

The Condition of Postmodernity

An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change

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The time and space of the Enlightenment project

In what follows I shall make frequent reference to the concept of 'time-space compression.' I mean to signal by that term processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves. I use the word 'compression' because a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us. The time taken to traverse space (plate 3.1) and the way we commonly represent that fact to ourselves (plate 3.2) are useful indicators of the kind of phenomena I have in mind. As space appears to shrink to a 'global village' of telecommunications and a 'spaceship earth' of economic and ecological interdependencies — to use just two familiar and everyday images — and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is (the world of the schizophrenic), so we have to learn how to cope with an overwhelming sense of *compression* of our spatial and temporal worlds.

The experience of time-space compression is challenging, exciting, stressful and sometimes deeply troubling, capable of sparking, therefore, a diversity of social, cultural, and political responses. 'Compression' should be understood as relative to any preceding state of affairs. In what follows, I shall consider the matter historically, using the European case (somewhat ethnocentrically) as an example. In this chapter, I shall look briefly at the long transition that prepared the way for Enlightenment thinking about space and time.

In the relatively isolated worlds (and I use the plural advisedly) of European feudalism, place assumed a definite legal, political, and social meaning indicative of a relative autonomy of social relations and of community inside roughly given territorial boundaries. Within each knowable world, spatial organization reflected a confused

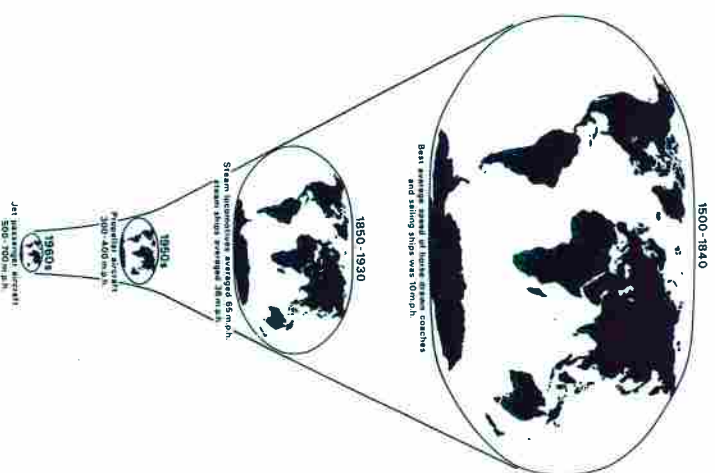


Plate 3.1 *The shrinking map of the world through innovations in transport which 'annihilate' space through time.*

overlapping of economic, political, and legal obligations and rights. External space was weakly grasped and generally conceptualized as a mysterious cosmology populated by some external authority, heavenly hosts, or more sinister figures of myth and imagination. The finite centred qualities of place (an intricate territory of interdependence, obligation, surveillance, and control) matched time-honoured routines of daily life set in the infinity and unknowability of 'enduring time' (to use Gurwitsch's term). Mediaeval parochialism and superstition were paralleled by an 'easy and hedonistic psychological' approach to spatial representation. The mediaeval artist believed that he could render what he saw before his eyes convincingly by representing what it felt like to walk about, experiencing structures, almost tactilely, from many different sides, rather than from a single overall vantage' (Edgerton, 1976). Mediaeval art and

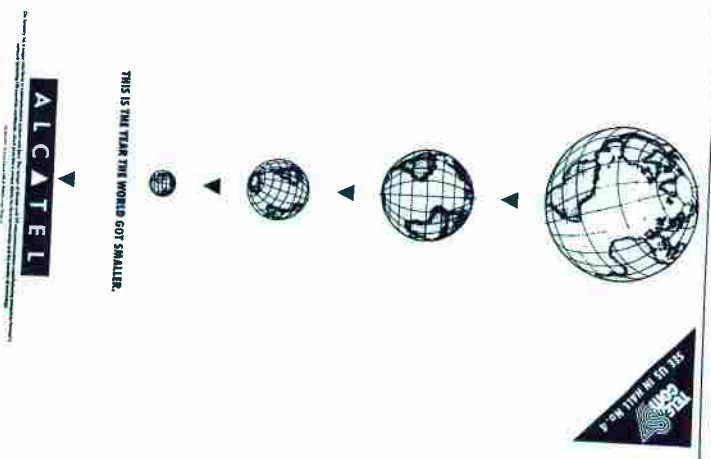


Plate 3.2 A 1987 advertisement by Alcatel emphasizes a popular image of the shrinking globe.

cartography, interestingly, seem to match the sensibility portrayed in de Certeau's 'spatial stories' (see plate 3.3).

There were, of course, disruptive forces at work in this feudal world – class conflicts, disputes over rights, ecological instabilities, and population pressures, doctrinal conflicts, Saracen invasions and the crusades, and the like. Above all, the progress of monetization (with its disruptive effect on the traditional community) and commodity exchange, in the first instance between communities but later through more independent forms of merchant trading, suggested an entirely different conception of time and space (see above, pp. 227–9)

The Renaissance, however, saw a radical reconstruction of views of space and time in the Western world. From an ethnocentric

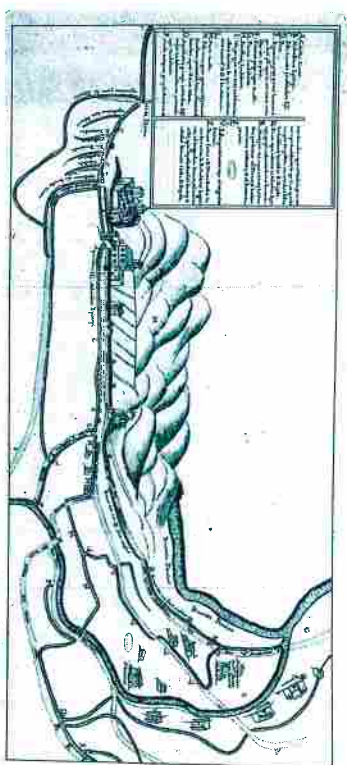
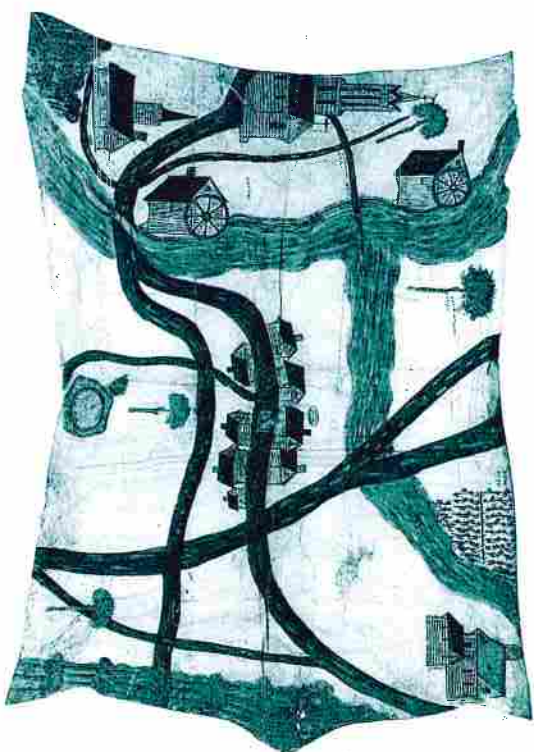


Plate 3.3 The tradition of medieval mapping typically emphasizes the sensuous rather than the rational and objective qualities of spatial order: (above) Plan des dîmes de Champpeaux from the XVth century and (below) the Vue de Cavallon et ses environs from the XVIIIth century.

viewpoint, the voyages of discovery produced an astounding flow of knowledge about a wider world that had somehow to be absorbed and represented. They indicated a globe that was finite and potentially knowable. Geographical knowledge became a valued commodity in a society that was becoming more and more profit-conscious. The accumulation of wealth, power, and capital became linked to personalized knowledge of, and individual command over, space. By the same token, each place became vulnerable to the direct influence of that wider world through trade, intra-territorial competition, military action, the inflow of new commodities, of bullion, and the like. But by virtue of the piecemeal development of the processes shaping it, the revolution in conceptions of space and time was slow to unfold.

Fundamental rules of perspective — rules that broke radically with the practices of mediaeval art and architecture, and which were to dominate until the beginning of the twentieth century — were elaborated in mid-fifteenth-century Florence by Brunelleschi and Alberti. This was a fundamental achievement of the Renaissance; it shaped ways of seeing for four centuries. The fixed viewpoint; its perspective maps and paintings 'is elevated and distant, completely out of plastic or sensory reach.' It generates a 'coldly geometrical' and 'systematic' sense of space which nevertheless gives 'a sense of harmony with natural law, thereby underscoring man's moral responsibility within God's geometrically ordered universe' (Edgerton, 1976, 114). A conception of infinite space allowed the globe to be grasped as a finite totality without challenging, at least in theory, the infinite wisdom of the deity. 'Infinite space is endowed with infinite quality,' wrote Giordano Bruno at the end of the Renaissance, 'and in the infinite quality is lauded the infinite act of existence' (cited in Kostof, 1985, 537). The chronometer, which gave strength and measure to the idea of time's arrow, was likewise rendered theoretically compatible with God's infinite wisdom by attributing infinite qualities to time analogous to those which attached to space. The attachment was of immense importance. It meant that the idea of time as 'becoming' — a very human sense of time which is also contained in the idea of time's arrow — was separated from the analytical and 'scientific' sense of time which rested on a conception of infinity that was preferred (though not by the authorities in Rome) broadly for religious reasons. The Renaissance separated scientific and supposedly factual senses of time and space from the more fluid conceptions that might arise experientially.

Giordano Bruno's conceptions, which prefigured those of Galileo and Newton, were in practice so pantheistic that Rome burned him at the stake as a threat to centralized authority and dogma. In so

doing, the Church was recognizing a rather significant challenge that infinite time and space posed to hierarchically conceived systems of authority and power based in a particular place (Rome).

Perspectivism conceives of the world from the standpoint of the 'seeing eye' of the individual. It emphasizes the science of optics and the ability of the individual to represent what he or she sees as in some sense 'truthful,' compared to superimposed truths of mythology or religion. The connection between individualism and perspectivism is important. It provided an effective material foundation for the Cartesian principles of rationality that became integrated into the Enlightenment project. It signalled a break in artistic and architectural practice from artisan and vernacular traditions towards intellectual activity and the 'aura' of the artist, scientist, or entrepreneur as a creative individual. There is also some evidence to connect the formulation of perspectivist rules with the rationalizing practices emerging in commerce, banking, book-keeping, trade, and agricultural production under centralized land management (Kostof, 1985, 403–10).

The story of Renaissance maps, which took on entirely new qualities of objectivity, practicality, and functionality, is particularly revealing (see plate 3.4). Objectivity in spatial representation became a valued attribute because accuracy of navigation, the determination of property rights in land (as opposed to the confused system of legal rights and obligations that characterized feudalism), political boundaries, rights of passage and of transportation, and the like, became economically as well as politically imperative. Many special-purpose map representations, such as the portolan charts used by navigators and estate maps used by landowners, already existed, of course, but the importation of the Ptolemaic map from Alexandria to Florence around 1400 appears to have played a crucial role in the Renaissance discovery and use of perspectivism:

The portolans did not furnish a geometrical framework for comprehending the whole world. The Ptolemaic grid, on the other hand, posed an immediate mathematical unity. The most far-flung places could all be precisely fixed in relation to one another by unchanging coordinates so that their proportionate distance, as well as their directional relationships, would be apparent.... The Ptolemaic system gave the Florentines a perfect, expandable cartographic tool for collecting, collating, and correcting geographical knowledge. Above all, it supplied to geography the same aesthetic principles of geometrical harmony which Florentines demanded of all their art. (Edgerton, 1976)

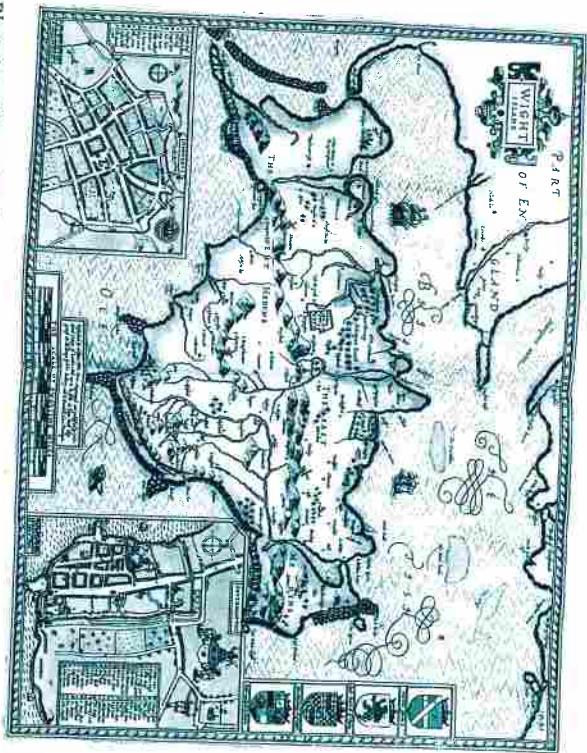


Plate 3.4 The rational ordering of space in the renaissance maps of England played an important role in affirming the position of individuals in relation to territory: John Speed's map of the Isle of Wight, 1616.

The connection with perspectivism lay in this: that in designing the grid in which to locate places, Ptolemy had imagined how the globe as a whole would look to a human eye looking at it from outside. A number of implications then follow. The first is an ability to see the globe as a knowable totality. As Ptolemy himself put it, whole, 'whereas the task of geography is to survey the whole in its just proportion.' Geography rather than chorography became a Renaissance mission. A second implication is that mathematical principles could be applied, as in optics, to the whole problem of representing the globe on a flat surface. As a result, it seemed as if space, though infinite, was conquerable and containable for purposes of human occupancy and action. It could be appropriated in imagination according to mathematical principles. And it was exactly in such a context that the revolution in natural philosophy, so brilliantly described by Koyré (1957), which went from Copernicus to Galileo and ultimately to Newton, was to occur.

Perspectivism had reverberations in all aspects of social life and in

all fields of representation. In architecture, for example, it allowed the replacement of Gothic structures 'spun from arcane geometrical formulae jealously guarded by the lodge' with a building conceived of and built 'on a unitary plan drawn to measure' (Kostof, 1985, 405). This way of thinking could be extended to encompass the planning and construction of whole cities (like Ferrara) according to a similar unitary plan. Perspectivism could be elaborated upon in innumerable ways, as, for example, in the baroque architecture of the seventeenth century which expressed 'a common fascination with the idea of the infinite, of movement and force, and the all-embracing but expansive unity of things.' While still religious in ambition and intent, such architecture would have been 'unthinkable in the earlier, simpler days before projective geometry, calculus, precision clocks, and Newtonian optics' (Kostof, 1985, 523). Baroque architecture and Baroque fugues are both expressive of those concepts of infinite space and time which post-Renaissance science elaborated upon with such zeal. The extraordinary strength of spatial and temporal imagery in the English literature of the Renaissance likewise testifies to the impact of this new sense of space and time on literary modes of representation. The language of Shakespeare, or of poets like John Donne and Andrew Marvell, is rife with such imagery. It is intriguing to note, furthermore, how the image of the world as a theatre ('all the world's a stage' played in a theatre called 'The Globe') was reappropriated in the titles commonly given to atlases and maps (such as John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* and the French atlas, *Théâtre français* of 1594). The construction of landscapes (both rural and urban) according to principles of theatrical design soon followed suit.

If spatial and temporal experiences are primary vehicles for the coding and reproduction of social relations (as Bourdieu suggests), then a change in the way the former get represented will almost certainly generate some kind of shift in the latter. This principle helps explain the support that the Renaissance maps of England supplied to individualism, nationalism, and parliamentary democracy at the expense of dynastic privilege (see plate 3.5). But, as Helgerson points out, maps could just as easily function 'in untroubled support of a strongly centralized monarchic regime,' though Philip II of Spain thought his maps sufficiently subversive to keep them under lock and key as a state secret. Colbert's plans for a rational spatial integration of the French nation state (focused as much upon the enhancement of trade and commerce as upon administrative efficiency) are typical of the deployment of the 'cold rationality' of maps used for instrumental ends in support of centralized state power. It was,

after all, Colbert, in the age of French Absolutism, who encouraged the French Academy of Sciences (set up in 1666) and the first of the great map-making family, Jean Dominique Cassini, to produce a coherent and well-ordered map of France.

The Renaissance revolution in concepts of space and time laid the conceptual foundations in many respects for the Enlightenment project. What many now look upon as the first great surge of modernist thinking, took the domination of nature as a necessary condition of human emancipation. Since space is a 'fact' of nature, this meant that the conquest and rational ordering of space became an integral part of the modernizing project. The difference this time was that space and time had to be organized not to reflect the glory of God, but to celebrate and facilitate the liberation of 'Man' as a free and active individual, endowed with consciousness and will. It was in this image that a new landscape was to emerge. The twisting perspectives and intense force fields constructed to the glory of God in baroque architecture had to give way to the rationalized structures of an architect like Bou le (whose project, see plate 3.6, for a cenotaph for Isaac Newton is a visionary piece of modernism). There is a continuous thread of thought from Voltaire's concern with rational city planning through to Saint-Simon's vision of associated capitals unifying the earth by way of vast investments in transport and communications, and Goethe's heroic invocation in *Faust* – 'let me open spaces for many millions/ to dwell in, though not secure, yet active and free' – and the ultimate realization of exactly such projects as part and parcel of the capitalist modernization process in the nineteenth century. Enlightenment thinkers similarly looked to command over the future through powers of scientific prediction, through social engineering and rational planning, and the institutionalization of rational systems of social regulation and control. They in effect appropriated and pushed Renaissance conceptions of space and time to their limit in the search to construct a new, more democratic, healthier, and more affluent society. Accurate maps and chronometers were essential tools within the Enlightenment vision of how the world should be organized.

Maps, stripped of all elements of fantasy and religious belief, as well as of any sign of the experiences involved in their production, had become abstract and strictly functional systems for the factual ordering of phenomena in space. The science of map projection, and techniques of cadastral surveying, made them mathematically rigorous depictions. They defined property rights in land, territorial boundaries, domains of administration and social control, communication routes, etc. with increasing accuracy. They also allowed the whole

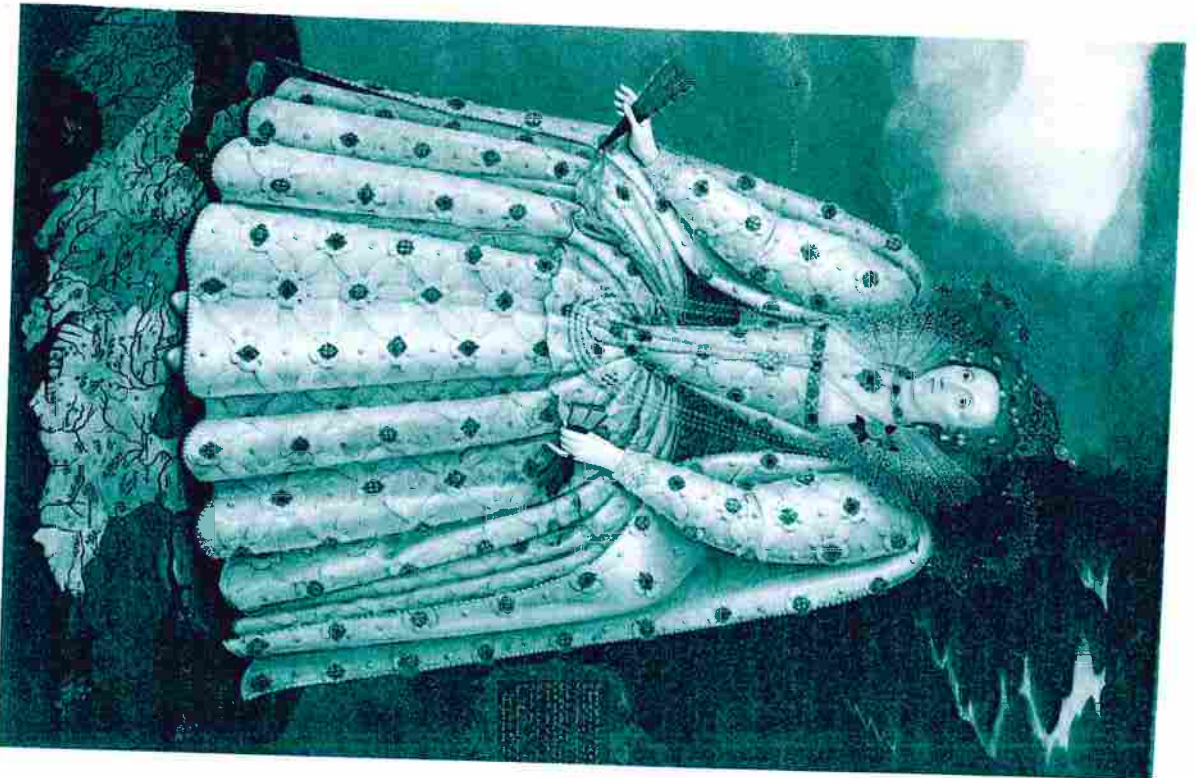


Plate 3.5 Dynasty versus the map: the Ditchley Portrait of Queen Elizabeth emphasizing the power of dynasty over individual and nation as represented by the Renaissance map

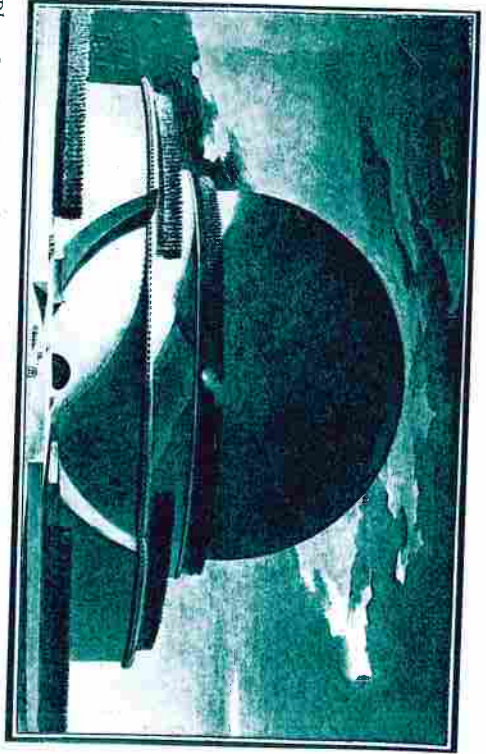


Plate 3.6 Boule's eighteenth-century design for Newton's Cenotaph pioneered the rational and ordered sense of architectural space later taken up by modernism.

population of the earth, for the first time in human history, to be located within a single spatial frame (see plate 3.7). The grid that the Ptolemaic system had provided as a means to absorb the inflow of new information had by now been corrected and filled out, so that a long line of thinkers, from Montesquieu to Rousseau, could begin to speculate on the material and rational principles that might order the distribution of populations, ways of life, and political systems on the surface of the globe. It was within the confines of such a totalizing vision of the globe that environmental determinism and a certain conception of 'otherness' could be admitted, even flourish. The diversity of peoples could be appreciated and analysed in the secure knowledge that their 'place' in the spatial order was unambiguously known. In exactly the same way that Enlightenment thinkers believed that translation from one language to another was always possible without destroying the integrity of either language, so the totalizing vision of the map allowed strong senses of national, local, and personal identities to be constructed in the midst of geographical differences. Were not the latter after all entirely compatible with the division of labour, commerce, and other forms of exchange? Were they not also explicable in terms of different environmental conditions? I do not want to idealize the qualities of thought that

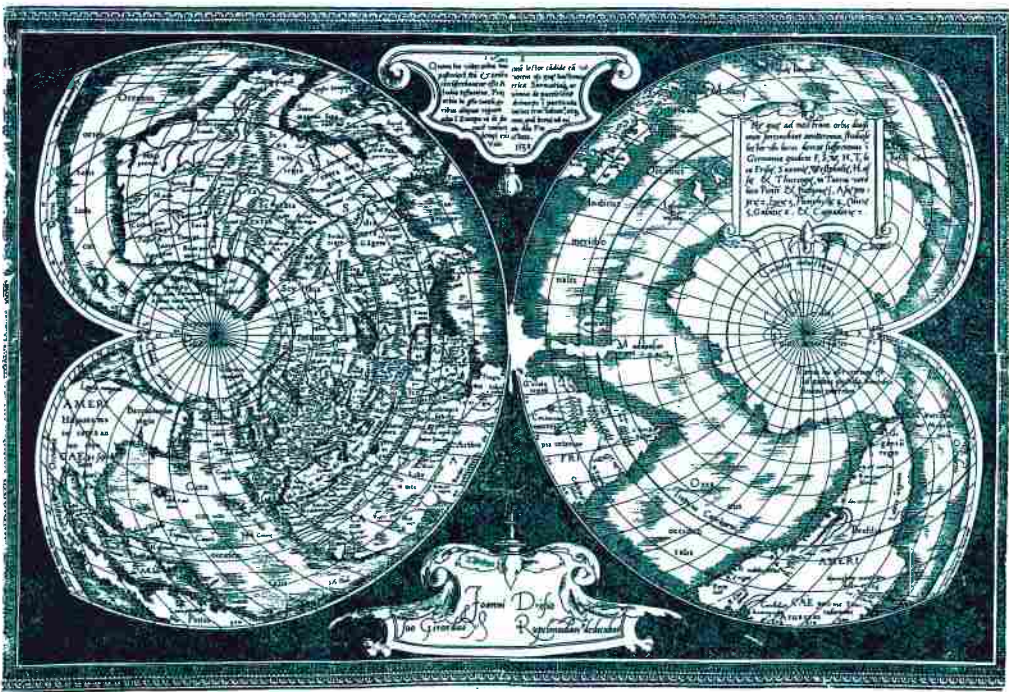


Plate 3.7 Mercator completed the Ptolemaic ambition by producing maps of the world, such as this effort of 1538, that ever more accurately represented the physical spatial relationships of all places on the globe's surface.

resulted. The environmentalist explanations of difference put forward by Montesquieu and Rousseau hardly appear enlightened, while the sordid facts of the slave trade and the subjugation of women passed Enlightenment thinkers by with hardly a murmur of protest. Nevertheless, I do want to insist that the problem with Enlightenment thought was not that it had *no* conception of 'the other' but that it perceived 'the other' as necessarily having (and sometimes 'keeping to') a specific *place* in a spatial order that was ethnocentrically conceived to have homogeneous and absolute qualities.

The recording of time by the chronometer was no less totalizing in its implication for thought and action. Increasingly seen as a mechanical division fixed by the swing of the pendulum, time's arrow was conceived to be linear both forwards and backwards. The conception of past and future as linearly connected by the ticking away of the clock allowed all manner of scientific and historical conceptions to flourish. On such a temporal schema it was possible to see retro-diction and prediction as symmetrical propositions, and to formulate a strong sense of potentiality to control the future. And even though it took many years for geological and evolutionary time scales to be accepted, there is a sense in which such time scales were already implicit in the very acceptance of the chronometer as the way of telling time. Even more important, perhaps, was the significance of such a conception of homogeneous and universal time to conceptions of the rate of profit (return on stock of capital over time, said Adam Smith), the rate of interest, the hourly wage, and other magnitudes fundamental to capitalist decision-making. What all this adds up to is the by now well accepted fact that Enlightenment thought operated within the confines of a rather mechanical 'Newtonian' vision of the universe, in which the presumed absolutes of homogeneous time and space formed limiting containers to thought and action. The breakdown in these absolute conceptions under the stress of time—space compression was the central story of the birth of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century forms of modernism.

I think it useful, however, to pave the path to understanding the break into modernist ways of seeing after 1848 with a consideration of the tensions that lay within Enlightenment conceptions of space. The theoretical, representational, and practical dilemmas are also instructive in interpreting the subsequent move towards post-modernism.

Consider, as a starting point, de Certeau's contemporary critique of the map as a 'totalizing device.' The application of mathematical principles produces 'a formal ensemble of abstract places' and 'col-lates on the same plane heterogeneous places, some received from

tradition and others produced by observation.' The map is, in effect, a homogenization and reification of the rich diversity of spatial inneraries and spatial stories. It 'eliminates little by little' all traces of 'the practices that produce it.' While the tactile qualities of the mediaeval map preserved such traces, the mathematically rigorous maps of the Enlightenment were of quite different qualities. Bourdieu's arguments also apply. Since any system of representation is itself a fixed spatial construct, it automatically converts the fluid, confused, but nonetheless objective spaces and time of work and social reproduction into a fixed schema. Just as the map replaces the discontinuous patchy space of practical paths by the homogeneous, continuous space of geometry, so the calendar substitutes a linear, homogeneous, continuous time for practical time, which is made up of incommensurable islands of duration each with its own rhythm.' The analyst, Bourdieu continues, may win 'the privilege of totalization' and secure 'the means for apprehending the logic of the system which a partial or discrete view would miss,' but there is also 'every likelihood that he will overlook the change in status to which he is subjecting practice and its product,' and consequently 'insist on trying to answer questions which are not and cannot be questions for practice.' By treating certain idealized conceptions of space and time as real, Enlightenment thinkers ran the danger of confining the free flow of human experience and practice to rationalized configurations. It is in these terms that Foucault detects the repressive turn in Enlightenment practices towards surveillance and control.

This provides a useful insight into 'postmodernist' criticism of the 'totalizing qualities' of Enlightenment thought and the 'tyranny' of perspectivism. It also highlights a recurring problem. If social life is to be rationally planned and controlled so as to promote social equality and the welfare of all, then how can production, consumption, and social interaction be planned and efficiently organized except through the incorporation of the ideal abstractions of space and time as given in the map, the chronometer, and the calendar? Beyond this there lies another problem. If perspectivism, for all its mathematical rigour, constructs the world from a given individual viewpoint, then from whose perspective is the physical landscape to be shaped? The architect, designer, planner could not preserve the tactile sense of mediaeval representations. Even when not directly dominated by class interests, the producer of space could only produce 'alien art' from the standpoint of its inhabitants. Insofar as the social planning of high modernism reincorporated these elements into its practical applications, it likewise stood to be accused of the 'totalizing vision' of space and time to which Enlightenment thinking was heir. The

mathematical unities given by Renaissance perspectivism could, from this standpoint, be regarded as just as totalizing and repressive as the maps.

Let me follow this line of argument a bit further in order to capture the central dilemma of defining a proper spatial frame for social action.

The conquest and control of space, for example, first requires that it be conceived of as something usable, malleable, and therefore capable of domination through human action. Perspectivism and mathematical mapping did this by conceiving of space as abstract, homogeneous, and universal in its qualities, a framework of thought and action which was stable and knowable. Euclidean geometry provided the basic language of discourse. Builders, engineers, architects, and land managers for their part showed how Euclidean representations of objective space could be converted into a spatially ordered physically landscape. Merchants and landowners used such practices for their own class purposes, while the absolutist state (with its concern for taxation of land and the definition of its own domain of domination and social control) likewise relished the capacity to define and produce spaces with fixed spatial co-ordinates. But these were islands of practice within a sea of social activities in which all manner of other conceptions of space and place — sacred and profane, symbolic, personal, animistic — could continue to function undisturbed. It took something more to consolidate the actual use of space as universal, homogeneous, objective, and abstract in social practice. In spite of the plethora of utopian plans, the 'something more' that came to dominate was private property in land, and the buying and selling of space as a commodity.

This brings us to the heart of the dilemmas of the politics of space in any kind of project to transform society. Lefebvre (1974, 385) observes, for example, that one of the ways in which the homogeneity of space can be achieved is through its total 'pulverization' and fragmentation into freely alienable parcels of private property, to be bought and traded at will upon the market. This was, of course, exactly the strategy that so forcefully transformed the British landscape through the enclosure movements of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and which demanded systematic mapping as one of its accoutrements. There is, Lefebvre suggests, a permanent tension between the free appropriation of space for individual and social purposes, and the domination of space through private property, the state, and other forms of class and social power. Out of Lefebvre's proposition we can extract five explicit dilemmas:

1 If it is true that the only way that space can be controlled and organized is through its 'pulverization' and fragmentation, then it behoves us to establish the principles of that fragmentation. If space, as Foucault would have it, is always a container of social power, then the reorganization of space is always a reorganization of the framework through which social power is expressed. Political economists of the Enlightenment period debated this problem quite explicitly under the opposed doctrines of mercantilism (in which the state was the relevant geographical unit around which spatial policy should be formulated) and liberalism (in which it was the rights of individualized private property that were paramount). Turgot, French minister of state and an eminent economist with physiocratic and liberal leanings, commissioned the accurate cadastral mapping of much of France precisely because he sought to support private property relations, the dispersal of economic and political power, and to facilitate the free circulation of commodities both within and without France. Colbert, on the other hand, had earlier tried to organize the French space to concentrate on Paris, the capital, because of his interest in supporting the absolute state and monarchical power. Both were concerned to enhance the fiscal basis of state power, but saw quite different spatial policies as necessary to meet that goal, because they envisaged quite different relations of power between private property and the state (Doecks, 1969).

2 What Enlightenment thinkers began to grapple with was the whole problem of 'the production of space' as a political and economic phenomenon. The production of turnpikes, canals, systems of communication and administration, cleared lands, and the like put the question of the production of a space of transport and communications clearly on the agenda. Any change in space relations wrought by such investments, after all, affected the profitability of economic activity unevenly, and therefore led to a redistribution of wealth and power. Any attempt to democratize and disperse political power likewise entailed some kind of spatial strategy. One of the first initiatives of the French Revolution was to devise a rational system of administration through a highly rational and egalitarian division of the French national space into 'departments' (see plate 3.8). Perhaps the clearest example of this politics in action is the design of the homesteading system and the spatial grid for land settlement in the United States (a product of Jeffersonian democratic and Enlightenment thinking). The pulverization and fragmentation of the space of the United States along such rationalistic lines was

thought to (and in some respects indeed did) imply maximum individual liberty to move and settle in a reasonably egalitarian way in the spirit of a property-owning and agrarian democracy. The Jeffersonian vision was ultimately subverted, but at least up until the Civil War there was enough truth in its practical meaning to give some credence to the idea that the United States, precisely because of its open spatial organization, was the land where the utopian visions of the Enlightenment might be realized.

3 There can be no politics of space independent of social relations. The latter give the former their social content and meaning. This was the rock upon which the innumerable utopian plans of the Enlightenment founded. The pulverization of space, which Jeffersonian land politics presumed would open the way to an egalitarian democracy, ended up being a means that facilitated the proliferation of capitalist social relations. It provided a remarkably open framework within which money power could operate with few of the constraints encountered in Europe. In the European context it was the ideas of Saint-Simon, with his associated capitals conquering and subduing space in the name of human welfare, that similarly got subverted. After 1848, credit bankers such as the Pécire brothers in Second Empire France, promoted a highly profitable even if speculative 'spatial fix' to the dilemmas of overaccumulation and capitalist crisis, through a vast wave of investments in railways, canals, and urban infrastructures.

4 The homogenization of space poses serious difficulties for the conception of place. If the latter is the site of Being (as many theorists were later to suppose), then Becoming entails a spatial politics that renders place subservient to transformations of space. Absolute space yields, as it were, to relative space. It is precisely at this point that the incipient tension between place and space can get transformed into an absolute antagonism. The reorganization of space to democratic ends challenged dynastic power embedded in place. 'The beating down of gates, the crossing of castle moats, walking at one's ease in places where one was once forbidden to enter: the appropriation of a certain space, which had to be opened and broken into, was the first delight of the [French] Revolution.' Moreover, as 'good sons of the Enlightenment,' Ozouf (1988, 126–37) goes on to report, the revolutionaries 'saw space and time as an occasion' to construct a ceremonial space that was the equivalent of 'the time of the Revolution'. But the subversion of that democratizing project by money power and capital led to the commodification of space and

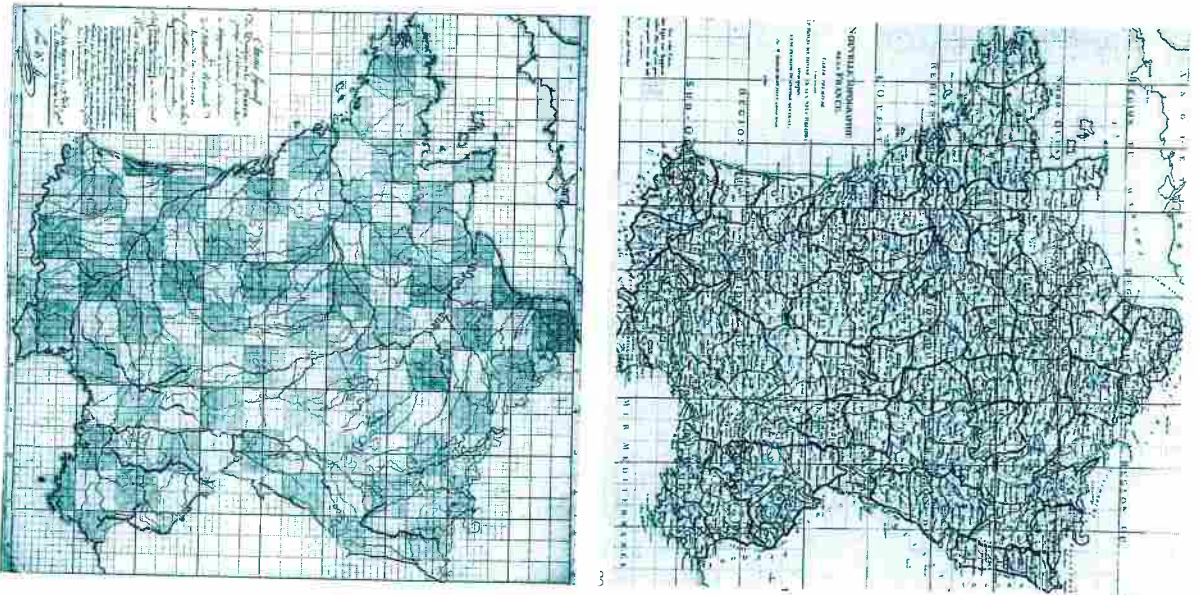


Plate 3.8 The French Revolution emphasized Enlightenment concerns for both the rational mapping of space and its rational division for purposes of administration: (above) a 1780 prospectus for a 'Nouvelle Topographie' of France and (below) a 1789 map drawn up by the National Assembly to facilitate proportional representation.

the production of new but equally oppressive geographical systems for the containerization of power (as in the United States).

5 This leads us back to the most serious dilemma of all: the fact that space can be conquered only through the production of space. The specific spaces of transport and communications, of human settlement and occupancy, all legitimized under some legal system of rights to spaces (of the body, of land, of home, etc.) which guarantees security of place and access to the members of society, form a fixed frame within which the dynamics of a social process must unfold. When placed in the context of capital accumulation this fixity of spatial organization becomes heightened into an absolute contradiction. The effect is to unleash capitalism's powers of 'creative destruction' upon the geographical landscape, sparking violent movements of opposition from all kinds of quarters.

This last point is sufficiently important to warrant generalization. Not only does it take the production of a specific, fixed, and immovable space to pursue the 'annihilation of space through time', but it also takes long-term investments of slow turnover time (automated plants, robots, etc.) in order to accelerate the turnover time of the mass of capitals. How capitalism confronts and periodically succumbs to this nexus of contradictions is one of the major unfold stories in the historical geography of capitalism. Time-space compression is a sign of the intensity of forces at work at this nexus of contradiction and it may well be that crises of overaccumulation as well as crises in cultural and political forms are powerfully connected to such forces.

Enlightenment thinkers sought a better society. In so doing they had to pay attention to the rational ordering of space and time as prerequisites to the construction of a society that would guarantee individual liberties and human welfare. The project meant the reconstruction of the spaces of power in radically new terms, but it proved impossible to specify exactly what those terms might be. State, communitarian, and individualistic ideas were associated with different spatial landscapes, just as differential command over time posed crucial problems of class relations, of the rights to the fruits of one's labour, and of capital accumulation. Yet all Enlightenment projects had in common a relatively unified common-sense of what space and time were about and why their rational ordering was important. This common basis in part depended on the popular availability of watches and clocks, and on the capacity to diffuse cartographic knowledge by cheaper and more efficient printing techniques. But it also rested upon the link between Renaissance perspectivism and a conception

of the individual as the ultimate source and container of social power, albeit assimilated within the nation state as a collective system of authority. The economic conditions of the European Enlightenment contributed in no uncertain measure to the sense of common objectives. Increased competition between states and other economic units created pressure to rationalize and co-ordinate the space and time of economic activity, be it within a national space of transport and communications, of administration and military organization, or the more localized spaces of private estates and municipalities. All economic units were caught up in a world of increasing competition in which the stakes were ultimately economic success (measured in the bullion so dear to the mercantilists, or by the accumulation of individualized money, wealth, and power as lauded by the liberals). The practical rationalization of space and time throughout the eighteenth century — a progress marked by the rise of the Ordnance Survey or of systematic cadastral mapping in France at the end of the eighteenth century — formed the context in which Enlightenment thinkers formulated their projects. And it was against this conception that the second great turn of modernism after 1848 revolted.

Time—space compression and the rise of modernism as a cultural force

The depression that swept out of Britain in 1846–7 and which quickly engulfed the whole of what was then the capitalist world, can justly be regarded as the first unambiguous crisis of capitalist overaccumulation. It shook the confidence of the bourgeoisie and challenged its sense of history and geography in profound ways. There had been many economic and political crises before, but most could reasonably be attributed to natural calamities (such as harvest failures) or wars and other geopolitical struggles. But this one was different. Though there were bad harvests here and there, this crisis could not easily be attributed to God or nature. Capitalism had matured by 1847–8 to a sufficient degree, so that even the blindest bourgeois apologist could see that financial conditions, reckless speculation, and over-production had something to do with events. The outcome, in any case, was a sudden paralysis of the economy, in which surpluses of capital and labour lay side by side with apparently no way to reunite them in profitable and socially useful union.

There were, of course, as many explanations of the crisis as there were class positions (and a good few more besides). The craft workers from Paris to Vienna tended to view it as the inevitable outcome of a rampant capitalist development process that was changing employment conditions, raising the rate of exploitation, and destroying traditional skills, while progressive elements in the bourgeoisie could view it as a product of the recalcitrant aristocratic and feudal orders who refused the course of progress. The latter, for their part, could attribute the whole affair to the undermining of traditional values and social hierarchies by the materialist values and practices of both workers and an aggressive class of capitalists and financiers.

The thesis I want to explore here, however, is that the crisis of 1847–8 created a crisis of representation, and that this latter crisis itself derived from a radical readjustment in the sense of time and

space in economic, political, and cultural life. Before 1848, progressive elements within the bourgeoisie could reasonably hold to the Enlightenment sense of time ('time pressing forward' as Gurwitsch would put it), recognizing that they were fighting a battle against the 'enduring' and ecological time of traditional societies and the 'retarded time' of recalcitrant forms of social organization. But after 1848, that progressive sense of time was called into question in many important respects. Too many people in Europe had fought on the barricades, or been caught up in the maelstrom of hopes and fears, not to appreciate the stimulus that comes with participant action in 'explorative time'. Baudelaire, for one, could never forget the experience, and came back to it again and again in his explorations of a modernist language. In retrospect, it became easier to invoke some cyclical sense of time (hence the growing interest in the idea of business cycles as necessary components to the capitalist growth process that would connect back to the economic troubles of 1837, 1826, and 1817). Or, if people were mindful enough of class tensions, they might invoke, as Marx did in *The eighteenth brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, a sense of 'alternating time' in which the outcome of bitter struggles must always be seen as a precarious balance between class forces. But I think it true to say that the question 'What time are we in?' came in upon the philosophical agenda after 1848 in ways that challenged the simple mathematical presuppositions of Enlightenment thinking. The sense of physical and social time, so recently brought together in Enlightenment thought, began once more to diverge. It then became possible for the artist and the thinker to explore the nature and meaning of time in new ways.

The events of 1847–8 also challenged certainties as to the nature of space and the meaning of money. Events proved that Europe had achieved a level of spatial integration in its economic and financial life that was to make the whole continent vulnerable to simultaneous crisis formation. The political revolutions that erupted at once across the continent emphasized the synchronic as well as the diachronic dimensions to capitalist development. The certainty of absolute space and place gave way to the insecurities of a shifting relative space, in which events in one place could have immediate and ramifying effects in several other places. If, as Jameson (1988, 349) suggests, 'the truth of experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place,' but is spreadeagled across the world's spaces, then a situation arises 'in which we can say that if individual experience is authentic, then it cannot be true; and that if a scientific or cognitive mode of the same content is true, then it escapes individual experience.' Since individual experience always forms the

raw material of works of art, this condition posed deep problems for artistic production. But this was not the only arena of confusion. Diverse local workers' movements suddenly found themselves swept up in a series of events and political shifts which had no obvious boundaries. Nationalist workers could exhibit xenophobia in Paris yet sympathize with Polish or Viennese workers struggling, like them, for political and economic emancipation in their particular spaces. It was in such a context that the universalist propositions of *The communist manifesto* made more than a little sense. How to reconcile the perspective of place with the shifting perspectives of relative space became a serious issue to which modernism was to address itself with increasing vigour up until the shock of the First World War.

European space was becoming more and more unified precisely because of the internationalism of money power. 1847–8 was a financial and monetary crisis which seriously challenged received ideas as to the meaning and role of money in social life. The tension between the functions of money as a measure and store of value, and money as a lubricant of exchange and investment had long been evident. But it was now registered as a downright antagonism between the financial system (the whole structure of credit moneys and 'fictitious capitals') and its monetary base (gold and other tangible commodities that give a clear physical meaning to money). Credit money in effect came crashing down, leaving a shortage of 'real money' and specie in 1847–8. Those who controlled specie controlled a vital source of social power. The Rothschilds used that power to great effect and, through their superior command over space, came to dominate the finances of the whole European continent. Yet the question of the true nature and meaning of money was not so easily resolved. The tension between credit and specie money loomed large in the subsequent years, eventually bringing even the Rothschilds into a banking world in which the credit system and 'fictitious capital formation' became paramount. This in turn altered the meaning of time (investment times, rate of return, etc.) and other vital magnitudes to capitalism's dominant mode of conducting business. It was only after 1850, after all, that stock and capital markets (markets for 'fictitious capital') were systematically organized and opened to general participation under legal rules of incorporation and market contract.

All of these shifts created a crisis of representation. Neither literature nor art could avoid the question of internationalism, synchrony, insecure temporality, and the tension within the dominant measure of value between the financial system and its monetary or commodity

base. 'Around 1850,' writes Barthes (1967, 9), 'classical writing therefore disintegrated, and the whole of literature, from Flaubert to the present day, became the problematics of language.' It is no accident that the first great modernist cultural thrust occurred in Paris after 1848. The brushstrokes of Manet that began to decompose the traditional space of painting and to alter its frame, to explore the fragmentations of light and colour; the poems and reflections of Baudelaire that sought to transcend ephemerality and the narrow politics of place in the search for eternal meanings; and the novels of Flaubert with their peculiar narrative structures in space and time coupled with a language of icy aloofness; all of these were signals of a radical break of cultural sentiment that reflected a profound questioning of the meaning of space and place, of present, past and future, in a world of insecurity and rapidly expanding spatial horizons.

Flaubert, for example, explores the question of representation of heterogeneity and difference, of simultaneity and synchrony, in a world where both time and space are being absorbed under the homogenizing powers of money and commodity exchange. 'Everything should sound simultaneously,' he wrote; 'one should hear the bellowing of the cartle, the whispering of the lovers, and the rhetoric of the officials all at the same time.' Unable to represent this simultaneity with the requisite effect, Flaubert 'dissolves the sequence by cutting back and forth (the cinematographic analogy is quite deliberate)' and in the final crescendo to a scene in *Madame Bovary* juxtaposes two sequences 'in a single sentence to reach a unified effect' (Bell, 1978, 114). Frédéric Moreau, the hero of Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale*, moves from space to space in Paris and its suburbs, collecting experiences of quite different qualities as he goes. What is special is the way that he glides in and out of the differentiated spaces of the city, with the same sort of ease that money and commodities change hands. The whole narrative structure of the book likewise gets lost in perpetual postponements of decisions precisely because Frédéric has enough inherited money to enjoy the luxury of not deciding, even in the midst of revolutionary turmoil. Action is reduced to a set of paths that might have been but were not taken. 'The thought of the future torments us, and the past is holding us back,' Flaubert (1979, 134) later wrote, adding, 'that is why the present is slipping from our grasp.' Yet it was the possession of money that allowed the present to slip through Frédéric's grasp, while opening social spaces to casual penetration. Evidently, time, space, and money could be invested with rather different significances, depending upon the conditions and possibilities of trade-off be-

tween them. Flaubert had to find a new language to speak of such possibilities.

These explorations of new cultural forms occurred in an economic and political context which in many respects belied that of the economic collapse and revolutionary upsurge of 1848. Even though, for example, excessive speculation in railroad construction triggered the first European-wide crisis of overaccumulation, the resolution to that crisis after 1850 rested heavily upon further exploration of temporal and spatial displacement. New systems of credit and corporate forms of organization, of distribution (the large department stores), coupled with technical and organizational innovations in production (increasing fragmentation, specialization, and de-skilling in the division of labour for example), helped speed up the circulation of capital in mass markets. More emphatically, capitalism became embroiled in an incredible phase of massive long-term investment in the conquest of space. The expansion of the railway network, accompanied by the advent of the telegraph, the growth of steam shipping, and the building of the Suez Canal, the beginnings of radio communication and bicycle and automobile travel at the end of the century, all changed the sense of time and space in radical ways. This period also saw the coming on stream of a whole series of technical innovations. New ways of viewing space and motion (derived from photography and exploration of the limits of perspectivism) began to be thought out and applied to the production of urban space (see Lefavre, 1986). Balloon travel and photography from on high changed perceptions of the earth's surface, while new technologies of printing and mechanical reproduction allowed a dissemination of news, information, and cultural artefacts throughout ever broader swathes of the population.

The vast expansion of foreign trade and investment after 1850 put the major capitalist powers on the path of globalism, but did so through imperial conquest and inter-imperialist rivalry that was to reach its apogee in World War I – the first global war. En route, the world's spaces were deterritorialized, stripped of their preceding significations, and then reterritorialized according to the convenience of colonial and imperial administration. Not only was the relative space revolutionized through innovations in transport and communications, but what that space contained was also fundamentally re-ordered. The map of domination of the world's spaces changed out of all recognition between 1850 and 1914. Yet it was possible, given the flow of information and new techniques of representation, to sample a wide range of simultaneous imperial adventures and conflicts with a mere glance at the morning newspaper. And if

that was not enough, the organization of a series of World Exhibitions, beginning with the Crystal Palace in 1851 and passing through several French efforts to the grand Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893, celebrated the fact of globalism while providing a framework within which what Benjamin calls 'the phantasmagoria' of the world of commodities and competition between nation states and territorial production systems might be understood.

So successful was this project of subduing space and rekindling capitalist growth that the economist Alfred Marshall could confidently assert in the 1870s that the influence of time is 'more fundamental than that of space' in economic life (thus consolidating that privileging of time over space in social theory which we have already noted). Yet this transformation also undermined the cogency and meaning of realist fiction and painting. Zola predicted the end of his own genre, as well as that of a self-contained peasantry in France, in *La Terre* when he has the school teacher articulate the idea that the import of cheap American wheat that then appeared imminent was bound to bury locality (its parochial politics and culture) within a flood of internationalist influences. Frank Norris, on the other side of the Atlantic, sensed the same problem in *The octopus* – the wheat farmers of California had to recognize that they were 'merely a part of an enormous whole, a unit in the vast agglomeration of wheat land the world around, feeling the effects of causes thousands of miles distant'. How was it possible, using the narrative structures of realism, to write anything other than a parochialist and hence to some degree 'unrealistic' novel in the face of all this spatial simultaneity? Realist narrative structures assumed, after all, that a story could be told as if it was unfolding coherently, event after event, in time. Such structures were inconsistent with a reality in which two events in quite different spaces occurring at the same time could so intersect as to change how the world worked. Flaubert, the modernist, pioneered a path that Zola, the realist, found it impossible to emulate.

It was in the midst of this rapid phase of time-space compression that the second great wave of modernist innovation in the aesthetic realm began. To what degree, then, can modernism be interpreted as a response to a crisis in the experience of space and time? Kern's (1983) study of *The culture of time and space, 1880–1918* makes such a supposition more than a little plausible.

Kern accepts that 'the telephone, wireless-telegraph, X-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile and airplane established the material foundation for new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space. While he is anxious to maintain the independence of cultural developments, he does argue that 'the interpretation of phenomena such

as class structure, diplomacy, and war tactics in terms of modes of time and space makes possible the demonstration of their essential similarity to explicit considerations of time and space in literature, philosophy, science, and art' (pp.1-5). Lacking any theory of technological innovation, of capitalist dynamics across space, or of cultural production, Kern offers only 'generalizations about the essential the incredible confusions and oppositions across a spectrum of possible reactions to the growing sense of crisis in the experience of time and space, that had been gathering since 1848 and seemed to come to a head just before the First World War. I note in parenthesis that 1910-14 is roughly the period that many historians of modernism (beginning with Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence) point to as crucial in the evolution of modernist thinking (see above p. 28; Bradbury and McFarlane, 1976, 31). Henri Lefebvre agrees:

Around 1910 a certain space was shattered. It was the space of common sense, of knowledge, of social practice, of political power, a space hitherto enshrined in everyday discourse, just as in abstract thought, as the environment of and channel for communication. . . . Euclidean and perspectivist space have disappeared as systems of reference, along with other former 'common places' such as town, history, paternity, the tonal system in music, traditional morality, and so forth. This was a truly crucial moment. (Lefebvre, 1974)

Consider a few aspects of this crucial moment set, significantly enough, between Einstein's special theory of relativity of 1905 and the general theory of 1916. Ford, we recall, set up his assembly line in 1913. He fragmented tasks and distributed them in space so as to maximize efficiency and minimize the friction of flow in production. In effect, he used a certain form of spatial organization to accelerate the turnover time of capital in production. Time could then be accelerated (speed-up) by virtue of the control established through organizing and fragmenting the spatial order of production. In that very same year, however, the first radio signal was beamed around the world from the Eiffel tower, thus emphasizing the capacity to collapse space into the simultaneity of an instant in universal public time. The power of wireless had been clearly demonstrated the year before with the rapid diffusion of news about the sinking of the *Titanic* (itself a symbol of speed and mass motion that came to grief in much the same way that the *Herald of Free Enterprise* was to keel over to speedy disaster some seventy-five years later). Public time

was becoming ever more homogeneous and universal across space. And it was not only commerce and railways, for the organization of large-scale commuting systems and all the other temporal coordinations that made metropolitan life bearable also depended upon establishing some universal and commonly accepted sense of time. The more than 38 billion telephone calls made in the United States in 1914 emphasized the power of intervention of public time and space in daily and private life. Indeed, it was only in terms of such a public sense of time that reference to private time could make sense. De Chirico appropriately celebrated these qualities by conspicuously placing clocks (an unusual gesture in art history) in his paintings of 1910-14 (see plate 3.9).

The reactions pointed in many directions. James Joyce, for one, began his quest to capture the sense of simultaneity in space and time during this period, insisting upon the present as the only real location of experience. He had his action take place in a plurality of spaces, Kern (p. 149) notes, 'in a consciousness that leaps about the universe and mixes here and there in defiance of the ordered diagramming of the cartographers.' Proust, for his part, tried to recover past time and to create a sense of individuality and place that rested on a conception of experience across a space of time. Personal conceptions of time became a matter of public commentary. 'The two most innovative novelists of the period,' Kern continues, 'transformed the stage of modern literature from a series of fixed settings in homogeneous space' (of the sort that realist novelists typically deployed) 'into a multitude of qualitatively different spaces that varied with the shifting moods and perspectives of human consciousness.'

Picasso and Braque, for their part, taking their cue from Cézanne who had begun to break up the space of painting in new ways in the 1880s, experimented with cubism, thus abandoning 'the homogeneous space of linear perspective' that had dominated since the fifteenth century. Delaunay's celebrated work of 1910-11 depicting the Eiffel Tower (plate 3.10) was perhaps the most startling public symbol of a movement that tried to represent time through a fragmentation of space; the protagonists were probably unaware that this paralleled the practices on Ford's assembly line, though the choice of the Eiffel Tower as symbol reflected the fact that the whole movement had something to do with industrialism. It was in 1912, also, that Durkheim's *Elementary forms of the religious life* was published with its explicit recognition that 'the foundation of the category time is the rhythm of social life,' and that the social origin of space likewise necessarily entailed the existence of multiple spatial visions. Ortega y Gasset, following Nietzsche's injunction that 'there is only

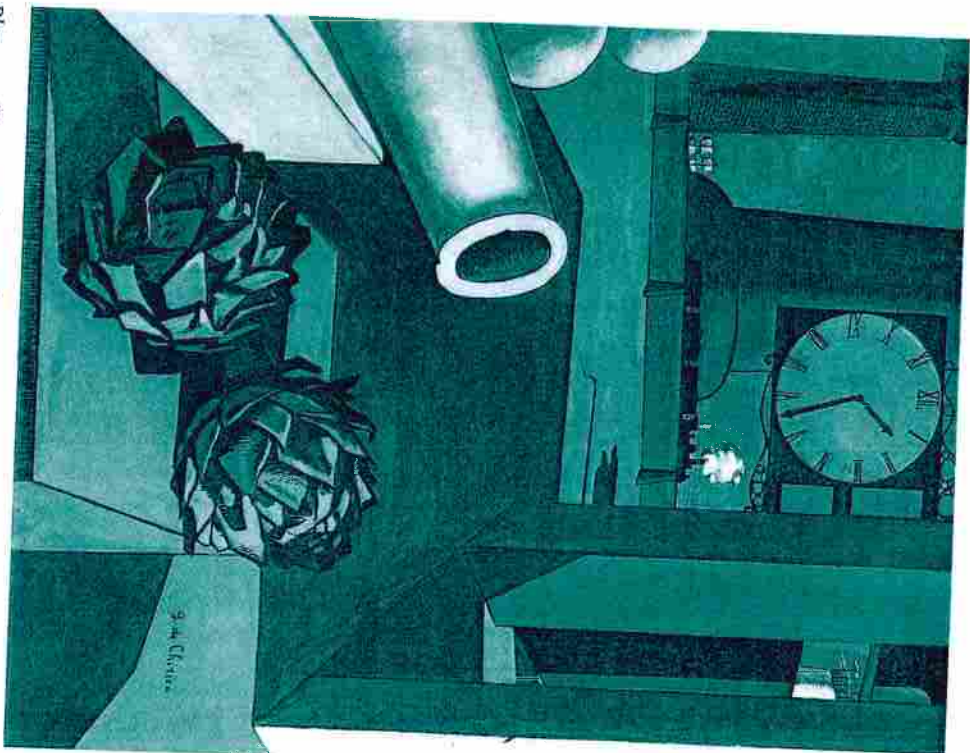


Plate 3.9 De Chirico's *The Philosopher's Conquest* (1914) explores modernist themes of time and space explicitly. (The Art Institute of Chicago, Joseph Winterboehm Collection)

a perspective seeing, *only* a proper perspective knowing,' formulated a new version of the theory of perspectivism in 1910 which insisted that 'there were as many spaces in reality as there were perspectives on it,' and that 'there are as many realities as points of view.' This

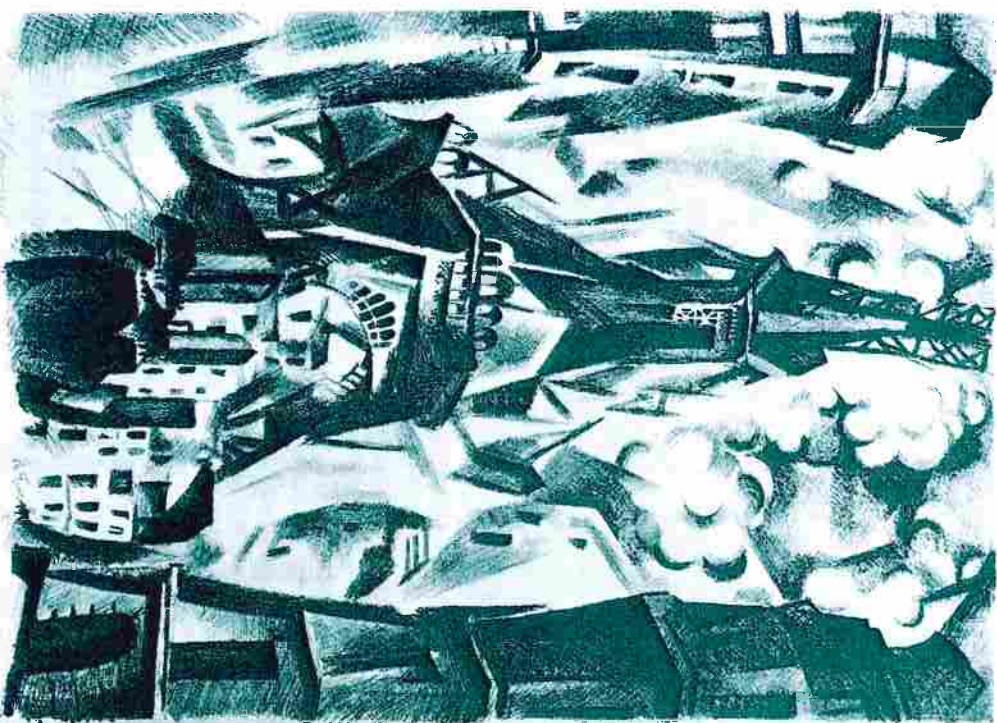


Plate 3.10 Delannay's *Eiffel Tower* (transfer lithograph, 1926), first exhibited in 1911, uses a familiar image of construction to examine the fragmentation and break up of space typical of cubism. (Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase Fund)

put a philosophical nail in the coffin of rationalist ideals of homogeneous and absolute space (Kern, 1983, 150–1).

I have cited just a few of the incidents that Kern records in order to convey a sense of the confusions rampant in social and cultural thought in the period 1910–14. But matters can, I think, be taken a step further, hinging an argument on an idea that Kern launches but makes very little of: 'One response was a growing sense of unity among people formerly isolated in distance and lack of communication. This was not, however, unambiguous, because proximity also generated anxiety — apprehension that the neighbours were seen as getting a bit too close' (p. 88). How was this 'ambiguity' expressed? Two broad and rather distinctive currents of thought can be identified depending upon the emphasis upon unity or difference.

Those who emphasized the unity between peoples also accepted the 'unreality of place' within a fragmented relative space. Celebrating the annihilation of space through time, the task was to re-launch the Enlightenment project of universal human emancipation in a global space bound together through mechanisms of communication and social intervention. Such a project implied, however, spatial fragmentation through planned co-ordination. And how could that be done except through 'pulverizing' pre-existing spaces in some manner? Ford had shown how social processes could be speeded up, and productive forces augmented, by the spatialization of time. The problem was to harness this capacity to human emancipation rather than to some narrow set of interests, such as those of capital. A German group proposed in 1911, for example, the creation of a 'world office' that would 'unify all the humanitarian tendencies that run in parallel but disorderly directions, and bring about a concentration and a promotion of all creative activities' (quoted in Tafari, 1985, 122). It was only in such a context of rationalized and totally organized external and public space, that interior and very private senses of time and space could properly flourish. The space of the body, of consciousness, of the psyche — spaces kept too long repressed, given the absolute suppositions of Enlightenment thought, but now opening up as a consequence of psychological and philosophical findings — could be liberated only through the rational organization of exterior space and time. But rationality now meant something more than planning with the aid of the map and the chronometer, or subjecting all of social life to time and motion study. New senses of relativism and perspectivism could be invented and applied to the production of space and the ordering of time. This kind of reaction, which many were later to dub as exclusively modernist, typically entailed a whole set of accoutrements. Despising

history, it sought entirely new cultural forms that broke with the past and solely spoke the language of the new. Holding that form followed function and that spatial rationality should be imposed on the external world in order to maximize individual liberty and welfare, it took efficiency and function (and hence the image of the metropolis as a well-oiled machine) as its central motif. It had a deep concern for purity of language, no matter whether it was in architecture, music, or literature.

It is an open question, of course, whether this response was a pure bowing down to the force of spatial and temporal restructuring of the period (see above, pp. 28–31). Fernand Léger, the French cubist painter, certainly thought so, observing in 1913 that life was 'more fragmented and faster moving than in previous periods' and that it was essential to devise a dynamic art to depict it (quoted in Kern, 1983, 118). And Gertrude Stein certainly interpreted cultural events, such as the advent of cubism, as a response to the time-space compression to which everyone was exposed and sensitized. This in no way detracts, of course, from the importance of grappling with that experience in the field of representation in such a way as to enhance, support, and perhaps even command the processes that seemed to be escaping from all forms of collective control (as they were indeed set to do in World War I). But it does re-focus our attention on the practical ways in which that might be done. Le Corbusier was, in effect, merely following the Jeffersonian principles of land partition when he argued that the way to individual liberty and freedom lay through the construction of a highly ordered and rationalized space. His project was internationalist, and emphasized the kind of unity in which a socially conscious notion of individual difference could be fully explored.

The other kind of reaction bundled together a host of seemingly divergent responses built, however, around one central principle which I shall later have frequent cause to invoke: that the more unified the space, the more important the qualities of the fragmentations become for social identity and action. The free flow of capital across the surface of the globe, for example, places strong emphasis upon the particular qualities of the spaces to which that capital might be attracted. The shrinkage of space that brings diverse communities across the globe into competition with each other implies localized competitive strategies and a heightened sense of awareness of what makes a place special and gives it a competitive advantage. This kind of reaction looks much more strongly to the identification of place, the building and signalling of its unique qualities in an increasingly homogeneous but fragmented world (see above, pp. 88–92).

We can spot this 'other side' to modernism's explorations in a number of contexts. Foucault's perceptive remark (quoted in Crimp, 1983, 47) that 'Flaubert is to the library what Manet is to the museum' underlines how the innovators of modernism in literature and painting, while in one sense breaking with all past conventions, still had to situate themselves historically and geographically somewhere. Both the library and the museum have the effect of recording the past and depicting geography while breaking with it. The reduction of the past to a representation organized as a display of artefacts (books, paintings, relics, etc.) is just as formalistic as the reduction of geography to a set of displays of things from far-off places. Modernist artists and writers painted for the museums or wrote for the libraries precisely because to work this way allowed them to break with the constraints of their own place and time.

Yet the museum, the library, and the exhibition usually aspire to some kind of coherent ordering. The ideological labour of inventing tradition became of great significance in the late nineteenth century precisely because this was an era when transformations in spatial and temporal practices implied a loss of identity with place and repeated radical breaks with any sense of historical continuity. Historical preservation and the museum culture experienced strong bursts of life from the late nineteenth century on, while the international expositions not only celebrated the world of international commodification but also exhibited the geography of the world as a series of artefacts for all to see. It was out of such a climate that one of the most sensitive of modernist writers, Simmel, could write so persuasively on the significance of ruins. They were, he said, places where 'the past with its destinies and transformations has been gathered into this instant of an aesthetically perceptible present' (quoted in Kern, 1983, 40). Ruins helped ground our shaken identity in a rapidly transforming world. This was also an age when the artefacts of the past or from afar began to trade as valued commodities. The emergence of an active antique and foreign craft market (the latter symbolized by the Japanese prints that Manet inserted into his portrait of Zola, and which to this day adorn Monet's house in Giverny) are indicative of a trend that was consistent, also, with the revival of the craft tradition pushed by William Morris in Britain, by the craftwork movement of Vienna, and in the art nouveau style that swamped France in the early years of the century. Architects like Louis Sullivan in Chicago and Gaudemar in Paris likewise searched for new and local vernacular styles that could satisfy the new functional needs but also celebrate the distinctive qualities of the places they occupied. The identity of place was reaffirmed in the midst of the growing abstractions of space.

This trend to privilege the spatialization of time (Being) over the annihilation of space by time (Becoming) is consistent with much of what postmodernism now articulates; with Lyotard's 'local determinisms', Fish's 'interpretive communities', Frampton's 'regional resistances', and Foucault's 'heterotopias'.⁷ It evidently offers multiple possibilities within which a spatialized 'otherness' can flourish. Modernism, seen as a whole, explored the dialectic of place versus space, of present versus past, in a variety of ways. While celebrating universality and the collapse of spatial barriers, it also explored new meanings for space and place in ways that tacitly reinforced local identity.

By enhancing links between place and the social sense of personal and communal identity, this facet of modernism was bound, to some degree, to entail the aestheticization of local, regional, or national politics. Loyalties to place then take precedence over loyalties to class, spatializing political action. At the end of the process lies the restoration of the Hegelian notion of the state and the resurrection of geopolitics. Marx, of course, had restored historical time (and class relations) to primacy of place in social theory, in part as a reaction to Hegel's spatialized conception of the 'ethical state' as the end-point of a teleological history. The introduction of the state — a spatialization — poses intriguing questions for social theory for as LeFebvre (1974) points out, 'the state crushes time by reducing differences to repetitions of circularities (dubbed "equilibrium", "feedback", "self-regulation", etc.)'.⁸ If 'this modern state imposes itself as the stable centre — definitively — of [national] societies and spaces,' then geopolitical argument has to resort, as has in fact always been the case, to aesthetic rather than to social values in its search for legitimacy.

It is, therefore, a readily understandable paradox that in an age when the annihilation of space through time was proceeding at a furious pace, geopolitics and the aestheticization of politics underwent a strong revival.

Nietzsche captured the essential thrust philosophically in *The will to power*. Nihilism — a condition in which 'the highest values devaluate themselves' — stands at our door as 'the uncanniest of guests.' European culture, he asserts, 'has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect.' The dissolution of 'unalienable landed property, honouring the old (origin of the belief in gods and heroes as ancestors)' in part arises, he suggests (prefiguring Heidegger's arguments exactly, see above pp. 207–9), with the collapse of space: 'newspapers (in place of daily prayers), railway, telegraph.' The consequent 'centralization of a

tremendous number of different interests in a single soul,' means that individuals must now be 'very strong and protean.' It is in such a circumstance that the will to power — 'an attempt at a revolution of all values' — must assert itself as a guiding force in the quest for a new morality:

And do you know what 'the world' is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; ... enclosed by 'nothingness,' as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something end-lessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be 'empty' here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here, and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming, that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my 'beyond good and evil,' without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself — do you want a name for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? — *This world is the will to power — and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power — and nothing besides!

The extraordinary imagery of space and time, of successive waves of compression and implosion, in passages such as this suggests that Nietzsche's powerful intervention in the modernity debate (see above, pp. 15–20) had an experimental basis in the world of late nineteenth-century time-space transformation.

The search for this new morality of power and the charisma of 'very strong and protean' individuals lay at the heart of the new science of geopolitics. Kern pays close attention to the rising signi-

fiance of such theories at the turn of the century. Friedrich Ratzel in Germany, Camille Vallaux in France, Halford Mackinder in Britain, and Admiral Mahan in the United States all recognized the significance of command over space as a fundamental source of military, economic, and political power. Were there, they asked, strategic spaces within the new globalism of trade and politics, the command of which would confer favoured status upon particular peoples? If there was some Darwinian struggle for survival of the different peoples and nations of the earth, then what principles governed that struggle and what would its outcome probably be? Each tilted his answer towards a national interest, and in so doing conceded the right of a particular people to command its own particular place and, if survival, necessity, or moral certitudes impelled it, to expand in the name of 'manifest destiny' (USA), the 'white man's burden' (Britain), the '*mission civilisatrice*' (France) or the need for '*Lebensraum*' (Germany). In Ratzel's case in particular, we find a philosophical predisposition to insist upon a unity between a people and its land as the basis of cultural sophistication and political power, a union that can be dissolved only through violence and dispossession. This union formed the basis of a national culture and civilizing influence, whose sources were radically different from those given by the universalists of Enlightenment thinking or of the confused but universalist modernism that formed the other major current in late nineteenth-century thought.

It would be wrong to consider these two wings of thought — the universalism and the particularism — as separate from each other. They should be regarded, rather, as two currents of sensibility that flowed along side by side, often within the same person, even when one or other sensibility became dominant in a particular place and time. Le Corbusier started his life paying close attention to vernacular styles even while recognizing the importance of rationalizing a homogeneous space in ways proposed by utopian planners. The fascination of cultural movements in Vienna, particularly before World War I, derives, I suspect, precisely from the confused ways in which the two currents I have identified mixed in time, place, and person almost without restraint. The free-flowing sensuality of Klimt, the agonized expressionism of Egon Schiele, the rigorous rejection of ornament and the rational shaping of space of Adolf Loos ... all clinging together in the midst of a crisis of bourgeois culture, caught in its own rigidities but faced with whirlwind shifts in the experience of space and time.

While modernism always ostensibly asserted the values of internationalism and universalism, it could never properly settle its account

with parochialism and nationalism. It either defined itself in opposition to these all too familiar forces (strongly identified, though else it took the elitist and ethnocentric road by presuming that Paris, Berlin, New York, London, or wherever, was indeed the intellectual fount of all representational and aesthetic wisdom. In the latter case, modernism stood to be accused of cultural imperialism in much the same way that abstract expressionism became caught up with national interests in the United States after World War II (see above, pp. 36–8). In putting things this way I am, to some degree, departing from the normal conception of what modernism was supposed to be about. But unless we are prepared to see even its universal aspirations as the outcome of a perpetual dialogue with localism and nationalism, I think we shall miss some of its more important features.

Since this opposition is important, I shall take up one example brilliantly exploited in Carl Schorske's *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*: the contrast between Camillo Sitte's and Otto Wagner's approaches to the production of urban space. Sitte, rooted in the craftworker tradition of late nineteenth-century Vienna, and abhorring the narrow and technical functionalism that seemed to attach to the lust for commercial profit, sought to construct spaces that would make the city's people feel 'secure and happy'. This meant that 'city building must be not just a technical question but an aesthetic one in the highest sense.' He therefore set out to create interior spaces – plazas and squares – that would promote the preservation and even re-creation of a sense of community. He sought to overcome fragmentation and provide a "community life-outlook" for the people as a whole. This deployment of art in the shaping of space to create a real sense of community was, to Sitte, the only possible response to modernity. As Schorske (p. 72) summarizes it: 'In the cold traffic-swept modern city of the slide-rule and the slum, the picturesque comforting square can reawaken memories of the vanished burgher past. This spatially dramatic memory will inspire us to create a better future, free of philistinism and utilitarianism.' To what coherent values could Sitte appeal? Needing a new ideal 'beside and above the real world,' Sitte 'exalted Richard Wagner as the genius who recognized this redemptive, future-oriented work as the special task of the artist. The world that the rootless seeker of science and trade destroyed, leaving the suffering Volk without a vital myth to live by, the artist must create anew' (p. 69).

Sitte's ideas (which parallel those of an anti-modernist like Jane Jacobs, and which are quite popular with urban planners today) can be seen as a specific reaction to commercialization, utilitarian ration-

alism, and the fragmentations and insecurities that typically arise under conditions of time-space compression. They also definitely attempt to spatialize time, but in so doing cannot help but aestheticize politics, in Sitte's case through appeal to the Wagnerian myth and its notion of a rooted community. Sitte was here conceding, however, to a whole set of political, cultural, and spatial practices that sought to reinforce local community solidarity and tradition in the face of the universalism and globalism of money power, commodification, and capital circulation. Kern, for example, reports that 'national festivals in Germany in this period were staged in spaces around national monuments where masses of people could sing and dance.' These were the kinds of spaces that Sitte set out to provide.

What is terrifying about the subsequent history of this sort of spatial practice is the way that so many of the Viennese artisans whom Sitte championed (along with their German counterparts) were later to mass in the squares, piazzas, and living spaces that Sitte wanted to create, in order to express their virulent opposition to internationalism, turning to anti-semitism (attacking the ethnic and religious group most representative of internationalism, of both capital and labour, by virtue of its condition of diaspora) and the place-specific myths of Nazism in opposition to the rational utilitarianism of Enlightenment thought. The dramatic spectacles of the sort the Nazis organized certainly brought space alive and managed to appeal to a deep mythology of place, symbolizing 'community,' but community of a most reactionary sort. Under conditions of mass unemployment, the collapse of spatial barriers, and the subsequent vulnerability of place and community to space and capital, it was all too easy to play upon sentiments of the most fanatical localism and nationalism. I am not even indirectly blaming Sitte or his ideas for this history. But I do think it important to recognize the potential connection between projects to shape space and encourage spatial practices of the sort that Sitte advocated, and political projects that can be at best conserving and at worst downright reactionary in their implications. These were, after all, the sorts of sentiments of place, Being, and community that brought Heidegger into the embrace of national socialism.

Otto Wagner, a contemporary of Sitte's, accepted the universality of modernity with much more *élan*. Building his ideas upon the motto 'necessity is art's only mistress,' he set out to impose order upon chaos, to rationalize the organization of movement on the basis of efficiency, economy, and the facilitation of the pursuit of business. But he too had to appeal to some kind of dominant aesthetic sense in order to surmount the 'painful uncertainty' that arose in a 'fast

moving world of time and motion' (Schorske, 1981, 85). That uncertainty could be overcome only by a clean break with the past, taking to the image of the machine as the ultimate form of efficient rationality, and exploring every nook and cranny of modern techniques and materials, Wagner was, in short, a late nineteenth-century pioneer of the 'heroic' forms of modernism that became fashionable in the 1920s with Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and the like.

These two lines — internationalist and localized — of coping with the phenomena of time-space compression collided violently in the global war of 1914–18. How that war was actually triggered rather than contained is of interest precisely because it illustrates how conditions of time-space compression, in the absence of a proper means for their representation, make national lines of conduct impossible to determine, let alone follow. The new systems of transportation and communication, Kern (1983, 260–1) notes, 'tightened the skin of internationalism and facilitated international co-operation' at the same time as they 'divided nations as they all grabbed for empire and clashed in a series of crises.' It is, he suggests, 'one of the great ironies of the period that a world war became possible only after the world had become so highly united.' Even more disturbing is his account of the July crisis that led into war. In the summer of 1914, 'the men in power lost their bearings in the hectic rush paced by flurries of telegrams, telephone conversations, memos, and press releases; hard-boiled politicians broke down and seasoned negotiators cracked under the pressure of tense confrontations and sleepless nights, agonizing over the probable disastrous consequence of their snap judgements and hasty actions.' Newspapers fed popular anger, swift military mobilizations were set in motion, thus contributing to the frenzy of diplomatic activity that broke down simply because enough decisions could not be made fast enough in enough locations to bring the warlike stresses under collective control. Global war was the result. It seemed, to both Gertrude Stein and Picasso, a *civilist* war and was fought on so many fronts and in so many spaces that the denotation appears reasonable even on a global scale.

It is hard, even in retrospect, to assess the impact of that event on thinking about space and time (see above, pp. 30–1). Some credence must be given to Kern's judgement that 'in four years the belief in evolution, progress, and history itself was wiped out' as the war 'ripped up the historical fabric and cut everyone off from the past suddenly and irretrievably.' The breakdown echoed the stresses of 1848 almost exactly and shook up perceptions of space and time.

Taylor's (1987, 126) account of what happened to the German artist Beckmann is instructive here:

Before the war Beckmann had defended a sensuous, painterly style of rounded volumes and rich gradations of space. . . . Then, in the war itself, his style changed completely. Beckmann is billeted near the front line in some of the fiercest fighting of the war, but continues to draw and paint the harrowing experiences around him with almost compulsive interest. . . . His allegorical style falls away . . . to be replaced by a more shallow, splintered and crowded manner. He writes late in 1914 of the fascinated horror he was developing for 'space, distance, infinity.' By 1915 he speaks of '... this infinite space, the foreground of which one must even fill again with some sort of rubbish, so that one will not see its terrible depth . . . thus to cover up to some extent that dark black hole. . . .' Beckmann then suffered a breakdown after which his art soon took on an almost unimaginably strange dimension . . . quasi-mystical works of transcendent generality which responded to no actual events.

But there was also something quite consistent with the modernist impulse in creating and exploring such a radical break with the past. The advent of the Russian Revolution allowed some, at least, to see rupture as an opportunity for progression and new creation. Unfortunately, the socialist movement itself divided, internalizing the tension between international and national aims (as evidenced by the famous debates of the period between Lenin, Luxemburg, and many others on the national question and the prospects for socialism in one country). The very advent of revolution, however, allowed the overwhelmingly nationalist strains of the Second International to be challenged by a new sense of connection between the aims of modernism and those of socialist revolution and internationalism.

'Heroic' modernism after 1920 can then be interpreted as a dogged fight of the universalist against localist sensibility within the arena of cultural production. The 'heroism' derived from the extraordinary intellectual and artistic attempt to come to terms with and dominate the crisis in the experience of space and time that had built up before the First World War, and to fight off the nationalist and geopolitical sentiments the war expressed. The heroic modernists sought to show how the accelerations, fragmentations, and imploding centralization (particularly in urban life) could be represented and thereby contained

within a singular image. They sought to show how localism and nationalism could be overcome and how some sense of a global project to advance human welfare could be restored. This entailed a definite change of stance with respect to space and time. The shift that occurred in Kandinsky's painting style between 1914 and 1930 is illustrative. Before the war, Kandinsky is painting extraordinary canvases in which violent swirls of brilliant colour seem to implode simultaneously upon the canvas and explode beyond the edges of a frame that seems powerless to contain them. Ten years later we find Kandinsky at the Bauhaus (one of the key centres of modernist thought and practice) painting controlled pictures of spaces neatly organized within a secure frame, in some cases clearly taking the form of diagrammed city plans viewed from a perspective high above the earth (see plates 3.11 and 3.12). If modernism meant, among other things, the subjugation of space to human purposes, then the rational ordering and control of space as part and parcel of a modern culture founded on rationality and technique, the suppression of spatial barriers and difference, had to be merged with some kind of historical project. Picasso's evolution is also instructive. Abandoning cubism after the 'cubist war', he turned to classicism for a brief period after 1919, probably out of some search to rediscover humanist values. But he returns shortly thereafter to his explorations of interior spaces through their total pulverization, only to recoup the destruction in a creative masterpiece, *Guernica*, in which the modernist style is used as a 'flexible instrument for the connection of multiple temporal and spatial viewpoints within the scope of the rhetorically powerful image' (Taylor, 1987, 150).

Enlightenment thinkers had postulated human welfare as their goal. That objective was never far from the surface of the rhetoric of inter-war modernism. The problem was to find practical circumstances and the financial resources to realize such goals. The Russians, obviously attracted to the modernist ethos of a radical break with the past for ideological reasons, provided a space within which a whole set of experiments – Russian formalism and constructivism being by far the most important – could unfold, and out of which came wide-ranging initiatives in cinema, painting, literature, and music as well as architecture. But the breathing space for such experimentation was relatively short, and the resources were hardly munificent, even for those most committed to the cause of the revolution. On the other hand, this connection between socialism and modernism, however slender, placed a cloud over modernism's reputation in the capitalist West, where the turn to surrealism (also with political overtones) did not help matters. In societies where the accumulation of capital –



Plate 3.11 Kandinsky's paintings of the pre-1914 war period, such as the *Jugement Dernier* of 1912, exhibit such an explosive sense of space that they appear to spill off the canvas with an uncontrollable dynamism

that 'historical mission of the bourgeoisie' as Marx called it – remained the effective pivot of action, there was only place for machine-style modernism of the Bauhaus sort.

Modernism's travails were also internal. To begin with, it could never escape the problem of its own aesthetic as a spatialization of sorts. However flexible Otto Wagner's or Le Corbusier's plans were in their capacity to absorb future developments and expansions, they necessarily fixed space in the midst of a historical process that was highly dynamic.

How to contain flowing and expanding processes in a fixed spatial frame of power relations, infrastructures and the like could not easily be resolved. The result was a social system that was all too prone to creative destruction of the sort that unfolded mercilessly after the capitalist crash of 1929. As spatializations, the artefacts produced by the moderns (with exceptions, of course, such as the Dadaists) conveyed some permanent if not monumental sense of supposedly universal human values. But even Le Corbusier recognized that such an

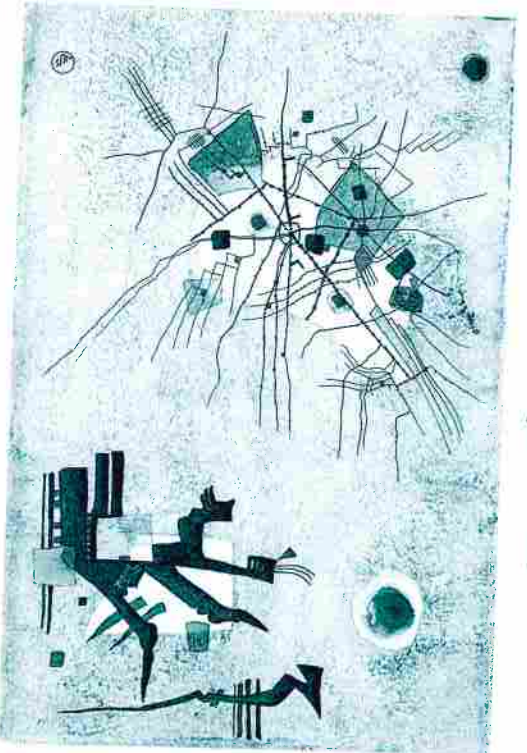


Plate 3.12 After the trauma of World War I, Kandinsky shifts to a much more controlled and rationalized imagery of spatial organization, as in *Les Deux* of 1924 which bears more than a casual resemblance to a stylized urban map.

act had to invoke the power of myth. And here the real tragedy of modernism begins. Because it was not the myths favoured by Le Corbusier or Otto Wagner or Walter Gropius that in the end dominated matters. It was either the worship of Mammon or, worse still, the myths stirred up by an aestheticized politics that called the tune. Le Corbusier flirted with Mussolini and compromised with Pétain's France, Oscar Niemeyer planned Brasilia for a populist president but built it for ruthless generals, the insights of the Bauhaus form followed profit as well as function dominated everywhere. It was, in the end, the aestheticizations of politics and the power of money capital that triumphed over an aesthetic movement that had ponded to rationally. Its insights, tragically, were absorbed for purposes that were not, by and large, its own. The trauma of World War II showed, if further proof were needed, of such a proposition, that it was all too easy for Hegel's spatializations to subvert the Enlightenment's (and Marx's) historical project. Geopolitical and

aesthetic interventions always seem to imply nationalist, and hence unavoidably reactionary, politics.

The opposition between Being and Becoming has been central to modernism's history. That opposition has to be seen in political terms as a tension between the sense of time and the focus of space. After 1848, modernism as a cultural movement struggled with that opposition, often in creative ways. The struggle was warped in all sorts of respects by the overwhelming power of money, profit, capital accumulation, and state power as frames of reference within which all forms of cultural practice had to unfold. Even under conditions of widespread class revolt, the dialectic of Being and Becoming has posed seemingly intractable problems. Above all, the changing meaning of space and time which capitalism has itself wrought, has forced perpetual re-evaluations in representations of the world in cultural life. It was only in an era of speculation on the future and fictitious capital formation that the concept of an avant-garde (both artistic and political) could make any sense. The changing experience of space and time had much to do with the birth of modernism and its confused wanderings from this to that side of the spatial-temporal relation. If this is indeed the case, then the proposition that postmodernism is some kind of response to a new set of experiences of space and time, a new round of 'time-space compression,' is well worth exploring.

Time—space compression and the postmodern condition

How have the uses and meanings of space and time shifted with the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation? I want to suggest that we have been experiencing, these last two decades, an intense phase of time—space compression that has had a disorienting and disruptive impact upon political—economic practices, the balance of class power, as well as upon cultural and social life. While historical analogies are always dangerous, I think it no accident that post-modern sensibility evidences strong sympathies for certain of the confused political, cultural, and philosophical movements that occurred at the beginning of this century (in Vienna for example) when the sense of time—space compression was also peculiarly strong. I also note the revival of interest in geopolitical theory since around 1970, the aesthetics of place, and a revived willingness (even in social theory) to open the problem of spatiality to a general reconsideration (see, e.g., Gregory and Urry, 1985, and Soja, 1988).

The transition to flexible accumulation was in part accomplished through the rapid deployment of new organizational forms and new technologies in production. Though the latter may have originated in the pursuit of military superiority, their application had everything to do with bypassing the rigidities of Fordism and accelerating turnover time as a solution to the grumbling problems of Fordism—Keynesianism that erupted into open crisis in 1973. Speed-up was achieved in production by organizational shifts towards vertical disintegration — sub-contracting, outsourcing, etc. — that reversed the Fordist tendency towards vertical integration and produced an increasing roundaboutness in production even in the face of increasing financial centralization. Other organizational shifts — such as the 'just-in-time' delivery system that reduces stock inventories — when coupled with the new technologies of electronic control, small-batch production, etc., all reduced turnover times in many sectors of pro-

duction (electronics, machine tools, automobiles, construction, clothing, etc.). For the labourers this all implied an intensification (speed-up) in labour processes and an acceleration in the de-skilling and re-skilling required to meet new labour needs (see Part II).

Accelerating turnover time in production entails parallel accelerations in exchange and consumption. Improved systems of communication and information flow, coupled with rationalizations in techniques of distribution (packaging, inventory control, containerization, market feed-back, etc.), made it possible to circulate commodities through the market system with greater speed. Electronic banking and plastic money were some of the innovations that improved the speed of the inverse flow of money. Financial services and markets (aided by computerized trading) likewise speeded up, so as to make, as the saying has it, 'twenty-four hours a very long time' in global stock markets.

Of the many developments in the arena of consumption, two stand out as being of particular importance. The mobilization of fashion in mass (as opposed to elite) markets provided a means to accelerate the pace of consumption not only in clothing, ornament, and decoration but also across a wide swathe of life-styles and recreational activities (leisure and sporting habits, pop music styles, video and children's games, and the like). A second trend was a shift away from the consumption of goods and into the consumption of services — not only personal, business, educational, and health services, but also into entertainments, spectacles, happenings, and distractions. The 'lifetime' of such services (a visit to a museum, going to a rock concert or movie, attending lectures or health clubs), though hard to estimate, is far shorter than that of an automobile or washing machine. If there are limits to the accumulation and turnover of physical goods (even counting the famous six thousand pairs of shoes of Imelda Marcos), then it makes sense for capitalists to turn to the provision of very ephemeral services in consumption. This quest may lie at the root of the rapid capitalist penetration, noted by Mandel and Jameson (see above, p. 63), of many sectors of cultural production from the mid-1960s onwards.

Of the innumerable consequences that have flowed from this general speed-up in the turnover times of capital, I shall focus on those that have particular bearing on postmodern ways of thinking, feeling, and doing.

The first major consequence has been to accentuate volatility and ephemerality of fashions, products, production techniques, labour processes, ideas and ideologies, values and established practices. The sense that 'all that is solid melts into air' has rarely been more

pervasive (which probably accounts for the volume of writing on that theme in recent years). The effect of this on labour markets and skills has already been considered (see Part II). My interest here is to look at the more general society-wide effects.

In the realm of commodity production, the primary effect has been to emphasize the values and virtues of instantaneity (instant and fast foods, meals, and other satisfactions) and of disposability (cups, plates, cutlery, packaging, napkins, clothing, etc.). The dynamics of a 'throwaway' society, as writers like Alvin Toffler (1970) dubbed it, began to become evident during the 1960s. It meant more than just throwing away produced goods (creating a monumental waste-disposal problem), but also being able to throw away values, lifestyles, stable relationships, and attachments to things, buildings, places, people, and received ways of doing and being. These were the immediate and tangible ways in which the 'accelerative thrust in the larger society' crashed up against 'the ordinary daily experience of the individual' (Toffler, p. 40). Through such mechanisms (which proved highly effective from the standpoint of accelerating the turnover of goods in consumption) individuals were forced to cope with 'disposability, novelty, and the prospects for instant obsolescence. Compared to the life in a less rapidly changing society, more situations now flow through the channel in any given interval of time — and this implies profound changes in human psychology.' This transience, Toffler goes on to suggest, creates 'a temporariness in the structure of both public and personal value systems' which in turn provides a context for the 'crack-up of consensus' and the diversification of values within a fragmenting society. The bombardment of stimuli, simply on the commodity front, creates problems of sensory overload that makes Simmel's dissection of the problems of modernist urban living at the turn of the century seem to pale into insignificance by comparison. Yet, precisely because of the relative qualities of the shift, the psychological responses exist roughly within the range of those which Simmel identified — the blocking out of sensory stimuli, denial, and cultivation of the blasé attitude, myopic specialization, reversion to images of a lost past (hence the importance of mementoes, museums, ruins), and excessive simplification (either in the presentation of self or in the interpretation of events). In this regard, it is instructive to see how Toffler (pp. 326–9), at a much later moment of time—space compression, echoes the thinking of Simmel, whose ideas were shaped at a moment of similar trauma more than seventy years before.

The volatility, of course, makes it extremely difficult to engage in any long-term planning. Indeed, learning to play the volatility right

is now just as important as accelerating turnover time. This means either being highly adaptable and fast-moving in response to market shifts, or mastering the volatility. The first strategy points mainly towards short-term rather than long-term planning, and cultivating the art of taking short-term gains wherever they are to be had. This has been a notorious feature of US management in recent times. The average tenure of company executive officers has come down to five years, and companies nominally involved in production frequently seek short-term gains through mergers, acquisitions, or operations in financial and currency markets. The tension of managerial performance in such an environment is considerable, producing all kinds of side-effects, such as the so-called 'yuppie flu' (a psychological stress condition that paralyzes the performance of talented people and produces long-lasting flu-like symptoms) or the frenzied life-style of financial operators whose addiction to work, long hours, and the rush of power makes them excellent candidates for the kind of schizophrenic mentality that Jameson depicts.

Mastering or intervening actively in the production of volatility, on the other hand, entails manipulation of taste and opinion, either through being a fashion leader or by so saturating the market with images as to shape the volatility to particular ends. This means, in either case, the construction of new sign systems and imagery, which is itself an important aspect of the postmodern condition — one that needs to be considered from several different angles. To begin with, advertising and media images (as we saw in Part I) have come to play a very much more integrative role in cultural practices and now assume a much greater importance in the growth dynamics of capitalism. Advertising, moreover, is no longer built around the idea of informing or promoting in the ordinary sense, but is increasingly geared to manipulating desires and tastes through images that may or may not have anything to do with the product to be sold (see plate 1.6). If we stripped modern advertising of direct reference to the three themes of money, sex, and power there would be very little left. Furthermore, images have, in a sense, themselves become commodities. This phenomenon has led Baudrillard (1981) to argue that Marx's analysis of commodity production is outdated because capitalism is now predominantly concerned with the production of signs, images, and sign systems rather than with commodities themselves. The transition he points to is important, though there are in fact no serious difficulties in extending Marx's theory of commodity production to cope with it. To be sure, the systems of production and marketing of images (like markets for land, public goods, or labour power) do exhibit some special features that need to be taken into

account. The consumer turnover time of certain images can be very short indeed (close to that ideal of the 'twinkling of an eye' that Marx saw as optimal from the standpoint of capital circulation). Many images can also be mass-marketed instantaneously over space. Given the pressures to accelerate turnover time (and to overcome spatial barriers), the commodification of images of the most ephemeral sort would seem to be a godsend from the standpoint of capital accumulation, particularly when other paths to relieve over-accumulation seem blocked. Ephemerality and instantaneous communicability over space then become virtues to be explored and appropriated by capitalists for their own purposes.

But images have to perform other functions. Corporations, governments, political and intellectual leaders, all value a stable (though dynamic) image as part of their aura of authority and power. The mediatization of politics has now become all pervasive. This becomes, in effect, the fleeting, superficial, and illusory means whereby an individualistic society of transients sets forth its nostalgia for common values. The production and marketing of such images of permanence and power require considerable sophistication, because the continuity and stability of the image have to be retained while stressing the adaptability, flexibility, and dynamism of whoever or whatever is being imaged. Moreover, image becomes all-important in competition, not only through name-brand recognition but also because of various associations of 'respectability,' 'quality,' 'prestige,' 'reliability,' and 'innovation.' Competition in the image-building trade becomes a vital aspect of inter-firm competition. Success is so plainly profitable that investment in image-building (sponsoring the arts, exhibitions, television productions, new buildings, as well as direct marketing) becomes as important as investment in new plant and machinery. The image serves to establish an identity in the market place. This is also true in labour markets. The acquisition of an image (by the purchase of a sign system such as designer clothes and the right car) becomes a singularly important element in the presentation of self in labour markets and, by extension, becomes integral to the quest for individual identity, self-realization, and meaning. Amusing yet sad imitation car telephones, indistinguishable from the real ones, and they sell like hot cakes to a populace desperate to acquire such a symbol of importance. Personal image consultants have become big business in New York City, the *International Herald Tribune* has reported, as a million or so people a year in the city region sign up for courses with firms called Image Assemblers, Image Builders, Image Crafters, and Image Creators. People make up their minds

about you in around one tenth of a second these days,' says one image consultant. 'Fake it till you make it,' is the slogan of another. It has always been the case, of course, that symbols of wealth, status, fame, and power as well as of class have been important in bourgeois society, but probably nowhere near as widely in the past as now. The increasing material affluence generated during the post-war Fordist boom posed the problem of converting rising incomes into an effective demand that satisfied the rising aspirations of youth, women, and the working class. Given the ability to produce images as commodities more or less at will, it becomes feasible for accumulation to proceed at least in part on the basis of pure image production and marketing. The ephemerality of such images can then be interpreted in part as a struggle on the part of the oppressed groups of whatever sort to establish their own identity (in terms of street culture, musical styles, fads and fashions made up for themselves) and the rush to convert those innovations to commercial advantage (Carnaby Street in the late 1960s proved an excellent pioneer). The effect is to make it seem as if we are living in a world of ephemeral created images. The psychological impacts of sensory overload, of the sort that Simmel and Toffler identify, are thereby put to work with a redoubled effect.

The materials to produce and reproduce such images, if they were not readily to hand, have themselves been the focus for innovation — the better the replication of the image, the greater the mass market for image making could become. This is in itself an important issue and it brings us more explicitly to consider the role of the 'simulacrum' in postmodernism. By 'simulacrum' is meant a state of such near perfect replication that the difference between the original and the copy becomes almost impossible to spot. The production of images as simulacra is relatively easy, given modern techniques. Insofar as identity is increasingly dependent upon images, this means that the serial and recursive replications of identities (individual, corporate, institutional, and political) becomes a very real possibility and problem. We can certainly see it at work in the realm of politics as the image makers and the media assume a more powerful role in the shaping of political identities. But there are many more tangible realms where the simulacrum has a heightened role. With modern building materials it is possible to replicate ancient buildings with such exactitude that authenticity or origins can be put into doubt. The manufacture of antiques and other art objects becomes entirely possible, making the high-class forgery a serious problem in the art collection business. We not only possess, therefore, the capacity to pile images from the past or from other places eclectically and

simultaneously upon the television screen, but even to transform those images into material simulacra in the form of built environments, events and spectacles, and the like, which become in many respects indistinguishable from the originals. What happens to cultural forms when the imitations become real, and the real takes on many of the qualities of an imitation, is a question to which we shall return.

The organization and conditions of labour prevailing within what we might broadly refer to as the 'image production industry' are also quite special. An industry of this sort has to rely, after all, upon the innovative powers of the direct producers. The latter have an insecure existence, tempered by very high rewards for the successful and at least a semblance of command over their own labour process and creative powers. The growth of cultural output has in fact been phenomenal. Taylor (1987, 77) contrasts the art market condition in New York in 1945, when there were a handful of galleries and no more than a score of artists regularly exhibiting, and the two thousand or so artists who practised in or around Paris in the mid-nineteenth century, with the 150,000 artists in the New York region who claim professional status, exhibiting at some 680 galleries, producing more than 15 million art-works in a decade (compared to 200,000 in late nineteenth-century Paris). And this is only the tip of an iceberg of cultural production that encompasses local entertainers and graphic designers, street and pub musicians, photographers, as well as the more established and recognized schools for teaching art, music, drama, and the like. Dwarfing all of this, however, is what Daniel Bell (1978, 20) calls 'the cultural mass' defined as:

not the creators of culture but the transmitters: those working in higher education, publishing, magazines, broadcast media, theater, and museums, who process and influence the reception of serious cultural products. It is in itself large enough to be a market for culture, purchase books, prints and serious music recordings. And it is also the group which, as writers, magazine editors, movie-makers, musicians, and so forth, produce the popular materials for the wider mass-culture audience.

This whole industry specializes in the acceleration of turnover time through the production and marketing of images. This is an industry where reputations are made and lost overnight, where big money talks in no uncertain terms, and where there is a ferment of intense, often individualized, creativity poured into the vast vat of serialized and recursive mass culture. It is the organizer of fads and

fashions and, as such, it actively produces the very ephemerality that has always been fundamental to the experience of modernity. It becomes a social means to produce that sense of collapsing time horizons which it in turn so avidly feeds upon.

The popularity of a work like Alvin Toffler's *Future shock* lay precisely in its prescient appreciation of the speed with which the future has come to be discounted into the present. Out of that, also, comes a collapse of cultural distinctions between, say, 'science' and 'regulat' fction (in the works of, for example, Thomas Pynchon and Doris Lessing), as well as a merging of the cinema of distraction with the cinema of futuristic universes. We can link the schizophrenic dimension to postmodernity which Jameson emphasizes (above, pp. 53-5) with accelerations in turnover times in production, exchange, and consumption that produce, as it were, the loss of a sense of the future except and insofar as the future can be discounted into the present. Volatility and ephemerality similarly make it hard to maintain any firm sense of continuity. Past experience gets compressed into some overwhelming present. Italo Calvino (1981, 8) reports the effect on his own craft of novel writing this way:

long novels written today are perhaps a contradiction: the dimension of time had been shattered, we cannot live or think except in fragments of time each of which goes off along its own trajectory and immediately disappears. We can rediscover the continuity of time only in the novels of that period when time no longer seemed stopped and did not yet seem to have exploded, a period that lasted no more than a hundred years.

Baudrillard (1986), never afraid to exaggerate, considers the United States as a society so given over to speed, motion, cinematic images, and technological fixes as to have created a crisis of explanatory logic. It represents, he suggests, 'the triumph of effect over cause, of instantaneity over time as depth, the triumph of surface and of pure objectivization over the depth of desire.' This, of course, is the kind of environment in which deconstructionism can flourish. If it is impossible to say anything of solidity and permanence in the midst of this ephemeral and fragmented world, then why not join in the [language] game? Everything, from novel writing and philosophizing to the experience of labouring or making a home, has to face the challenge of accelerating turnover time and the rapid write-off of traditional and historically acquired values. The temporary contract in everything, as Lyotard remarks (see above, p. 113), then becomes the hallmark of postmodern living.

But, as so often happens, the plunge into the maelstrom of ephemerality has provoked an explosion of opposed sentiments and tendencies. To begin with, all sorts of technical means arise to guard against future shocks. Firms sub-contract or resort to flexible hiring practices to discount the potential unemployment costs of future market shifts. Futures markets in everything, from corn and pork bellies to currencies and government debt, coupled with the 'securitization' of all kinds of temporary and floating debts, illustrate techniques for discounting the future into the present. Insurance hedges of all kinds against future volatility become much more widely available.

Deeper questions of meaning and interpretation also arise. The greater the ephemerality, the more pressing the need to discover or manufacture some kind of eternal truth that might lie therein. The religious revival that has become much stronger since the late sixties, and the search for authenticity and authority in politics (with all of its accoutrements of nationalism and localism and of admiration for those charismatic and 'protean' individuals with their Nietzschean institutions (such as the family and community), and the search for historical roots are all signs of a search for more secure moorings and longer-lasting values in a shifting world. Roachberg-Halton (1986, 173), in a sample study of North Chicago residents in 1977, finds, for example, that the objects actually valued in the home were not the 'pecuniary trophies' of a materialist culture which acted as 'reliable indices of one's socio-economic class, age, gender and so on,' but the artefacts that embodied 'ties to loved ones and kin, valued experiences and activities, and memories of significant life events and people.' Photographs, particular objects (like a piano, a clock, a chair), and events (the playing of a record of a piece of music, the singing of a song) become the focus of a contemplative memory, and hence a generator of a sense of self that lies outside the sensory overloading of consumerist culture and fashion. The home becomes a private museum to guard against the ravages of time—space compression. At the very time, furthermore, that postmodernism proclaims the 'death of the author' and the rise of anti-auteur art in the public realm, the art market becomes ever more conscious of the monopoly power of the artist's signature and of questions of the authenticity and forgery (no matter that the Rauschenberg is itself a postmodernist developer montage). It is, perhaps, appropriate that the Philip Johnson's AT & T building, as solid as the pink granite of the basis of fictitious capital, and architecturally conceived of, at least on the outside, more in the spirit of fiction than of function.

The spatial adjustments have been no less traumatic. The satellite communications systems deployed since the early 1970s have rendered the unit cost and time of communication invariant with respect to distance. It costs the same to communicate over 500 miles as it does over 5,000 via satellite. Air freight rates on commodities have likewise come down dramatically, while containerization has reduced the cost of bulk sea and road transport. It is now possible for a large multinational corporation like Texas Instruments to operate plants with simultaneous decision-making with respect to financial, market, input costs, quality control, and labour process conditions in more than fifty different locations across the globe (Dicken, 1986, 110–13). Mass television ownership coupled with satellite communication makes it possible to experience a rush of images from different spaces almost simultaneously, collapsing the world's spaces into a series of images on a television screen. The whole world can watch the Olympic Games, the World Cup, the fall of a dictator, a political summit, a deadly tragedy... while mass tourism, films made in spectacular locations, make a wide range of simulated or vicarious experiences of what the world contains available to many people. The image of places and spaces becomes as open to production and ephemeral use as any other.

We have, in short, witnessed another fierce round in that process of annihilation of space through time that has always lain at the center of capitalism's dynamic (see plate 3.2). Marshall McLuhan described how he thought the 'global village' had now become a communications reality in the mid-1960s:

After three thousand years of explosion, by means of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, the Western World is imploding. During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today, after more than a century of electronic technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.

In recent years a whole spate of writing has taken this idea on board and tried to explore, as for example Virilio (1980) does in his *Eschêtiqûe de la disparition*, the cultural consequences of the supposed disappearance of time and space as materialized and tangible dimensions to social life.

But the collapse of spatial barriers does not mean that the significance of space is decreasing. Not for the first time in capitalism's history, we find the evidence pointing to the converse thesis. Heightened competition under conditions of crisis has coerced capitalists

into paying much closer attention to relative locational advantages, precisely because diminishing spatial barriers give capitalists the power to exploit minute spatial differentiations to good effect. Small differences in what the space contains in the way of labour supplies, resources, infrastructures, and the like become of increased significance. Superior command over space becomes an even more important weapon in class struggle. It becomes one of the means to enforce speed-up and the redefinition of skills on recalcitrant work forces. Geographical mobility and decentralization are used against a union power which traditionally concentrated in the factories of mass production. Capital flight, deindustrialization of some regions, and the industrialization of others, the destruction of traditional working-class communities as power bases in class struggle, become leitmotifs of spatial transformation under more flexible conditions of accumulation (Martin and Rowthorn, 1986; Bluestone and Harrison, 1982; Harrison and Bluestone, 1988).

As spatial barriers diminish so we become much more sensitized to what the world's spaces contain. Flexible accumulation typically exploits a wide range of seemingly contingent geographical circumstances, and reconstitutes them as structured internal elements of its own encompassing logic. For example, geographical differentiations in the mode and strengths of labour control together with variations in the quality as well as the quantity of labour power assume a much greater significance in corporate locational strategies. New industrial ensembles arise, sometimes out of almost nothing (as the various silicon valleys and glens) but more often on the basis of some pre-existing mix of skills and resources. The 'Third Italy' (Emilia-Romagna) builds upon a peculiar mix of co-operative entrepreneurialism, artisan labour, and local communist administrations anxious to generate employment, and inserts its clothing products with incredible success into a highly competitive world economy. Flanders attracts outside capital on the basis of a dispersed, flexible, and reasonably skilled labour supply with a deep hostility to unionism and socialism. Los Angeles imports the highly successful patriarchal labour systems of South-East Asia through mass immigration, while the celebrated paternalistic labour control system of the Japanese and Taiwanese is imported into California and South Wales. The story in each case is different, making it appear as if the uniqueness of this or that geographical circumstance matters more than ever before. Yet it does so, ironically, only because of the collapse of spatial barriers.

While labour control is always central, there are many other aspects of geographical organization that have risen to a new prominence under conditions of more flexible accumulation. The need for accurate information and speedy communication has emphasized the role

of so-called 'world cities' in the financial and corporate system (centres equipped with teleports, airports, fixed communication links, as well as a wide array of financial, legal, business, and infrastructural services). The diminution of spatial barriers results in the reaffirmation and realignment of hierarchy within what is now a global urban system. The local availability of material resources of special qualities, or even at marginally lower costs, starts to be ever more important, as do local variations in market taste that are today more easily exploited under conditions of small-batch production and flexible design. Local differences in entrepreneurial ability, venture capital, scientific and technical know-how, social attitudes, also enter in, while the local networks of influence and power, the accumulation strategies of local ruling elites (as opposed to nation state policies) also become more deeply implicated in the regime of flexible accumulation.

But this then raises another dimension to the changing role of spatiality in contemporary society. If capitalists become increasingly sensitive to the spatially differentiated qualities of which the world's geography is composed, then it is possible for the peoples and powers that command those spaces to alter them in such a way as to be more rather than less attractive to highly mobile capital. Local ruling elites can, for example, implement strategies of local labour control, of skill enhancement, of infrastructural provision, of tax policy, state regulation, and so on, in order to attract development within their particular space. The qualities of place stand thereby to be emphasized in the midst of the increasing abstractions of space. The active production of places with special qualities becomes an important stake in spatial competition between localities, cities, regions, and nations. Corporatist forms of governance can flourish in such spaces, and themselves take on entrepreneurial roles in the production of favourable business climates and other special qualities. And it is in this context that we can better situate the striving, noted in Part I (pp. 88–92), for cities to forge a distinctive image and to create an atmosphere of place and tradition that will act as a lure to both capital and people 'of the right sort' (i.e. wealthy and influential). Heightened inter-place competition should lead to the production of more variegated spaces within the increasing homogeneity of international exchange. But to the degree that this competition opens up cities to systems of accumulation, it ends up producing what Boyer (1988) calls a 'recursive' and 'serial' monotony, 'producing from already known patterns or molds places almost identical in ambience from city to city: New York's South Street Seaport, Boston's Quincy Market, Baltimore's Harbor Place.'

We thus approach the central paradox: the less important the

spatial barriers, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the variations of place within space, and the greater the incentive for places to be differentiated in ways attractive to capital. The result has been the production of fragmentation, insecurity, and ephemeral uneven development within a highly unified global space economy of capital flows. The historic tension within capitalism between centralization and decentralization is now being worked out in new ways. Extraordinary decentralization and proliferation of industrial production ends up putting Benetton or Laura Ashley products in almost every serially produced shopping mall in the advanced capitalist world. Plainly, the new round of time-space compression is fraught with as many dangers as it offers possibilities for survival of particular places or for a solution to the overaccumulation problem.

The geography of devaluation through deindustrialization, rising local unemployment, fiscal retrenchment, write-offs of local assets, and the like, is indeed a sorry picture. But we can at least see its logic within the frame of the search for a solution to the overaccumulation problem through the push into flexible and more mobile systems of accumulation. But there are also a priori reasons to suspect (as well as some material evidence to support the idea) that regions of maximum churning and fragmentation are also regions that seem best set to survive the traumas of devaluation in the long run. There is more than a hint that a little devaluation now is better than massive devaluation later in the scramble for local survival in the world of severely constrained opportunities for positive growth. Reindustrializing and restructuring cannot be accomplished without deindustrializing and devaluing first.

None of these shifts in the experience of space and time would make the sense or have the impact they do without a radical shift in the manner in which value gets represented as money. Though long dominant, money has never been a clear or unambiguous representation of value, and on occasion it becomes so muddled as to become itself a major source of insecurity and uncertainty. Under the terms of the postwar settlement, the question of world money was put on a fairly stable basis. The US dollar became the medium of world trade, technically backed by a fixed convertibility into gold, and backed politically and economically by the overwhelming power of the US productive apparatus. The space of the US production system became, in effect, the guarantor of international value. But, as we have seen, one of the signals of the breakdown of the Fordist-Keynesian system was the breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreement, of convertibility of US dollars to gold, and the shift to a global system of floating exchange rates. The breakdown in part occurred

because of the shifting dimensionalities of space and time generated out of capital accumulation. Rising indebtedness (particularly within the United States), and fiercer international competition from the reconstructed spaces of the world economy under conditions of growing accumulation, had much to do with undermining the power of the US economy to operate as an exclusive guarantor of world money.

The effects have been legion. The question of how value should now get represented, what form money should take, and the meaning that can be put upon the various forms of money available to us, has never been far from the surface of recent concerns. Since 1973, money has been 'de-materialized' in the sense that it no longer has a formal or tangible link to precious metals (though the latter have continued to play a role as one potential form of money among many others), or for that matter to any other tangible commodity. Nor does it rely exclusively upon productive activity within a particular space. The world has come to rely, for the first time in its history, upon immaterial forms of money — i.e. money of account assessed quantitatively in numbers of some designated currency (dollars, yen, Deutsch Marks, sterling, etc.). Exchange rates between the different currencies of the world have also been extremely volatile. Fortunes could be lost or made simply by holding the right currency during the right phases. The question of which currency I hold is directly linked to which place I put my faith in. That may have something to do with the competitive economic position and power of different national systems. That power, given the flexibility of accumulation over space, is itself a rapidly shifting magnitude. The effect is to render the spaces that underpin the determination of value as unstable as value itself. This problem is compounded by the way that speculative shifts bypass actual economic power and performance, and then trigger self-fulfilling expectations. The de-linking of the financial system from active production and from any material monetary base calls into question the reliability of the basic mechanism whereby value is supposed to be represented.

These difficulties have been most powerfully present in the process of devaluation of money, the measure of value, through inflation. The steady inflation rates of the Fordist-Keynesian era (usually in the 3 per cent range, and rarely above 5 per cent) gave way from 1969 onwards, and then accelerated in all the major capitalist countries during the 1970s into double-digit rates (see figure 2.8). Worse still, inflation became highly unstable, between as well as within countries, leaving everyone in doubt as to what the true value (the buying power) of a particular money might be in the near future.

Money consequently became useless as a means of storing value for any length of time (the real rate of interest, measured as the money rate of interest minus the rate of inflation, was negative for several years during the 1970s, so dispossessing savers of the value they were seeking to store). Alternative means had to be found to store value effectively. And so began the vast inflation in certain kinds of asset prices — collectibles, art objects, antiques, houses, and the like. Buying a Degas or Van Gogh in 1973 would surely outstrip almost any other kind of investment in terms of capital gain. Indeed it can be argued that the growth of the art market (with its concern for authorial signature) and the strong commercialization of cultural production since around 1970 have had a lot to do with the search to find alternative means to store value under conditions where the usual money forms were deficient. Commodity and general price inflation, though to some degree brought under control in the advanced capitalist countries during the 1980s, has by no means diminished as a problem. It is rampant in countries like Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Israel (all with recent rates in hundreds of per cent), and the prospect of generalized inflation looms in the advanced capitalist countries, where it is in any case arguable that the inflation of asset prices (housing, works of art, antiques, etc.) has taken over where commodity and labour market inflation left off in the early 1980s.

The breakdown of money as a secure means of representing value has itself created a crisis of representation in advanced capitalism. It has also been reinforced by, and added its very considerable weight to, the problems of time-space compression which we earlier identified. The rapidity with which currency markets fluctuate across the world's spaces, the extraordinary power of money capital flow in what is now a global stock and financial market, and the volatility of what the purchasing power of money might represent, define, as it were, a high point of that highly problematic intersection of money, time, and space as interlocking elements of social power in the political economy of postmodernity.

It is, furthermore, not hard to see how all of this might create a more general crisis of representation. The central value system, to which capitalism has always appealed to validate and gauge its actions, is dematerialized and shifting, time horizons are collapsing, and it is hard to tell exactly what space we are in when it comes to assessing causes and effects, meanings or values. The intriguing exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in 1985 on 'The Immaterial' (an exhibition for which none other than Lyotard acted as one of the consultants) was perhaps a mirror image of the dissolution of the material repre-

sentations of value under conditions of more flexible accumulation, and of the confusions as to what it might mean to say, with Paul Virilio, that time and space have disappeared as meaningful dimensions to human thought and action.

There are, I would submit, more tangible and material ways than this to go about assessing the significance of space and time for the condition of postmodernity. It should be possible to consider how, for example, the changing experience of space, time, and money has formed a distinctive material basis for the rise of distinctive systems of interpretation and representation, as well as opening a path through which the aestheticization of politics might once more reassert itself. If we view culture as that complex of signs and significations (including language) that mesh into codes of transmission of social values and meanings, then we can at least begin upon the task of unravelling its complexities under present-day conditions by recognizing that money and commodities are themselves the primary bearers of cultural codes. Since money and commodities are entirely bound up with the circulation of capital, it follows that cultural forms are firmly rooted in the daily circulation process of capital. It is, therefore, with the daily experience of money and the commodity that we should begin, no matter if special commodities or even whole sign systems may be extracted from the common herd and made the basis of 'high' culture or that specialized 'imaging' which we have already had cause to comment upon.

The annihilation of space through time has radically changed the commodity mix that enters into daily reproduction. Innumerable local food systems have been reorganized through their incorporation into global commodity exchange. French cheeses, for example, virtually unavailable except in a few gourmet stores in large cities in 1970, are now widely sold across the United States. And if this is thought a somewhat elite example, the case of beer consumption suggests that the internationalization of a product, that traditional location theory always taught should be highly market-oriented, is now complete. Baltimore was essentially a one-beer town (locally brewed) in 1970, but first the regional beers from places like Milwaukee and Denver, and then Canadian and Mexican beers followed by European, Australian, Chinese, Polish, etc. beers became cheaper. Formerly exotic foods became commonplace while popular local delicacies (in the Baltimore case, blue crabs and oysters) that were once relatively inexpensive jumped in price as they too became integrated into long-distance trading.

The market place has always been an 'emporium of styles' (to quote Raban's phrase) but the food market, just to take one example,

now looks very different from what it was twenty years ago. Kenyan haricot beans, Californian celery and avocados, North African potatoes, Canadian apples, and Chilean grapes all sit side by side in a British supermarket. This variety also makes for a proliferation of culinary styles, even among the relatively poor. Such styles have always migrated, of course, usually following the migration streams of different groups before diffusing slowly through urban cultures. The new waves of immigrants (such as the Vietnamese, Koreans, Filipinos, Central Americans, etc. that have added to the older groups of Japanese, Chinese, Chicanos, and all the European ethnic groups that have also found their culinary heritage can be revived for fun and profit) make a typical United States city such as New York, Los Angeles, or San Francisco (where the last census showed the majority of the population to be made up of minorities) as much an emporium of culinary styles as it is an emporium of the world's commodities. But here, too, there has been an acceleration, because culinary styles have moved faster than the immigration streams. It did not take a large French immigration to the United States to send the croissant rapidly spreading across America to challenge the traditional doughnut, nor did it take a large immigration of Americans to Europe to bring fast-food hamburgers to nearly all medium-sized European cities. Chinese takeaways, Italian pizza-parlours (run by a US chain), Middle Eastern *felafel* stalls, Japanese sushi bars ... the list is now endless in the Western world.

The whole world's cuisine is now assembled in one place in almost exactly the same way that the world's geographical complexity is nightly reduced to a series of images on a static television screen. This same phenomenon is exploited in entertainment palaces like Epcot and Disneyworld; it becomes possible, as the US commercials put it, 'to experience the Old World for a day without actually having to go there.' The general implication is that through the experience of everything from food, to culinary habits, music, television, entertainment, and cinema, it is now possible to experience the world's geography vicariously, as a simulacrum. The intertwaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. But it does so in such a way as to conceal almost perfectly any trace of origin, of the labour processes that produced them, or of the social relations implicated in their production.

The simulacra can in turn become the reality. Baudrillard (1986) in *L'Amérique* even goes so far, somewhat exaggeratedly in my view, to suggest that US reality is now constructed as a giant screen: 'the cinema is everywhere, most of all in the city, incessant and marvellous

film and scenario.' Places portrayed in a certain way, particularly if they have the capacity to attract tourists, may begin to 'dress themselves up' as the fantasy images prescribe. Mediaeval castles offer mediaeval weekends (food, dress, but not of course the primitive heating arrangements). Vicarious participation in these various worlds has real effects on the ways in which these worlds get ordered. Jencks (1984, 127) proposes that the architect should be an active participant in this:

Any middle class urbanite in any large city from Tehran to Tokyo is bound to have a well-stocked, indeed over-stocked 'image bank' that is continually restuffed by travel and magazines. His *musée imaginaire* may mirror the pot-pourri of the producers but it is nonetheless natural to his way of life. Barring some kind of totalitarian reduction in the heterogeneity of production and consumption, it seems to be desirable that architects learn to use this inevitable heterogeneity of languages. Besides, it is quite enjoyable. Why, if one can afford to live in different ages and cultures, restrict oneself to the present, the locale? Eclecticism is the natural evolution of a culture with choice.

Much the same can be said of popular music styles. Commenting on how collage and eclecticism have recently come to dominate, Chambers (1987) goes on to show how oppositional and subcultural musics like reggae, Afro-American and Afro-Hispanic have taken their place 'in the museum of fixed symbolic structures' to form a flexible collage of 'the already seen, the already worn, the already played, the already heard.' A strong sense of 'the Other' is replaced, he suggests, by a weak sense of 'the others.' The loose hanging together of divergent street cultures in the fragmented spaces of the contemporary city re-emphasizes the contingent and accidental aspects of this 'otherness' in daily life. This same sensibility exists in postmodern fiction. It is, says McHale (1987), concerned with 'ontologies,' with a potential as well as an actual plurality of universes, forming an eclectic and 'anarchic landscape of worlds in the plural.' Dazed and distracted characters wander through these worlds without a clear sense of location, wondering, 'Which world am I in and which of my personalities do I deploy?' Our postmodern ontological landscape, suggests McHale, 'is unprecedented in human history — at least in the degree of its pluralism.' Spaces of very different worlds seem to collapse upon each other, much as the world's commodities are assembled in the supermarket and all manner of

sub-cultures get juxtaposed in the contemporary city. Disruptive spatiality triumphs over the coherence of perspective and narrative in postmodern fiction, in exactly the same way that imported beers coexist with local brews, local employment collapses under the weight of foreign competition, and all the divergent spaces of the world are assembled nightly as a collage of images upon the television screen.

There seem to be two divergent sociological effects of all of this in daily thought and action. The first suggests taking advantage of all of the divergent possibilities, much as Jencks recommends, and cultivating a whole series of simulacra as milieux of escape, fantasy, and distraction:

All around us — on advertisement hoardings, bookshelves, record covers, television screens — these miniature escape fantasies present themselves. This, it seems, is how we are destined to live, as split personalities in which the private life is disturbed by the promise of escape routes to another reality. (Cohen and Taylor, 1978, quoted in McHale, 1987, 38)

From this standpoint I think we have to accept McHale's argument that postmodern fiction is mimetic of something, much as I have argued that the emphasis upon ephemerality, collage, fragmentation, and dispersal in philosophical and social thought mimics the conditions of flexible accumulation. And it should not be surprising either to see how all of this fits in with the emergence since 1970 of a fragmented politics of divergent special and regional interest groups.

But it is exactly at this point that we encounter the opposite reaction that can best be summed up as the search for personal or collective identity, the search for secure moorings in a shifting world. Place-identity, in this collage of superimposed spatial images that implode in upon us, becomes an important issue, because everyone occupies a space of individuation (a body, a room, a home, a shaping community, a nation), and how we individuate ourselves shapes identity. Furthermore, if no one 'knows their place' in this shifting collage world, then how can a secure social order be fashioned or sustained?

There are two elements within this problem that deserve close consideration. First, the capacity of most social movements to command place better than space puts a strong emphasis upon the potential connection between place and social identity. This is manifest in political action. The defensiveness of municipal socialism, the insistence on working-class community, the localization of the fight against capital, become central features of working-class struggle

within an overall patterning of uneven geographical development. The consequent dilemmas of socialist or working-class movements in the face of a universalizing capitalism are shared by other oppositional groups — racial minorities, colonized peoples, women, etc. — who are relatively empowered to organize in place but disempowered when it comes to organizing over space. In clinging, often of necessity, to a place-bound identity, however, such oppositional movements become a part of the very fragmentation which a mobile capitalism and flexible accumulation can feed upon. 'Regional resistances,' the struggle for local autonomy, place-bound organization, may be excellent bases for political action, but they cannot bear the burden of radical historical change alone. 'Think globally and act locally' was the revolutionary slogan of the 1960s. It bears repeating.

The assertion of any place-bound identity has to rest at some point on the motivational power of tradition. It is difficult, however, to maintain any sense of historical continuity in the face of all the flux and ephemerality of flexible accumulation. The irony is that tradition is now often preserved by being commodified and marketed as such. The search for roots ends up at worst being produced and marketed as an image, as a simulacrum or pastiche (imitation communities constructed to evoke images of some folksy past, the fabric of traditional working-class communities being taken over by an urban gentry). The photograph, the document, the view, and the reproduction become history precisely because they are so overwhelmingly present. The problem, of course, is that none of these are immune from tampering or downright faking for present purposes. At best, historical tradition is reorganized as a museum culture, not necessarily of high modernist art, but of local history, of local production, of how things once upon a time were made, sold, consumed, and integrated into a long-lost and often romanticized daily life (one from which all trace of oppressive social relations may be expunged). Through the presentation of a partially illusory past it becomes possible to signify something of local identity and perhaps to do it profitably.

The second reaction to the internationalism of modernism lies in the search to construct place and its meanings qualitatively. Capitalist hegemony over space puts the aesthetics of place very much back on the agenda. But this, as we have seen, meshes only too well with the idea of spatial differentiations as lures for a peripatetic capital that values the option of mobility very highly. Isn't this place better than that place, not only for the operations of capital but also for living in, consuming well, and feeling secure in a shifting world? The construction of such places, the fashioning of some localized aesthetic

image, allows the construction of some limited and limiting sense of identity in the midst of a collage of imploding spatialities.

The tension in these oppositions is clear enough but it is hard to appreciate their intellectual and political ramifications. Here, for example, is Foucault (1984, 253) addressing the issue from his own perspective:

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

The proposition the Sartrean critic offers is, though crude and oppositional, nowhere near as laughable as Foucault avers. On the other hand, postmodernist sentiment definitely leans towards Foucault's position. Whereas modernism looked upon the spaces of the city, for example, as 'an epiphenomenon of social functions,' postmodernism 'tends to disengage urban space from its dependence on functions, and to see it as an autonomous formal system' incorporating 'rhetorical and artistic strategies, which are independent of any simple historical determinism' (Colquhoun, 1985). It is precisely this disengagement that permits Foucault to deploy spatial metaphors so extensively in his studies of power. Spatial imagery, liberated from its roots in any social determination, becomes a means to depict the forces of social determination. It is a short step, however, from Foucault's metaphors to reinforcement of a political ideology that sees place and *Being* with all its associated aesthetic qualities as a proper basis for social action. Geopolitics and the Heideggerian trap come not too far behind. Jameson (1988, 351), for his part, views the

spatial peculiarities of post-modernism as symptoms and expressions of a new and historically original dilemma, one that involves our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities, whose frames range from the still surviving spaces of bourgeois private life all

the way to the unimaginable decentering of global capitalism itself. Not even Einsteinian relativity, or the multiple subjective worlds of the older modernists, is capable of giving any adequate figuration to this process, which in lived experience makes itself felt by the so-called death of the subject, or, more exactly, the fragmented and schizophrenic decentering and dispersion of this last. . . . And although you may not have realized it, I am talking about practical politics here: since the crisis of socialist internationalism, and the enormous strategic and tactical difficulties of coordinating local and grassroots or neighborhood political actions with national or international ones, such urgent political dilemmas are all immediately functions of the enormously complex new international space I have in mind.

Jameson exaggerates somewhat with respect to the uniqueness and newness of this experience. Stressful though the current condition undoubtedly is, it is qualitatively similar to that which led to Renaissance and various modernist reconceptualizations of space and time. Nevertheless, the dilemmas which Jameson depicts are exact and capture the drift of postmodern sensibility as to the meaning of space in contemporary political and cultural as well as economic life. If, however, we have lost the modernist faith in becoming, as Foucault's Sartrean critic argued, is there any way out except via the reactionary politics of an aestheticized spatiality? Are we sadly destined to end up on the track that Stire began with, in his turn to Wagnerian mythology as support for his assertion of the primacy of place and community in a world of changing spaces? Worse still, if aesthetic production has now been so thoroughly commodified and thereby become really subsumed within a political economy of cultural production, how can we possibly stop that circle closing onto a produced, and hence all too easily manipulated, aestheticization of a globally mediated politics?

This should alert us to the acute geopolitical dangers that attach to the rapidity of time—space compression in recent years. The transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation, such as it has been, ought to imply a transition in our mental maps, political attitudes, and political institutions. But political thinking does not necessarily undergo such easy transformations, and is in any case subject to the contradictory pressures that derive from spatial integration and differentiation. There is an omni-present danger that our mental maps will not match current realities. The serious diminution of the power of individual nation states over fiscal and monetary policies, for example, has not been matched by any parallel shift towards an international-

ization of politics. Indeed, there are abundant signs that localism and nationalism have become stronger precisely because of the quest for the security that place always offers in the midst of all the shifting that flexible accumulation implies. The resurgence of geopolitics and of faith in charismatic politics (Thatcher's Falklands War, Reagan's invasion of Grenada) fits only too well with a world that is increasingly nourished intellectually and politically by a vast flux of ephemeral images.

Time—space compression always exacts its toll on our capacity to grapple with the realities unfolding around us. Under stress, for example, it becomes harder and harder to react accurately to events. The erroneous identification of an Iranian airbus, ascending within an established commercial flight corridor, with a fighter-bomber descending towards a targeted US warship — an incident that resulted in many civilian deaths — is typical of the way that reality gets created rather than interpreted under conditions of stress and time—space compression. The parallel with Kern's account of the outbreak of World War I (cited above, p. 278) is instructive. If 'seasoned negotiators cracked under the pressure of tense confrontations and sleepless nights, agonizing over the probable disastrous consequences of their snap judgements and hasty actions,' then how much more difficult must decision-making now be? The difference this time is that there is not even time to agonize. And the problems are not confined to the realms of political and military decision-making, for the world's financial markets are on the boil in ways that make a snap judgement here, an unconsidered word there, and a gut reaction somewhere else the slip that can unravel the whole skein of fictitious capital formation and of interdependency.

The conditions of postmodern time—space compression exaggerate in many respects the dilemmas that have from time to time beset capitalist procedures of modernization in the past (1848 and the phase just before the First World War spring particularly to mind). While the economic, cultural, and political responses may not be exactly new, the range of those responses differs in certain important respects from those which have occurred before. The intensity of time—space compression in Western capitalism since the 1960s, with all of its congruent features of excessive ephemerality and fragmentation in the political and private as well as in the social realm, does seem to indicate an experiential context that makes the condition of postmodernity somewhat special. But by putting this condition into its historical context, as part of a history of successive waves of time—space compression generated out of the pressures of capital accumulation with its perpetual search to annihilate space

through time and reduce turnover time, we can at least pull the condition of postmodernity into the range of a condition accessible to historical materialist analysis and interpretation. How to interpret and react to it will be taken up in Part IV.