter on temporality and antagonism, so now, let us take as an example the classically capitalist world of early 19th c. production studied by Marx. Here, the worker gives labour-power to the capitalist in exchange for money in the form of the wage. The capitalist transforms living labour into abstract labour power, thereby instituting a power of measure that allows for the production of commodities that are sold in the market. Underneath the appearance of the equal exchange that measure makes possible, the capitalist extracts surplus value from the worker through the imposition of a *differential* between

necessary labour and surplus labour. Necessary labour is that part of the labouring time during which workers produce enough surplus value to meet their own needs, while surplus labour represents that part of labouring time during which surplus value is produced for the capitalist (Negri 1991).

Now, workers use money earned from the wage to purchase the material means of their livelihood. Thus, workers exchange labour power, or capacity to produce surplus value, for a wage expended directly on the reproduction of the capacity to labour. The result is that the wage is experienced as a use value by workers, while capitalists take up the capacity to produce surplus value as exchange value, once the commodity is sold. What is apparent in this formulation is that there is a dichotomy between the worker who lives primarily in the sphere of use value for the satisfaction of direct personal needs, and the capitalist who appropriates surplus-value through the conversion of commodities into exchange-values. In Negri's reading of Marx, the attribution of use value by the worker is a valorisation brought in from the outside, that is, from the sphere of life and reproduction that in the classically capitalist mode of production exists beyond the field of capital (Read 2003).

While this depiction of the relation between the worker, the commodity and the capitalist was adequate to an understanding of classical capitalism, it can no longer fully explain the structure of modern production. For Negri and others, the binary logic of use value/exchange value and its corollary of inside/outside has collapsed as a result of capital's expansion throughout society during the present period of real subsumption. Negri's contention is that production, or value-creating activity, no longer takes place merely inside the discreet spaces of the factory. Instead, all of social life has become a source of value-creating activity. Immediately it is apparent that these developments spell the demise of traditional forms of opposition to capital. The fragmentation of large-scale industrial labour and the growth of affective and immaterial labour means that the there can no longer be any recourse to the simple proletarian political dilemma of revolution or social democracy. If, as Negri will have it, the forms of work have changed, so too have the forms

of social subjectivity that correspond to them. This is the dynamic that forces Negri and others to try to understand the new forms of social subjectivity that emerge after the collapse of the concept of the mass worker in the 20th century. The question that is proposed is then: how are we to understand the world of contemporary production? How might we think of a social antagonism that no longer has an "outside", a place of refuge from and opposition to, capital? The only possible means of producing suitable answers to these questions will be through a study of the contemporary forms of labour.

Immaterial labour and the multitude

Although Negri and his contemporaries consider themselves to have travelled, theoretically speaking, beyond Marx, it is clear that for Negri at least, social theory must take its possibility from the theoretical field delineated by Marx. Thus, despite the fact that Negri has shown that the classical premises of Marxism appear to have collapsed, his work is critical of capitalist relations and remains theoretically grounded in the analysis of material production. Now as in the past, production contains and generates the most fundamental social contradictions and antagonisms. But in the 21st century, theoretical investigation must be capable of discerning the manner in which production has subsumed the totality of life. Traditional political economy, based as it is on the effectivity of the law of value (and the concomitant binary of inside/outside) cannot uncover the characteristics of production in the present day. This is because labour has ceased to be simply about the production of things. Work and production now involve aspects of human experience that previously lay beyond the realm of economic life, such as emotion, language and ethos.

To understand this new ontology of labour, we must turn to Maurizio Lazzarato and his influential essay *Immaterial Labour*. For Lazzarato and other theorists whose work appeared in various autonomist and workerist journals, the end of the era of the mass worker and the development of the socialized worker signals a profound shift in the character of capitalist

production, one that Lazzarato terms post-Fordism. Immaterial labour and post-Fordism means, above all, the inclusion of communication, consumption and subjectivity into the production cycle. As Lazzarato writes:

> The concept of immaterial labour presupposes and results in an enlargement of productive cooperation that even includes the production and reproduction of communication and hence of its most important contents: subjectivity. If Fordism integrates consumption into the cycle of the reproduction of capital, post-Fordism integrates communication into it. […] Consumption is then first of all a consumption of information. Consumption is no longer only the "realisation" of a product, but a real and proper social process that for the moment is defined within the term *communication*. (Lazzarato, *Theory Out of Bounds*, p. 140-1)

The growing hegemony of immaterial labour under post Fordism requires that the individual and affective life of the subject become enmeshed into the world of production and consumption. While the co-mingling of subjectivity with production presents society with new productive possibilities, it also presents new forms of subjection and exploitation. As Hardt and Negri put it: "When our ideas and our affects, or emotions, are put to work, for instance, and when they thus become subject in a new way to the boss, we often experience new and intense of violation or alienation" (Hardt and Negri, 2004 p. 66). Further, the extension of immaterial production and Post Fordism throughout society as a whole means that more traditional forms of labour – including unionised and relatively stable work arrangements – are put in jeopardy as demands for flexibilisation and just-in-time production extend throughout society (ibid).

If the reach and acuity of subjection has expanded, then what of the reach and vitality of antagonism to capitalist order? The incorporation of language, emotion and affectivity into production is a result of the expansion of value-creating activity to encompass the entire sphere of life. The discrete points of value creation (and capture) particular to classical capitalism have

dispersed throughout society. Negri is compelled to abandon the proletariat as the source of antagonism to the capitalist order, simply because the dispersal of value-creating activity means that the proletariat no longer occupies the same strategic point as before. Instead, Negri and the Autonomists hope to discover a new and *possibly* antagonistic subject in what they term the multitude. Negri's position is that if capitalism has completely subsumed all of social life, it has also displaced the terrain of political subjectivity beyond the nation state and its subsidiary concept of the "people". Negri proposes instead the concept of the "multitude", a radically heterogeneous political subjectivity that is the material and historical result of a long cycle of struggles, primarily in the developed capitalist countries. As we have seen in our reading of Negri's work on the recomposition of the working class after World War Two, this new political subjectivity revealed itself most spectacularly in the social unrest that gripped Western Europe in the late 1960's and early 1970's and again in the diverse and politically non-traditional anti-globalisation movements of more recent times.

So how can we approach the analysis of the multitude? What theoretical techniques can we use to illuminate the multitude's characteristics? As I have said before, our inquiry must take account of capitalism's tendency to immaterial labour and to the manner in which all of life, including our affects and emotions, are taken up by capitalism as sources of value-creating activity. As a result, theoretical inquiry must be capable of seeing beyond the field of political economy and be ready to immerse itself in the world of feeling, personality and affect. Here, however, we can distinguish at least two diverging, if perhaps complementary, approaches to the multitude. On one side there is Negri, who begins to stress the immanence of the multitude within a framework of the ontology of power. I will have reason to take up this analytic again in the chapter on temporality and antagonism, so let us consider another way of thinking the multitude, this time through the work of Negri's colleague and critic Paulo Virno.

Like other writers in the Autonomist milieu, Virno recognises that capitalism, the historical object of Marxist theory, itself has a history. This is to

say that capitalism is not simply a synchronic model but also a mode of production susceptible to change. If such is the case, the task of the scholar is to trace these changes using only the most adequate theoretical tools. Just as Marx read *through* classical political economy to reveal the secrets of 19th century capitalist production, so now Virno turns to contemporary theory to reveal the nature of production as it is presently constituted. While Marx studied the discipline of the factory and the relatively simple world of commodity exchange to show the production of surplus value, Virno must develop a theoretical approach adequate to a world of immaterial production and complex communication. Thus, Virno's approach is to analyze the kinds of linguistic, emotional and psychological patterns that correspond to the material world of immaterial labour.

At the same time, Virno is careful not to ascribe any predetermined outcome or telos to his study: the world of affect and emotion is a complex and multiply determined environment that must be read historically. As he writes:

> Now I would like to speak briefly about the *emotional situation* in which the contemporary multitude finds itself. With the expression "emotional situation" I do not refer, let it be clear, to a cluster of psychological tendencies, but to ways of being and feeling so pervasive that they end up being common to the most diverse contexts of experience (work, leisure, feelings, politics, etc.). The emotional situation, over and above being ubiquitous, is always *ambivalent*. That is, it can manifest itself as a form of consent as often as it can as a form of conflict, as often with the characteristics of resignation as with those of critical unease. To put it another way: the emotional situation has a *neutral core* subject to diverse, and even contrary, elaborations. (Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, p. 84.)

Many of these new parameters of subjectivity are, properly speaking, metropolitan. That is, these subjective dispositions find their most complete expression in the urban milieu simply because immaterial labour, as the hegemonically determinative *form* of labour in capitalism, finds its most

adequate environment in metropolitan space. Virno's contention is that the emotional tonality of the multitude operates within a new topography, one that requires the deployment of new and different affective responses. Significantly, the material development of late capitalism leaves no social or historical concept as it was, so from the point of view of theory, analysis of new subjectivities can reveal broad transformations in social life and vice versa.

The dissolution of traditional concepts, and even of identities and communities, means that familiar places of refuge are no longer available to the multitude. The people no longer find respite within the polity of the nation: both terms are in the process of disintegration. For Virno, the result is that at least one thing the multitude has in common is the feeling of *not being at home*. In the face of this feeling, and in the face of greater uncertainty and risk caused by the retreat of the welfare state, the multitude seeks reassurance and refuge, but not in places we might expect. Because traditional public spaces and communities no longer provide reassurance, the multitude is compelled to search for a more profound depth of commonality, and it finds this depth at the level of language and intellect. These insights on the tonalities of contemporary emotional life will be relevant to our analysis of urbanism and the multitude in the next and final chapter.

Chapter five

Cities, time and command

> *There is no outside to our world of real subsumption of society under capital. We live within it, but it has no exterior; we are engulfed in commodity fetishism – without recourse to something that might represent its transcendence. Nature and humanity have been transformed by capital. From now on, all aspirations to alterity (as in the important tradition stretching from Rosa Luxemburg to Walter Benjamin) are not only outdated but vain. And yet: from inside this fetishistic world, the antagonism of living work is affirming itself and resistance is building.* (Negri 2008, p 25)

Introduction: from cities to resistance

This thesis has attempted to explore relationships between cities, subjectivity and resistance. The standpoint throughout has, I hope, approximated that of a contemporary marxist analysis; that is, one that seeks to understand the complexity of the present without renouncing any commitments to history, materiality and resistance. In order to bring this perspective to bear on the contemporary city, it was necessary to work with a theoretical tableau somewhat different than that of classical political economy. Though there has been important work within marxist political economy on the city, in general the field has been slow to take account of the profound changes that mark the passage from the era of industrial capitalism to the postmodern period (Cleaver 1991; Negri 1991). As we have seen, this passage has been characterised by the collapse of rigid oppositions and binaries that defined much of the 19th and 20th centuries. We now live in a world where immateriality and subjectivity have emerged as important analytic categories, at the same time as capitalist relations have penetrated all of

social life. How can we understand the impact of these changes on the urban landscape?

Turning to the city, we saw that our urban spaces are not what we have imagined them to be. Medieval cities have been replaced by industrial cities, and suburbs and edge cities have replaced these in turn. Immaterial networks of power and communication are part of what we now understand as urban life and infrastructure. That something we thought more permanent should prove to be so changeable should provoke us to question our definition of what cities are. But in asking after the nature of cities, we need to understand that there is a contradiction between our concept of city and the material processes determining what we might refer to as urbanisation. To a certain degree, part of the difficulty facing a critical urbanism has been the persistence of a romantic and ideological concept of the city, and by this I mean a view of the city as a timeless element of human life. The effect of such a perspective is to obscure the connection between cities and the operation of capitalist power. At the same time, the constant repetition of ideological concept versus material process as far as the city is concerned may indicate that we simply do not have the capacity to think the urban. Thus, despite the fact that processes of urbanisation are creating spaces that are completely unlike what we might wish to think when we use the word "city", we still use the word because, for the most part, we cannot bring ourselves to do otherwise. Following Jameson, I would argue that the spatiotemporal processes of urbanisation are so extensive and unprecedented that we face a crisis in our capacity to adequately represent them (Jameson 1992). Our cities may be dead, but we do not yet know what has replaced them.

It was with this in mind that we turned to the work of Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord. Lefebvre's theory of the production of space is at once phenomenological, in that it takes account of the role of subjectivity, and also marxist, as he recognises that conditions of social production involve material processes of domination and exploitation. Meanwhile, Lefebvre's commitment to the idea of an emergent urban order modifying the conditions of capitalist production represents, in my view, a valuable attempt to think the profound

social changes that we have now come to associate with the postmodern condition. Lefebvre's theory of urban space under capitalism posits the urban as a field of power that effects domination through the production of centres and peripheries, and this binary provides a helpful key to thinking about what cities are, and what they can be.

Guy Debord's work on time, spectacle and the city represents another useful theoretical anticipation of social change and the city in the 20th century. Instead of focusing on space, Debord is concerned with the alienation of time and history represented by the spectacle, which he depicts as a significant evolution of the commodity-form. As far as the city is concerned, Debord's writings provide an invaluable resource for thinking about the relationship between immateriality and capitalism, while situating both in an analysis that manages to apprehend the emerging nexus between subjectivity and consumption that now characterises cities of the present (Harvey 1978; Negri 2002). Recalling what was said earlier about the peculiar temporalities of theory, it seems to me that, despite important theoretical anticipations in the work of Debord and Lefebvre, both writers remain within the limits of their time when it comes to thinking about a social subject capable of remaking the city beyond the designs of capital.

The desire for a theory of a social subject of resistance brought us to the work of Antonio Negri and the Autonomists, and, having briefly examined his figure of the multitude, we discovered in his work an attentiveness to themes that have concerned us throughout our study. From subjectivity and production to immateriality and temporality, Negri's writing has demonstrated an ability to think about the implications of social change in the late 20th and 21st centuries for political transformation as well as for theory. For our purposes, Negri is important not only because he manages to think the conditions of postmodernity through a spirited critique of capitalism, but also because his interest in the contemporary polis (see Negri 2002) and networks of immaterial communication (Dyer-Witherford 2005) gives us a conceptual frame for understanding cities as spatiotemporal locations of domination and resistance.

Having brought these different themes and writers together in this work, it is now my responsibility to move toward a conclusion. To do this, it will be necessary to take up certain parts of Negri's work in a little more detail than was possible in the last chapter. In the section that follows, we will examine how Negri uses Marx's concept of the general intellect as a way of thinking through opportunities and consequences following from the real subsumption of labour by capital. Real subsumption marks a profound shift in the relation of capital to life, particularly in the way in which capitalist temporality relates to subjectivity. We will therefore take up Negri's analysis of time and subjectivity during the period of the total subsumption of labour, because what emerges from his reading is the sense that, as a result of the complete extension of capitalist temporality, new temporal possibilities of liberation become available (Negri 2008; 2003). However, Negri's figure of the multitude fits uneasily into what we have managed to discover about cities, and in part this is because there are traces of an ideological conception of the urban that remains in Negri's thought. We will interrogate Negri's writing on the multitude and the metropolis, seeking to supplement his concepts through the insights we have culled from both Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord. As an example of this lapse in Negri's work, I will interpret the contemporary suburb as a spatial strategy directed against the possibility of a time of resistance.

Subsumption, subjectivity and the general intellect

> In the case of the real subsumption of labour under capital, all the changes in the labour process itself, analysed by us previously, actually take effect. Labour's social powers of production are developed, and with labour on a large scale the application of science and machinery to direct production takes place. On the one hand, the capitalist mode of production, which now takes shape as a mode of production sui generis; changes the shape of material production. On the other hand, this alteration of production's material shape forms the

75

basis for the development of the capital-relation, which in its adequate shape therefore corresponds to a specific level of development of the productive powers of labour. (Marx, *Results of the Direct Production Process* s. 473)

Throughout this thesis, we have attempted to explain contemporary cities by assembling certain theoretical resources in the marxist tradition. More than simply belonging to a particular theoretical perspective, however, what unites these materials as far as this study is concerned is the sense in which all are attempts to understand the transition from industrial capitalism to late capitalism. My supposition has been that this transition involves profound changes in the relation of subjectivity to production, and that as a result, the material ecology of cities has changed as well. Finally, to the extent that we can show a relation between changes in urban form and changes in subjectivity, this ought to tell us something about the prospects for urban resistance directed against the capitalist metropolis. As we saw in the previous chapter, Negri and the Autonomists have taken on the project of understanding social subjectivity more assiduously than most, linking changes in material production to developments in the history of revolt and insubordination. For our work, therefore, I propose that we not only return to Negri and his thought of the multitude, but that we avail ourselves of his source material in Marx on the distinction between the formal and real subsumption of labour. As we will see, this concept provides a basis for thinking about the material conditions of postmodernity as well as for the possibility of resistance (Vercellone 2007).

To understand subsumption a little more clearly, it will help us to situate the concept as it appears in Marx. Most readings of *Capital* focus on the extent to which the three-volume work is, or is not, an adequate model of capital as a mode of production. What these synchronic readings of *Capital* tend to pass over is the very careful effort by Marx to show, not only that capitalism has a history, but that this history is utterly different than that imagined by classical political economy (Read 2003). Far from a benign story of industry, thrift and enterprise, Marx reveals, through examples as well as

through theory, that the secret history of capital begins with the violence of expropriation and continues, via different forms of coercion, along the path of accumulation (Toscano 2007; Negri 1989). Thus, the passage from formal subsumption to real subsumption not only measures a theoretical distinction, but an historical one as well. Let us follow Jason Read on subsumption:

> Formal subsumption is the imposition of the basic forms of the capitalist mode of production – commodity production and wage labor – on preexistent technical and social organizations of production. As such it corresponds to a particular manner of extracting surplus value: what Marx called "absolute surplus value," surplus value produced by the extension of the working day (Read 2003, p 105).

As the capitalist mode of production develops, it extends itself throughout geographical and social space, annihilating ancient dependencies and anything else that stands in the way of the ever more intensive extraction of surplus value. Despite this, capital finds that its capacity to extract absolute surplus value is diminished as workers take up the struggle to limit the working day. In the face of resistance, capital must develop more intensive and mystified – i.e., disguised – forms of exploitation. Fortunately for capital, as its relations extend further, it manages to posit its own conditions of production as necessary. This is to say that, as capital expands, it sets in motion a collapse of the social world into the realm of production, such that there ceases to be any social location beyond the logic of capital and its temporality (Read 2003). It is precisely this collapse that inaugurates the world of total subsumption.

Antonio Negri has seized upon the consequences of the difference between formal subsumption and real subsumption for his theoretical project, using it as the basis for understanding not only the conditions of postmodernity – where the world of total subsumption is not only similar to, but helps explain the emergence of biopower (Toscano 2007), but also as a means of thinking through the fate of subjectivity and resistance in the contemporary world. Insofar as this thesis is concerned, I would like to turn

now to this aspect of Negri's work, particularly to his reading of Marx's theory of the general intellect. As we will see, the conditions of real subsumption and the general intellect will help us think the relation between immateriality, subjectivity and the contemporary metropolis.

Let us return to the dynamics of formal and real subsumption. In formal subsumption, capitalist production exists alongside older forms of labour and consciousness. The labour process itself is fundamentally divided between the capitalists seeking to extract surplus labour, and workers, who carry out their labour through forms of cooperation that remain relatively independent from the dictates of capital (Vercellone 2007). Under the conditions of real subsumption, this historical autonomy of labouring cooperation gradually disappears as capital posits its own conditions as the only terms under which productive labour is possible. In this period, capital begins to rationalise the labouring process to its own specifications, both through the implementation of automated machine manufacture as well as through the destruction of previous forms of labouring cooperation.

If the foregoing corresponds to the analysis of postmodernity in the work of Negri and the Autonomists, it would appear that prospects for social transformation directed against capital are dim. After all, is it not the case that the collapse of social life into the realm of capitalist relations, along with the destruction of autonomous forms of labour cooperation, leaves us little in the way of a basis for opposition to the capitalist system? Before succumbing to pessimism, we should remember that Negri has already warned us about taking up the viewpoint of capital, rather than that of labour. To recuperate the perspective of labour, Negri develops a logic of antagonism based upon a concept of living labour, thereby casting aside the classical dialectical struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist. Whereas the dialectic requires an outside – either in the realm of use-value or in a preexisting social formation – Negri's antagonistic figure of living labour needs no outside, simply because living labour, and not capital, is the source of all value (Read 2003; Cleaver 1991). In fact, similarly to Debord, Negri sees the dialectic as the law of capitalist command. As Cleaver has it:

The dialectic is not some metaphysical law of cosmological development. It is rather the form within which capital seeks to bind working-class struggle. […] But to bind working-class struggle, to impose a unity, means that capital must overcome this other subject - the working-class – that moves and develops with its own separate logic. That logic, Negri argues, is a non-dialectical one. It is a logic of antagonism, of separation, that characterises a class seeking not to control another, but to destroy it in order to free itself.

By this reading, capital is depicted as an apparatus of capture, and not as productive of value itself. This schematic fatally undermines the dialectic and places dynamic emphasis upon living labour's antagonism to capitalist forms of work (Weeks 2005).

The relevance of the above is this: Negri's reading of Marx gives us a way of thinking resistance into the contemporary world, even if this world has been completely subsumed by capitalist relations that extend into subjectivity itself. When this political standpoint is combined with Marx's theory of the general intellect – a diffuse mass intellectuality arising out of the proliferation of machines in production, we are suddenly granted a very different means of taking stock of how productive activity, and life itself, is increasingly carried out along immaterial networks of communication (Vercellone 2007). While Marx's formulation of the general intellect is politically ambivalent, anticipating the possibility of a total subordination of consciousness within a system of machines, in the *Grundrisse* he also implies that this diffuse and cooperative matrix of knowledges – i.e., of science, technology and its correlate forms of communicative labour – becomes a crucial means of production in itself. Negri takes up this aspect of Marx's work, arguing that

In the post-Fordist world … capital surrounds the socialized worker with a dense web of technological devices – but this envelopment does not necessarily result in subjugation. As the system of machines becomes all-encompassing and familiar, the socialized worker enjoys an

increasingly 'organic' relation to technoscience. Though initiated for purposes of control and command, as the system grows it becomes an 'ecology of machines' – an everyday ambience of potentials to be tapped and explored by the socialized worker, a technohabitat whose uses can no longer be exclusively dictated by capital. (Dyer-Witherford 2005, p 140)

What is at stake here is an understanding of immateriality, not as a technological epiphenomenon that rests upon the surface of things, but as a key aspect of contemporary reality, and one that is, in part, constituted through the struggle of living labour to move beyond the capitalist domination of time. By this account, it would be possible to argue that immateriality is an essential feature of contemporary urban geography. Further, I think it possible to read this relation of immateriality to the urban as an ambiguous and contested consequence of capital's reordering of urban space. Recalling Henri Lefebvre's definition of the urban as a matrix of centres and peripheries (Lefebvre 2007), immateriality can be seen as both an effect of capitalist power – an attempt to harness and reconfigure centrality in its own interests – as well as a site of struggle and exodus on the part of the multitude. What I would like to offer is the idea that there may be a relationship between capital's domination of traditional urban centres (and production of centreless suburbs) and the proliferation of multiple centres generated within the sphere of immateriality. Thus, counter to Debord's negative conception of immateriality as spectacle (and therefore, as ideology), Negri encourages us to view the immaterial as a potential space of liberation (Dyer-Witherford 2005). But *when* can this liberation occur? What is the relation between the city, immateriality and time?

Time and the city

As we have seen, Henri Lefebvre is the theorist most responsible for the interpretation of the city as a field of space. Despite the insights that a spatial interpretation may produce, for Negri and the Autonomists, it is essential that theory remain committed to the analysis of temporality. This is true not only because the rediscovery of time helps us move more easily within the marxist critique of capital, but also because the renewal of temporality demolishes the closure of marxist theory brought about by determinism and dialectic (Mandarini 2003; Casarino 2003). As an example of the utility of this return to time, let us consider for just a moment the idea of power, a concept that, since Foucault, has generally been considered in terms of space (Kofman and Lebas 2007). However, if we understand power as the capacity to determine not only the space, but also the temporality of subjectivity, it would appear that time is critical to understanding how urban spaces work in terms of the production and management of subjectivity. Let us return once again, therefore, to an understanding of the city in time.

The basic understanding of the relation between time and the city is that of the city as a site layered with different times. We need turn to no better source for this conception of urban temporality than Lewis Mumford, in his book *The Culture of Cities*:

> Cities are a product of time. They are the molds in which men's lifetimes have cooled and congealed, giving lasting shape, by way of art, to monuments that would otherwise vanish with the living and give no means of renewal or wider participation behind them. In the city, time becomes visible: buildings and monuments and public ways, more open than the written record, more subject to the gaze of many men than the scattered artifacts of the countryside, leave an imprint on the minds even of the ignorant or the indifferent. Through the material fact of preservation, time challenges time, time clashes with time: habits and values carry over beyond the living group, streaking with different strata of time the character of any single generation. (Mumford 1997, p 4)

In this account, the temporal layering particular to the city is also hierarchical, and so for Mumford the city is a critical site for the production and transmission of power. Despite the force of this passage, with its image of the city as a space characterised by a kind of archaeological layering, it is important to note that Mumford does not simply view the temporality of the city as a uniform field in which remnants of the past are only visible in the concretions of architecture or monumentality. Such a view of time and the city would mean that urban space grants us only a sense of the past as a linear progression of historically superseded temporalities. Instead, Mumford indicates that the city, because of its complexity and heterogeneity, contains different temporal modalities, or ways of life, within the same moment. While this may have been true of cities in the past, it is arguable that in the world of total subsumption, the simple contemporaneity of superseded times in the city may no longer be possible. Additionally, I would suggest that such a view of urban temporality is irretrievably romantic in its nostalgia for the city as a space wherein lost times become accessible (Benjamin 1999).

Perhaps a more useful way of thinking about time and the city in late capitalism would be in terms of its tendency to uniformity. In order to do so, we must revisit Negri's spatiotemporal environment of the total subsumption of labour, along with the emergence of the general intellect. Let us recall that Negri's analytic revolves around two central themes critical for understanding contemporary life, namely: immateriality and temporality. As we have seen, immaterial labour – characterised by its symbolic, conceptual, communicative and affective nature - is the hegemonic form of labour in postmodern capitalism. The second analytic theme – temporality – derives from Negri's assertion that with real subsumption the law of value has been thrown into crisis. Now, the law of value holds that the value of any commodity is proportional to the socially necessary labour time required to produce it. (Harvey 1999). For Negri, the law functions as a regulative and temporal

principle founded upon the division of time into abstract, equal and exchangeable units. As Casarino writes:

> For Negri, the temporality of production – that is, the time most expressive of our productive and creative energies – is at once a temporality that cannot be measured as quantity and yet the temporality that capital endeavours to quantify and to measure all the time so as to control it and employ it in the extraction of surplus-value: the logic of equivalence is identified here as the harness of the incommensurable, as the strategy of containment that becomes instrumental for the continued exploitation of that which is fundamentally uncontainable about time. (Casarino 2003, p 190)

Once the principle of temporal equivalence is sufficiently established, capital more easily induces surplus labour through the mystification of the wage. In this schema, the wage is a mechanism that converts the worker's desire for money as use value into surplus labour for the capitalist (Cleaver 1991). Note that this also assumes a realm of use value external to capital. Once we are well within the period of total subsumption, this externality is lost, and the function of the wage as an implement for cutting living labour into homogenous and exchangeable units is thrown into crisis. Negri writes that the law of value cannot function at this point because it becomes purely tautological; what he means is that with the complete incorporation of the world within the logic of exchange, the wage has nothing left to measure (Negri 1991).

At this point, we need to appreciate the manner in which immateriality and the general intellect contribute to the temporal contest between living labour and capitalism. For Negri, the crisis of capitalist time as measure does not indicate a lack of wealth and productivity. Instead, the sheer abundance and plenitude opened by the development of virtuality, cooperative labour and the general intellect subverts the capacity of capitalist measurement. In this contemporary environment, living labour manages to produce not only wealth, but the possibility of escape as well, provoking further crisis on the part of

capital. Kathi Weeks makes the link between the abundance of immaterial labour and the possibility of living labour refusing capitalist temporality and conditions of work:

> The separation, exit, or exodus is not predicated upon what we lack or cannot do, but rather upon a wealth of potential powers and capacities, on what we have and what we can do. The refusal of work as both a practical demand and theoretical perspective presupposes an appreciation of the potentially immense productive power of the accumulated knowledges of social labour. (Weeks 2005, p 123)

The point that needs to be emphasised here is not that new possibilities of liberation arise by virtue of the fact that immateriality is, as it were, immaterial or unlimited; rather it is that immateriality destabilizes capitalist command because it unleashes productive capacities that exhaust the ability of capitalist measure. I think this emphasis on the productivity of immateriality and the general intellect is important, for it highlights a curious paradox facing the marxist critique of virtuality, such that, despite the supposed evanescence of the phenomena in question, the critique must stress an irreducible materiality. Where this becomes particularly important is in resisting a kind of utopian vision that, in many cases, too closely resembles the ideological fantasies of capital (Dyer-Witherford 2005). Before we imagine that the new subjectivities unleashed by immaterial labour escape capitalist command by merely moving away in virtual space, it is worth reminding ourselves, first, that this movement would be more evasion than subversion, and second, that there is a double process at work here. While it is true that, with the advent of the general intellect, subjectivity circulates more and more within the sphere of immateriality, it is also true that physical spaces – particularly those within the contemporary metropolis – are increasingly saturated with immateriality, and also, therefore, with its productive temporalities and possibilities of resistance (Negri 2002). Ultimately, the temporal possibilities unleashed by immateriality must have some impact on the materiality of production and command if they are to be considered subversive.

Interrogating Negri's urbanism

> *The encounter, the clash and the intertwining and moving forward of the different strata of the metropolitan multitude cannot be seen other than as constructions (through struggle) of movements of power. How does this movement become capable of spreading power? For us the answer does not allude to the Winter Palace. Metropolitan revolts do not pose the question of substituting a mayor: they express new forms of democracy and schemes other than those of control. Metropolitan revolt is always a refoundation of the city.* (Negri 2002)

I hope that I have managed to show that there are compelling reasons why a student of the urban might turn to the work of Antonio Negri in seeking to understand the contemporary metropolis. Through his relentlessly political reading of postmodernity, subjectivity and capital, Negri manages to refound a marxist project of resistance through a very original and iconoclastic engagement with Marx. However, Negri's work has attracted a wide range of criticism (Murphy 2005; Callinicos 2007). Whether it is his incomplete, or perhaps incompletable, concept of the multitude, or his expansive understanding of real subsumption, it is important to read Negri carefully enough to discern those points at which radical will threatens to overwhelm analysis (Cleaver 1991). In the section that remains, I want to draw our attention to one such point, that being Negri's thinking of the relation between the multitude and the urban. From there, I wish to consider some of the difficulties that arise when we try to spread Negri's map of immaterial resistance overtop the material landscape of command that characterises the postmodern metropolis. Despite the strengths of Negri's analysis, many of which are directly applicable to an understanding of the city, I will suggest that Negri either fails to appreciate, or refuses to emphasise, the extent to which the multitude is primarily an urban multiplicity. Whether this is because his understanding of the urban is insufficiently developed, or as a result of a political commitment to non-urban resistance, to the extent that Negri leaves

the relation between the multitude and the urban at a certain level of incoherency, the concept of the multitude suffers.

The source of Negri's difficulty with respect to the urban and the multitude can be traced to two books co-authored with Michael Hardt, namely *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004). Rather than suggest that the cause of this incoherency lies with Negri's colleague and fellow activist Michael Hardt, I wish to point to the fact that both of these books represent a significant departure for Negri in terms of the scope of his political analysis (Murphy 2005). Whereas most of Negri's work consulted in this thesis is drawn from the period of his close and acute reading of political struggle and social change in Italy and France, the two books noted above are situated at a global scale and represent Negri's attempt to think through the consequences of the anti-globalisation movement. The result is that Negri's most careful work on the development of social subjectivity – i.e., his earlier works – are all *implicitly* about the development of social subjectivity, not just in urban space, but in centuries-old European urban spaces. It is only when we read *Empire* and *Multitude* that we see Negri attempting to bring together both urban and non-urban subjects within one global analysis.

The popularity of these two works, along with the uncanny timeliness of *Empire* (released just after the momentous protests against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle), has meant that Negri's multitude is at least rhetorically identified with the new social movements that made their presence felt so spectacularly in cities such as Seattle, Quebec and Genoa. What was unique about these movements was the manner in which they combined militant anti-capitalism with a concern for the effects of capitalist globalism. Thus, these movements brought before the eyes of the industrialised West demands of rural subjects from developing countries that, until then, were considered to be politically distinctive. Though urban activists in the West may have urged solidarity with poor, rural or indigenous groups from the developing South, there was little sense before *Empire* and its figure of the multitude that both the urbanised West and the rural South were part of a

single global subjectivity characterised by such ontological attributes as constituent power and living labour (Surin 2005; Negri 2000).

However, one of the results of this conjoinment is that Negri and Hardt struggle with a call to resistance that sees no significant political difference between urban and rural areas (Negri 2004) and an analysis of the contemporary multitude that is often explicitly, if not more often implicitly, situated within the urban environment. As we have seen, the urban is a privileged site of communicative co-operation, affective production and immaterial labour. More: If the urban subject is a tendency, it is a hegemonic tendency. The vicissitudes of urban life therefore help to shape the experience of the contemporary subject; and if it is true that the age of capital has passed and that of Empire has begun, then it is also true that despite the radical heterogeneity of the multitude, its critical centre lies in the urban.

The metropolis and command

I want to end this thesis with by taking another pass at interrogating Negri's urbanism. I have already suggested that Negri's transformative figure of the multitude is undermined to some degree by an analysis that, on the one hand, situates the transformative and temporal possibilities of the multitude within a classical conception of urban space, and on the other hand, posits an ontological, and therefore political, equivalence between urban subjectivity and non-urban subjectivity. Here at the very end, I want to suggest that there is a tension in Negri's work between an analysis of contemporary capitalism that places an immeasurable possibility of social transformation into the present moment, and a social subjectivity situated between immaterial plenitude and material command. Although there is an excellent argument to be made that Negri's multitude possesses a transformational capacity within the immaterial– one that threatens to spill into the metropolis – it is more debatable whether the *physical* spaces of the contemporary metropolis offer the same opportunities for collectivity and centrality. In fact, I will suggest that

the real challenge immateriality presents to capitalist accumulation means that contemporary metropolitan landscapes represent nothing less than a surplus of command and domination meant to forestall the temporal possibilities existing in the immaterial present.

Let us begin by examining Negri's deployment of the figure of the metropolis, and see if we can uncover tensions and contradictions arising from the manner in which the term is used. Reading Negri, we discover that despite his interest in the work of Manuel Castells on the rise of the network society, or Saskia Sassen's careful analysis of global cities and metropolitan areas (Dyer-Witherford 2005; Negri 2002), when Negri speaks explicitly about urban space, it is nearly always by using the term "metropolis" (see Negri 2002). When we encountered this term in chapter one, we learned that a metropolis should be understood as a metropolitan area, i.e., as both large material environment and field of governance containing many different kinds of space. This means that a metropolis cannot be considered as definitionally coextensive with the either the urban, understood as a centre, or to the classic city of the industrial era. In reality, the metropolis designates a field where determinate material, temporal and social processes overwhelm, overlay and invest what we might wish to think of as a city (Castells 2007; Sassen 1998).

The consequences of this are both numerous and, as far as the multitude is concerned, essentially contradictory. If we read Negri for the purposes of constructing a material ecology of resistance, we must be careful to distinguish between a thought of resistance that relies upon the material ecology of the classical city, and a thought of resistance located within a field of centrality. As an example of the confusion that can attend thinking about resistance and cities in the postmodern era, we can turn briefly to Negri's remarks given during a seminar on the multitude and the metropolis in 2002. In this seminar, Negri refers to the metropolis as the site of the most intense concentration of biopolitical capture, a place where police, repression and what Negri terms the "reigning in of subjectivity" is most acute (Negri 2002). It is in this essentially urban milieu where a line is most clearly visible – what Negri calls a "political diagonal" – a line that represents the relation of political

subjectivity with power. This political diagonal is a concrete horizon, a relation that, as Negri puts it, one cannot but have with power. This urban diagonal, or this political diagonal that becomes visible in the urban, thus appears to represent the line of possible confrontation between living labour and the various apparatuses of capture and suppression arrayed in the urban environment. Here Negri correctly notes that metropolitan spaces concentrate formidable elements of command, but extrapolates on the possibilities of resistance. The point I wish to make is that metropolitan regions such as Paris or Rome contain classic urban public spaces saturated with histories of subversion and revolt, and it is fundamentally unclear to what extent social protests occurring within these spaces owe their origins and strengths to these histories, rather than to the overlay of newer, metropolitan relations. Thus, although valuable, what remains unclear in Negri's remarks is whether such a stark and forceful diagonal is actually possible within the new metropolitan spaces of global capitalism.

I think that it is important to recall, with Lefebvre, that urbanism is an ambivalent concept. On one side, urbanisation is driven by processes of capitalist accumulation, while on the other, urbanisation represents a proliferation of centrality, with all the liberational and transformative meaning this implies (Lefebvre 2003). Once we understand this, we cannot assume that urbanisation simply concentrates potential for social transformation. As a result, though the spread of urbanisation is drawing more of the world's population into urban-like areas, metropolitan regions of the developing South are no more, and no less, centres of potential transformation than those in the West. As Castells, Sassen and Harvey have all noted, the growth of metropolitan regions is related to the development of globalised economic flows that reconfigure various processes of centrality and dispersal, heterogeneity and homogeneity, equality and inequality. According to Sassen,

> The combination of geographic dispersal of economic activities and
> system integration which lies at the heart of the current economic era
> has contributed to new or expanded central functions and the
> complexity of transactions has raised the demand by firms for highly

specialized services. Rather than becoming obsolete due to the dispersal made possible by information technologies, a critical number of cities: a) concentrate command functions; b) are post-industrial sites for the leading industries of our period, such as finance and specialized services; and c) are national or transnational marketplaces where firms and governments can buy financial instruments and specialized services. (Sassen 1998, p 173)

As Sassen indicates in this passage, it appears as though the physical centrality associated with the classic city has dispersed in the era of post-industrial urbanism. However, a new type of centrality has returned in the form of a concentration of immaterial networks within metropolitan space. At least one of the effects of this concentration of immateriality is an increased concentration of command. Mike Davis (2006) has pointed to the proliferation of a physical geography and architecture of command that increasingly defines metropolitan space, while both Castells and Sassen explicitly relate the new geographies of command to the postmodern economy of flows and immateriality. To understand the social function of contemporary command, we need look no further than to the relation Negri posits between immeasurability and capital in the era of total subsumption. Cesare Casarino emphasises the extent to which the temporal – and therefore productive – possibilities of late capitalism place accumulation at the edge of a precipice:

Postmodernity can be said to constitute the full fruition of the projects of modernity: if the real subsumption of society by capital has entailed that there is no longer virtually any aspect and indeed any time of our lives that is not productive for capital, time then – Negri seems to suggest – is that which capital needs now more than ever and yet that which capital always hopes against all hope to reduce to zero. The impossible dream of capital, after all, has always been to have production and circulation in no time, that is, to disengage production from time and to relegate time to its ontologically mortified and increasingly inadequate role of measure. (Casarino 2003, p 190)

Ultimately, the prospect before capital is perfectly sublime: on the one hand, an immeasurably productive temporality threatens accumulation forever; on the other, the prospect of extending capitalist accumulation into the infinite realm of immateriality and productive time. There are numerous strategies available to capital to manage the threat of subversion and dissent. During the period of total subsumption, as we have seen, the mechanism of wage labour becomes increasingly tautological and ineffective as an instrument of command (Negri 1991). The more subtle and insidious response of capitalist accumulation has been to reach into the heart of social and subjective life in order to produce consent. However, at the same moment of capital extension into these realms, there is a counter-movement of social subjectivity into the centre of productive temporality. For Negri, this is the source of the antagonistic crisis that defines postmodernity, and in his more recent writings such as *Time for Revolution* (2003) and *Multitude* (2004), he has focused on the extent to which capital, in response to the crisis of insubordination and immeasurability, increasingly resorts to force and command instead of coercion and hegemony.

What does this mean for the metropolitan landscape? David Harvey has already shown us that it is possible to read the built environment as a series of responses to various cyclical crises that characterise the capitalist economy. For Harvey, urban space can regulate crisis by taking dangerous levels of accumulated surplus in other areas of the economy and switching them into infrastructure or buildings. Thus cities, in Harvey's view, already represent spatial fixes to specific problems of capitalist temporality and accumulation (Harvey 1989). What I want to suggest is that the new metropolitan landscapes of command represent a spatial response to the crisis of measure faced by capital as a result of the productive possibilities of late capitalism. In response to the potential of centrality and subjectivation available within communication, affect and the general intellect, capitalism has taken on the work of reconfiguring space with a new geography of centrelessness and dispersal, one designed to materially encode capitalist temporality at the expense of the more dense temporal possibilities that exist within older urban environments.

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