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Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination

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Abstract. Although concepts of space and time are socially constructed, they operate with the full force of objective fact and play a key role in processes of social reproduction. Concepts of space and time are inevitably, therefore, contested as part and parcel of processes of social change, no matter whether that change is superimposed from without (as in imperialist domination) or generated from within (as in the conflict between environmentalist and economic standards of decision making). A study of the historical geography of concepts of space and time suggests that the roots of the social construction of these concepts lie in the mode of production and its characteristic social relations. In particular, the revolutionary qualities of a capitalistic mode of production, marked by strong currents of technological change and rapid economic growth and development, have been associated with powerful revolutions in the social conceptions of space and time. The implications of these revolutions, implying as they do the “annihilation of space by time” and the general speed-up and acceleration of turnover time of capital, are traced in the fields of culture and politics, aesthetic theory and, finally, brought home within the discipline of geography as both a problem and a stimulus for rethinking the role of the geographical imagination in contemporary social life.

Key Words: aesthetics, capitalism, geography, geopolitics, historical materialism, place, social change, social reproduction, social space, social theory, social time.

The question I wish to consider is the construction of a historical geography of space and time. Since that sounds and indeed is a double play on the concepts of space and time, the idea requires some initial elaboration. I shall then explore the implications of the idea in relation to the historical geography of everyday life and the social practices of those who call themselves geographers.

The Spaces and Times of Social Life

Durkheim pointed out in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1915) that space and time are social constructs. The writings of anthropologists such as Hallowell (1955), Lévi-Strauss (1963), Hall (1966) and, more recently Bourdieu (1977) and Moore (1986) confirm this view: different societies produce qualitatively different conceptions of space and time (see also Tuan 1977). In interpreting this anthropological evidence, I want to highlight two features.

First, the social definitions of space and time operate with the full force of objective facts to which all individuals and institutions necessarily respond. For example, in modern societies, we accept clock time, even though such time is a social construct, as an objective fact of daily life; it provides a commonly held standard, outside of any one person’s influence, to which we turn again and again to organize our lives and in terms of which we assess and judge all manner of social behaviors and subjective feelings. Even when we do not conform to it, we know very well what it is that we are not conforming to.

Secondly, the definitions of objective space and time are deeply implicated in processes of social reproduction. Bourdieu (1977) shows, for example, how in the case of the North African Kabyle, temporal and spatial organization (the calendar, the partitions within the house, etc.) serve to constitute the social order through the...
assignment of people and activities to distinctive places and times. The group orders its hierarchies, its gender roles and divisions of labor, in accordance with a specific mode of spatial and temporal organization. The role of woman in Kabyle society is, for example, defined in terms of the spaces occupied at specific times. A particular way of representing space and time guides spatial and temporal practices which in turn secure the social order.

Practices of this sort are not foreign to advanced capitalist societies. To begin with, space and time are always a primary means of both individuation and social differentiation. The definition of spatial units as administrative, legal or accounting entities defines fields of social action which have wide-ranging impacts on the organization of social life. Indeed, the very act of naming geographical entities implies a power over them, most particularly over the way in which places, their inhabitants and their social functions get represented. As Edward Said (1978) so brilliantly demonstrates in his study of Orientalism, the identity of variegated peoples can be collapsed, shaped, and manipulated through the connotations and associations imposed upon a name by outsiders. Ideological struggles over the meaning and manner of such representations of place and identity abound. But over and beyond the mere act of identification, the assignment of place within a socio-spatial structure indicates distinctive roles, capacities for action, and access to power within the social order. The when and where of different kinds of social activity and of different manners of relating convey clear social messages. We still instruct children, for example, in the idea that there is "a time and a place for everything" and all of us, at some level of meaning, know what our place is (though whether or not we feel comfortable with it is another question). We all know, furthermore, what it means to be "put in one's place" and that to challenge what that place might be, physically as well as socially, is to challenge something fundamental in the social order. Sit-ins, street demonstrations, the storming of the Bastille or the gates of the U.S. embassy in Teheran, the striking down of the Berlin Wall, and the occupation of a factory or a college administration building are all signs of attack against an established social order.

Sufficient accounts of these phenomena exist to render further proof of their generality sufficient, though the exact manner in which concepts of space and time operate in social reproduction is so subtle and nuanced as to require, if we are to read it right, the most sophisticated apparatus of enquiry we can muster. But the evidence is solid enough to support the following proposition: each social formation constructs objective conceptions of space and time sufficient unto its own needs and purposes of material and social reproduction and organizes its material practices in accordance with those conceptions.

But societies change and grow, they are transformed from within and adapt to pressures and influences from without. Objective conceptions of space and time must change to accommodate new material practices of social reproduction. How are such shifts in the public and objective conceptions of time and space accomplished? In certain instances, the answer is simply given. New concepts of space and time have been imposed by main force through conquest, imperial expansion or neocolonial domination. The European settlement of North America imposed quite alien conceptions of time and space upon the Plains Indians for example, and in so doing altered forever the social framework within which the reproduction of these peoples could, if at all, take place. The imposition of a mathematically rational spatial order in the house, the classroom, the village, the barracks and even across the city of Cairo itself, Mitchell (1988) shows, were centerpieces of a late nineteenth-century project to bring Egypt into line with the disciplinary frameworks of European capitalism. Such impositions are not necessarily well received. The spread of capitalist social relations has often entailed a fierce battle to socialize different peoples into the common net of time discipline implicit in industrial organization and into a respect for partitions of territorial and land rights specified in mathematically rigorous terms (see Sack 1986). While rearguard actions against such impositions abound, it is nevertheless true that public definitions of time and space throughout much of the contemporary world have been imposed in the course of capitalist development.

Even more interesting problems arise when the public sense of time and space is contested from within. Such contestation in contemporary society in part arises out of individual and subjective resistance to the authority of the clock and the tyranny of the cadastral map.
Modernist and postmodernist literature and painting are full of signs of revolt against simple mathematical and material measures of space and time, while psychologists and sociologists have revealed, through their explorations, a highly complicated and often confused world of personal and social representations which departs significantly from dominant public practices. Personal space and time do not automatically accord with the dominant public sense of either and, as Tamara Hareven (1982) shows, there are intricate ways in which “family time” can be integrated with and used to offset the pressing power of the “industrial time” of deskilling and reskilling of labor forces and the cyclical patterns of employment. More significantly, the class, gender, cultural, religious and political differentiation in conceptions of time and space frequently become arenas of social conflict. New definitions of what is the correct time and place for everything as well as of the proper objective qualities of space and time can arise out of such struggles.

A few examples of such conflict are perhaps in order. The first comes from the chapter in Capital on “The Working Day,” in which Marx (1967, 233–35) sets up a fictitious conversation between capitalist and worker. The former insists that a fair day’s work is measured in relation to how much time a worker needs to recuperate sufficient strength to return to work the next day and that a fair day’s wage is given by the money required to cover daily reproduction costs. The worker replies that such a calculation ignores the shortening of his life which results from unremitting toil and that the measure of a fair day’s work and wage looks entirely different when calculated over a working life. Both sides, Marx argues, are correct from the standpoint of the laws of market exchange, but different class perspectives dictate different time horizons for social calculation. Between such equal rights, Marx argues, force decides.

The gendering of “Father Time” yields a second example. It is not only that time gets construed quite differently according to gender roles through the curious habit of defining working time as only that taken up in selling labor power directly to others. But, as Forman (1989) points out, the reduction of a woman’s world to the cyclical times of nature has had the effect of excluding women from the linear time of patriarchal history, rendering women “strangers in the world of male-defined time.” The struggle, in this case, is to challenge the traditional world of myth, iconography and ritual in which male dominion over time parallels dominion over nature and over women as “natural beings.” When Blake, for example, insisted that “Time and Space are Real Beings. Time is a Man, Space is a Woman, and her masculine Portion is Death” (quoted in Forman, p. 4), he was articulating a widespread allegorical pre-supposition that has echoes even unto the present day. The inability to relate the time of birthing (and all that this implies) to the masculine preoccupation with death and history is, in Forman’s view, one of the deeper psychological battlegrounds between men and women.

The third example derives from a conversation between an economist and a geologist over the time horizon for optimal exploitation of a mineral resource. The former holds that the appropriate time horizon is set by the interest rate and market price, but the geologist, holding to a very different conception of time, argues that it is the obligation of every generation to leave behind an aliquot share of any resource to the next. There is no logical way to resolve that argument. It, too, is resolved by main force. The dominant market institutions prevailing under capitalism fix time horizons by way of the interest rate and, in almost all arenas of economic calculation (including the purchase of a house with a mortgage), that is the end of the story.

We here identify the potentiality for social conflict deriving entirely from the time horizon over which the effect of a decision is held to operate. While economists often accept the Keynesian maxim that “in the long run we are all dead” and that the short-run is the only reasonable time horizon over which to operationalize economic and political decisions, environmentalists insist that responsibilities must be judged over an infinite time horizon within which all forms of life (including that of humans) must be preserved. The opposition in the sense of time is obvious. Even when, as in Pigouvian economics, longer time horizons are introduced into economic calculation, the effective means is through a discount rate which is set by economic rather than ecological, religious or social calculation (see, for example, the report by Pearce, Markandya and Barbier [1989] on a Blueprint for a Green Economy, which insists that all environmental impacts can be monetized and that the discount rate is a perfectly
adequate means by which to take account of long-term environmental impacts). The whole political-economic trajectory of development and change depends upon which objective definition we adopt in social practice. If the practices are capitalistic, then the time horizon cannot be that to which environmentalists cleave.

Spatial usages and definitions are likewise a contested terrain in both practical and conceptual realms. Here, too, environmentalists tend to operate with a much broader conception of the spatial domain of social action, pointing to the spillover effects of local activities into patterns of use that affect global warming, acid rain formation and global despoliation of the resource base. Such a spatial conception conflicts with decisions taken with the objective of maximizing land rent at a particular site over a time horizon set by land price and the interest rate. What separates the environmental movement (and what in many respects makes it so special and so interesting) is precisely the conception of time and space which it brings to bear on questions of social reproduction and organization.

Such deep struggles over the meaning and social definition of space and time are rarely arrived at directly. They usually emerge out of much simpler conflicts over the appropriation and domination of particular spaces and times. It took me many years, for example, to understand why it was that the Parisian communards so readily put aside their pressing tasks of organizing for the defense of revolutionary Paris in 1871, in order to tear down the Vendôme column. The column was a hated symbol of an alien power that had long ruled over them; it was a symbol of that spatial organization of the city that had put so many segments of the population “in their place,” by the building of Haussmann’s boulevards and the expulsion of the working class from the central city. Haussmann inserted an entirely new conception of space into the fabric of the city, a conception appropriate to a new social order based on capitalistic (particularly financial) values. The transformation of social relations and daily life envisaged in the 1871 revolution entailed, or so the communards felt, the reconstruction of the interior spaces of Paris in a different non-hierarchical image. So powerful was that urge that the public spectacle of toppling the Vendôme column became a catalytic moment in the assertion of communard power over the city’s spaces (Ross 1988). The communards tried to build an alternative social order not only by reoccupying the space from which they had been so unceremoniously expelled but by trying to reshape the objective social qualities of urban space itself in a nonhierarchical and communitarian image. The subsequent rebuilding of the column was as much a signal of reaction as was the building of the Basilica of Sacré Coeur on the heights of Montmartre in expiation for the Commune’s supposed sins (see Harvey 1985).

The 1989 annual convention of the Association of American Geographers in Baltimore likewise took place in what is for me, a resident of that city for some eighteen years, alien territory. The present carnival mask of the inner harbor redevelopment conceals a long history of struggle over this space. The urban renewal that began in the early 1960s was led by the property developers and financial institutions as they sought to colonize what they saw as a strategic but declining central city core. But the effort was stymied by the unrest of the 1960s that had the downtown dominated by anti-war demonstrations, counter-cultural events and, most devastating of all for investor confidence, street uprisings mainly on the part of impoverished African-Americans. The inner city was a space of disaffection and social disruption. But in the wake of the violence that rocked the city after Martin Luther King’s assassination in 1968, a coalition sprang to life to try and restore a sense of unity and belonging to the city. The coalition was broad; it included the churches (the Black Ministerial Alliance in particular), community leaders of all kinds, academics and downtown lawyers, politicians, trade unionists, bureaucrats, and, bringing up the rear in this instance, the business community, which was plainly at a loss as to what to do or where to turn. The struggle was on to try and put the city back together again as a cohesive social entity, as a working and living community alert to racial and social injustice.

One idea that emerged from that effort was to create a city fair in the inner city, a fair that would celebrate “otherness” and difference by being based on the city’s distinctive religious, ethnic and racial composition but which would also celebrate the theme of civic unity within that diversity. In 1970 the first fair took place, bringing a quarter of a million people over a weekend, from all neighborhoods of the city,
into the inner city space of disaffection. By 1973, nearly two million came and the inner harbor was reoccupied by the common populace in ways which it had been impossible to envisage in the 1960s. It became a site of communal affirmation of unity within difference.

During the 1970s, in spite of considerable popular opposition, the forces of commercialism and property development recaptured the space. It became the site of a public-private partnership in which vast amounts of public moneys were absorbed for purposes of private rather than civic gain. The Hyatt–Regency Hotel, headquarters for the AAG meetings, was built with $5 million of private money, a $10 million Urban Development Action Grant, and a complicated deal of city investment in infrastructures and shell which took some $20 million of a city bond issue. The inner city space became a space of conspicuous consumption, celebrating commodities rather than civic values. It became the site of “spectacle” in which people are reduced from active participants in the appropriation of space to passive spectators (Debord 1983). This spectacle diverts attention from the awful poverty of the rest of the city and projects an image of successful dynamism when the reality is that of serious impoverishment and disempowerment (Levine 1987). While all that money was pouring into the inner city redevelopment, the rest of the city gained little and in some instances lost much, creating an island of downtown affluence in a sea of decay (Szanton 1986). The glitter of the inner harbor diverts the gaze from the gathering tragedy of injustice in that other Baltimore, now safely (or so it seems) tucked away in the invisible neighborhoods of despair.

The point of these examples is to illustrate how social space, when it is contested within the orbit of a given social formation, can begin to take on new definitions and meanings. In both Paris and Baltimore, we see the struggle for command over strategic central city spaces as part of a broader struggle to replace a landscape of hierarchy and of pure money power with a social space constructed in the image of equality and justice. While both struggles were unsuccessful, they do illustrate how dominant and hegemonic definitions of social space (and time) are perpetually under challenge and always open to modification.

Materialist Perspectives on the Historical Geography of Space and Time

If space and time are both social and objective, then it follows that social processes (including social conflicts of the sort already outlined) have a role to play in their objectification. How then, would we set out to study the ways in which social space and time get shaped in different historical and geographical contexts? There is no answer to that independent of the explicit character of our ontological and epistemological commitments. My own are, as is well known, explicitly Marxist, which means the organization of enquiry according to the basic principles of historical geographical materialism. The objective definitions must in the first instance be understood, not by appeal to the world of thoughts and ideas (though that study is always rewarding), but from the study of material processes of social reproduction. As Smith (1984, 77) puts it, “the relativity of space (is) not a philosophical issue but a product of social and historical practice.”

Let me illustrate such a principle at work. I often ask beginning geography students to consider where their last meal came from. Tracing back all the items used in the production of that meal reveals a relation of dependence upon a whole world of social labor conducted in many different places under very different social relations and conditions of production. That dependency expands even further when we consider the materials and goods used in the production of the goods we directly consume. Yet we can in practice consume our meal without the slightest knowledge of the intricate geography of production and the myriad social relationships embedded in the system that puts it upon our table.

This was the condition that Marx (1967, 71–83) picked upon in developing one of his most telling concepts—the fetishism of commodities. He sought to capture by that term the way in which markets conceal social (and, we should add, geographical) information and relations. We cannot tell from looking at the commodity whether it has been produced by happy laborers working in a cooperative in Italy, grossly exploited laborers working under conditions
of apartheid in South Africa, or wage laborers protected by adequate labor legislation and wage agreements in Sweden. The grapes that sit upon the supermarket shelves are mute; we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation upon them or tell immediately what part of the world they are from. We can, by further enquiry, lift the veil on this geographical and social ignorance and make ourselves aware of these issues (as we do when we engage in a consumer boycott of nonunion or South African grapes). But in so doing we find we have to go behind and beyond what the market itself reveals in order to understand how society is working. This was precisely Marx's own agenda. We have to get behind the veil, the fetishism of the market and the commodity, in order to tell the full story of social reproduction.

The geographical ignorance that arises out of the fetishism of commodities is in itself cause for concern. The spatial range of our own individual experience of procuring commodities in the market place bears no relationship to the spatial range over which the commodities themselves are produced. The two space horizons are quite distinct, and decisions that seem reasonable from the former standpoint are not necessarily appropriate from the latter. To which set of experiences should we appeal in understanding the historical geography of space and time? Strictly speaking, my answer will be both because both are equally material. But it is here that I insist we should deploy the Marxian concept of fetishism with its full force. We will arrive at a fetishistic interpretation of the world (including the objective social definitions of space and time) if we take the realm of individual experience (shopping in the supermarket, traveling to work and picking up money at the bank) as all there is. These latter activities are real and material, but their organization is such as to conceal the other definitions of space and time set up in accordance with the requirements of commodity production and capital circulation through price-fixing markets.

A pure concern for the material base of our own daily reproduction ought to dictate a working knowledge of the geography of commodity production and of the definitions of space and time embedded in the practices of commodity production and capital circulation. But in practice most people do without. This also raises important moral issues. If, for example, we consider it right and proper to show moral concern for those who help put dinner on the table, then this implies an extension of moral responsibility throughout the whole intricate geography and sociality of intersecting markets. We cannot reasonably go to church on Sunday, donate copiously to a fund to help the poor in the parish, and then walk obliviously into the market to buy grapes grown under conditions of apartheid. We cannot reasonably argue for high environmental quality in the neighborhood while still insisting on living at a level which necessarily implies polluting the air somewhere else (this is, after all, the heart of the ecologists’ argument). Our problem is indeed precisely that in which Marx sought to instruct us. We have to penetrate the veil of fetishisms with which we are necessarily surrounded by virtue of the system of commodity production and exchange and discover what lies behind it. In particular, we need to know how space and time get defined by these material processes which give us our daily bread. It is to this world that I now turn.

The Historical Geography of Space and Time in the Capitalist Epoch

Consideration of the historical geography of space and time in the era of Western capitalism illustrates how conceptions and practices with respect to both have changed in accordance with political-economic practices. The transition from feudalism to capitalism, Le Goff (1980, 1988) argues, entailed a fundamental redefinition of concepts of space and time which served to reorder the world according to quite new social principles. The hour was an invention of the thirteenth century, the minute and the second became common measures only as late as the seventeenth. While the first of these measures had a religious origin (illustrating a deep continuity between the Judeo-Christian view of the world and the rise of capitalism), the spread of adequate measures of time-keeping had much more to do with the growing concern for efficiency in production, exchange,
commerce and administration. It was an urban-based revolution "in mental structures and their material expressions" and it was "deeply implicated," according to Le Goff (1980, 36), "in the mechanisms of class struggle." "Equal hours" in the city, Landes (1983, 78) confirms, "announced the victory of a new cultural and economic order." But the victory was partial and patchy, leaving much of the western world outside of its reach until at least the mid-nineteenth century.

The history of cartography in the transition from feudalism to capitalism has, like the history of time-keeping, been very much about refinement of spatial measurement and representation according to clearly defined mathematical principles. Here, too, the interests of trade and commerce, of property and territorial rights (of the sort unrecognizable in the feudal world) were of paramount importance in reshaping mental structures and material practices. When it became clear that geographical knowledge was a vital source of military and economic power, then the connection between maps and money, as Landes (1983, 110) shows, followed not far behind. The introduction of the Ptolemaic map into Florence in 1400 and its immediate adoption there as a means to depict geographical space and store locational information, was arguably the fundamental breakthrough in the construction of geographical knowledge as we now know it. Thereafter it became possible in principle to comprehend the world as a global unity.

The political significance of this cartographic revolution deserves consideration. Rational mathematical conceptions of space and time were, for example, a necessary condition for Enlightenment doctrines of political equality and social progress. One of the first actions of the French revolutionary assembly was to ordain the systematic mapping of France as a means to ensure equality of political representation. This is such a familiar constitutional issue in the democracies of the world (given the whole history of gerrymandering) that the intimate connection between democracy and rational mapping is now taken for granted. But imagine attempting to draw up an egalitarian system of representation armed only with the Mappa Mundi! The Jeffersonian land system, with its repetitive mathematical grid that still dominates the landscape of the United States, likewise sought the rational partitioning of space so as to promote the formation of an agrarian democracy. In practice this proved admirable for capitalist appropriation of and speculation in space, subverting Jefferson’s aims, but it also demonstrates how a particular definition of objective social space (in this case strictly interpreted in rationalistic Enlightenment terms) facilitated the rise of a new kind of social order.

Accounts of the sort which Le Goff and Landes provide illustrate beyond doubt that concepts of space and time and the practices associated with them are far from socially neutral in human affairs. Precisely because of such political and economic implications, the sense of space and time remains contested and more problematic than we are wont to admit. Helgerson (1986) points out, for example, the intimate connection between the Renaissance maps of England (by Speed, Nordon, Caxton, and the others), the fight with dynastic privilege and the latter’s ultimate replacement by a politics in which the relation between individual and nation became hegemonic. Helgerson’s point is that the new means of cartographic representation allowed individuals to see themselves in terms that were more in accord with these new definitions of social and political relations. In the colonial period, to take a much later example, the maps of colonial administrations had very distinctive qualities that reflected their social purposes (Stone 1988).

Since I have taken up the above themes elsewhere (Harvey 1985, 1989a), I shall here merely assert that the construction of new mental conceptions and material practices with respect to space and time were fundamental to the rise of capitalism as a particular socioeconomic system. These conceptions and practices were always partial (though they became more hegemonic as capitalism evolved), and they were, in any case, always subject to social contestation in specific places and times. But social reproduction of the capitalist sort required their deep implanation in the world of ideas as well as in the realm of social practices.

Capitalism is, however, a revolutionary mode of production, always restlessly searching out new organizational forms, new technologies, new lifestyles, and new modalities of production and exploitation. Capitalism has also been revolutionary with respect to its objective social definitions of time and space. Indeed, when compared with almost all other forms of innovation, the radical reorganizations of space
relations and of spatial representations have had an extraordinarily powerful effect. The turnpikes and canals, the railways, steamships and telegraph, the radio and the automobile, containerization, jet cargo transport, television and telecommunications, have altered space and time relations and forced us to new material practices as well as to new modes of representation of space. The capacity to measure and divide time has been revolutionized, first through the production and diffusion of increasingly accurate time pieces and subsequently through close attention to the speed and coordinating mechanisms of production (automation, robotization) and the speed of movement of goods, people, information, messages, and the like. The material bases of objective space and time have become rapidly moving rather than fixed datum points in human affairs.

Why this movement? Since I have explored its roots in greater detail elsewhere (Harvey 1982, 1989a) I simply summarize the principal argument. Time is a vital magnitude under capitalism because social labor time is the measure of value and surplus social labor time lies at the origin of profit. Furthermore, the turnover time of capital is significant because speed-up (in production, in marketing, in capital turnover) is a powerful competitive means for individual capitalists to augment profits. In times of economic crisis and of particularly intense competition, capitalists with a faster turnover time survive better than their rivals, with the result that social time horizons typically shorten, intensity of working and living tends to pick up and the pace of change accelerates. The same sorts of proposition apply to the experience of space. The elimination of spatial barriers and the struggle to “annihilate space by time” is essential to the whole dynamic of capital accumulation and becomes particularly acute in crises of capital overaccumulation. The absorption of surpluses of capital (and sometimes labor) through geographical expansion into new territories and through the construction of a completely new set of space relations has been nothing short of remarkable. The construction and reconstruction of space relations and of the global space economy, as Henri Lefebvre (1974) acutely observes, has been one of the main means to permit the survival of capitalism into the twentieth century.

The general characteristics (as opposed to the detailed where, when and how) of the historical geography of space and time which results are not accidental or arbitrary, but implicit in the very laws of motion of capitalist development. The general trend is towards an acceleration in turnover time (the worlds of production, exchange, consumption all tend to change faster) and a shrinking of space horizons. In popular terms, we might say that Toffler’s (1970) world of “future shock” encounters, as it were, Marshall McLuhan’s (1966) “global village.” Such periodic revolutions in the objective social qualities of time and space are not without their contradictions. It takes, for example, long term and often high cost fixed capital investments of slow turnover time (like computer hardware) to speed up the turnover time of the rest, and it takes the production of a specific set of space relations (like a rail network) in order to annihilate space by time. A revolution in temporal and spatial relations often entails, therefore, not only the destruction of ways of life and social practices built around preceding time-space systems, but the “creative destruction” of a wide range of physical assets embedded in the landscape. The recent history of deindustrialization is amply illustrative of the sort of process I have in mind.

The Marxian theory of capital accumulation permits theoretical insights into the contradictory changes that have occurred in the dimensionality of space and time in Western capitalism. If, as is the case, the temporal and spatial world of contemporary Wall Street is so very different from that of the nineteenth century stock exchange and if both depart from that of rural France (then and now) or of Scottish crofters (then and now), then this must be understood as a particular set of responses to a pervasive aggregate condition shaped by the rules of commodity production and capital accumulation. It is the contradictions and tensions implied therein that I want to examine.

**Cultural and Political Responses to the Changing Dimensionality of Space and Time**

Rapid changes in the objective qualities of social space and time are both confusing and disturbing, precisely because their revolution-
ary implications for the social order are so hard to anticipate. The nervous wonderment at it all is excellently captured in the Quarterly Review for 1839:

Supposing that our railroads, even at our present simmering rate of travelling, were to be suddenly established all over England, the whole population of the country would, speaking metaphorically, at once advance en masse, and place their chairs nearer to the fireside of their metropolis. . . . As distances were thus annihilated, the surface of our country would, as it were, shrivel in size until it became not much bigger than one immense city (cited in Schivelbusch 1978, 32).

The poet Heine likewise recorded his “tremendous foreboding” on the opening of the rail link from Paris to Rouen:

What changes must now occur, in our way of looking at things, in our notions! Even the elementary concepts of time and space have begun to vacillate. Space is killed by the railways. I feel as if the mountains and forests of all countries were advancing on Paris. Even now, I can smell the German linden trees; the North Sea’s breakers are rolling against my door (cited in Schivelbusch 1978, 34).

The German theatre director Johannes Birringer (1989, 120–38) records a similar sense of shock in a contemporary setting. On arrival in Dallas and Houston, he felt an “unforeseen collapse of space,” where “the dispersion and decompositions of the urban body (the physical and cultural representation of community) have reached a hallucinatory stage.” He remarks on:

the unavoidable fusion and confusion of geographical realities, or the interchangeability of all places, or the disappearance of visible (static) points of reference into a constant commutation of surface images.

The riddle of Houston, he concludes:

is one of community: fragmented and exploded in all directions. . . . The city impersonates a speculative disorder, a kind of positive unspecificity on the verge of a paradoxical hyperbole (global power/local chaos).

I shall call this sense of overwhelming change in space-time dimensionality “time-space compression” in order to capture something of Heine’s sense of foreboding and Birringer’s sense of collapse. The experience of it forces all of us to adjust our notions of space and time and to rethink the prospects for social action. This rethinking is, as I have already argued, embedded in political-economic struggles. But it is also the focus of intense cultural, aesthetic and political debate. Reflection on this idea helps us understand some of the turmoil that has occurred within the fields of cultural and political production in the capitalist era.

The recent complex of movements known as “post-modernism” is, for example, connected in the writings of authors as diverse as Jameson (1984), Berman (1982) and Daniel Bell (1976) to some new experience of space and time. Interestingly, having advanced the idea, none of them tells us exactly what they might mean by it. And the material basis upon which these new experiences of space and time might be built, and its relation to the political economy of capitalist development, remains a topic lost in the shadows. I am particularly interested to see how far postmodernism can be understood simply by relating it to the new experiences of space and time generated out of the political-economic crisis of 1973 (Harvey 1989a).

Much of the advanced capitalist world was at that time forced into a major revolution in production techniques, consumption habits and political-economic practices. Strong currents of innovation have focused on speed-up and acceleration of turnover times. Time-horizons for decision making (now a matter of minutes in international financial markets) have shortened and lifestyle fashions have changed rapidly. And all of this has been coupled with a radical reorganization of space relations, the further reduction of spatial barriers, and the emergence of a new geography of capitalist development. These events have generated a powerful sense of time-space compression which has affected all aspects of cultural and political life. Whole landscapes have had to be destroyed in order to make way for the creation of the new. Themes of creative destruction, of increased fragmentation, of ephemerality (in community life, of skills, of lifestyles) have become much more noticeable in literary and philosophic discourse in an era when restructuring of everything from industrial production techniques to inner cities has become a major topic of concern. The transformation in “the structure of feeling” which the move towards postmodernism betokens seems to have much to do with the shifts in political-economic practices that have occurred over the last two decades.

Consider, glancing backwards, that complex cultural movement known as modernism (against which postmodernism is supposedly
reacting). There is indeed something special that happens to writing and artistic representation in Paris after 1848 and it is useful to look at that against the background of political-economic transformations occurring in that space and at that time. Heine’s vague foreboding became a dramatic and traumatic experience in 1848, when, for the first time in the capitalist world, political-economy assumed an looked for simultaneity. The economic collapse and political revolutions that swept across the capitals of Europe in that year indicated that the capitalist world was interlinked in ways that had hitherto seemed unimaginable. The speed and simultaneity of it all was deeply troubling and called for some new mode of representation through which this interlinked world could be better understood. Realist modes of representation, which took a simple narrative structure as their model, simply could not do the job (no matter how brilliantly Dickens ranged across space and time in a novel like Bleak House).

Baudelaire (1981) took up the challenge by defining the modernist problematic as the search for universal truths in a world characterized by (spatial) fragmentation, (temporal) ephemerality and creative destruction. The complex sentence structure in Flaubert’s novels and the brushstrokes of Manet defined totally new modes of representation of space and time that allowed new ways of thinking and new possibilities for social and political action. Kern’s (1983) account of the revolution in the representation of space and time that occurred shortly before 1914 (a period of extraordinary experimentation in fields as diverse as physics, literature, painting and philosophy) is one of the clearest studies to date of how time-space compression generates experiences out of which new conceptions are squeezed. The avant-garde movements in the cultural field in part reflected but in part also sought to impose new definitions of space and time upon a Western capitalism in the full flood of violent transformation.

A closer look at the contradictions built into these cultural and political movements illustrates how they can mirror the fundamental contradictions in capitalist political economy. Consider the cultural response to the recent speed-up and acceleration of capital turnover time. The latter presupposes, to begin with, a more rapid turnover in consumption habits and lifestyles which consequently become the focus of capitalist social relations of production and consumption. Capitalist penetration of the realm of cultural production becomes particularly attractive because the lifetime of consumption of images, as opposed to more tangible objects like autos and refrigerators, is almost instantaneous. In recent years, a good deal of capital and labor has been applied to this purpose. This has been accompanied by a renewed emphasis upon the production of controlled spectacles (of which the Los Angeles Olympic Games was a prime example) which can conveniently double as a means of capital accumulation and of social control (reviving political interest in the old Roman formula of “bread and circuses” at a time of greater insecurity).

The reactions to the collapse of spatial barriers are no less contradictory. The more global interrelations become, the more internationalized our dinner ingredients and our money flows, and the more spatial barriers disintegrate, so more rather than less of the world’s population clings to place and neighborhood or to nation, region, ethnic grouping, or religious belief as specific marks of identity. Such a quest for visible and tangible marks of identity is readily understandable in the midst of fierce time-space compression. No matter that the capitalist response has been to invent tradition as yet another item of commodity production and consumption (the reenactment of ancient rites and spectacles, the excesses of a rampant heritage culture), there is still an insistent urge to look for roots in a world where image streams accelerate and become more and more placeless (unless the television and video screen can properly be regarded as a place). The foreboding generated out of the sense of social space imploding in upon us (forcibly marked by everything from the daily news to random acts of international terror or global environmental problems) translates into a crisis of identity. Who are we and to what space/place do we belong? Am I a citizen of the world, the nation, the locality? Not for the first time in capitalist history, if Kern’s (1983) account of the period before World War I is correct, the diminution of spatial barriers has provoked an increasing sense of nationalism and localism, and excessive geopolitical rivalries and tensions, precisely because of the reduction in the power of spatial barriers to separate and defend against others.

The evident tension between place and space
representation, how very basic processes of social reproduction, as well as of production, are deeply implicated in shifting space and time horizons. In this regard, I find it intriguing, if I may make the aside, that the exploration of the relations between literature and geography that have so far emanated from the geographer's camp have almost without exception concentrated on the literary evocation of place (see, for example, Mallory and Simpson-Housley 1987) when the far more fundamental question of spatiality in, say, the novels of Flaubert and Joyce (a topic of great import for literary historians) has passed by unremarked. I also find it odd that geographers have concentrated so much more upon the importance of locality in the present conjuncture, leaning, as it were, to one side of the contradictory dynamic of space and place, as if they are separate rather than dialectically related concepts.

Geography in Relation to Social and Aesthetic Theory

Armed with such epistemological and ontological commitments as historical-geographical materialism provides, we can begin to unravel the theoretical and philosophical conceptions of space and time which sustain (explicitly or implicitly) particular social visions and interpretations of the world. In so doing, it is useful to begin with consideration of a major divide in Western thought between aesthetic and social theory.

Social theory of the sort constructed in the diverse traditions of Adam Smith, Marx, or Weber tends to privilege time over space in its formulations, reflecting and legitimizing those who view the world through the lenses of spaceless doctrines of progress and revolution. In recent years, many geographers have sought to correct that defective vision and to reintroduce the concept of space as not only meaningful but vital to the proper understanding of social processes (see Gregory and Urry 1985; Soja 1989). To some degree, that effort has been rewarded by the recognition on the part of some social theorists that space indeed does matter (for example, Giddens 1984). But that task is only partly complete. Getting behind the fetishism of commodities challenges us to integrate the historical geography of space and
time within the frame of all our understandings of how human societies are constructed and change. Our interventions in social theory stand to be strengthened even further by the exploration of that theme, though this presupposes, as always, the training of geographers with a powerful command over social theory and seized intellectually by the challenge to explore the difficult terrain of interface between society and the social construction of space and time.

But there is, curiously, another terrain of theoretical intervention which remains largely unexplored, except in that unsatisfactory and partial manner that always comes with nibbling at hidden rather than struggling over overt questions. I refer here to the intersection between geographical work and aesthetic theory. The latter, in direct contrast to social theory, is deeply concerned with “the spatialization of time,” albeit in terms of how that experience is communicated to and received by knowing, sensuous individuals. The architect, to take the most obvious case, tries to communicate certain values through the construction of a spatial form. Architecture, suggests Karsten Harries (1982), is not only about domesticating space, wrestling and shaping a livable place out of empty space. It is also a deep defense against “the terror of time.” The “language of beauty” is “the language of a timeless reality.” To create a beautiful object is “to link time and eternity” in such a way as to redeem us from time’s tyranny. The aim of spatial constructs is “not to illuminate temporal reality so that (we) might feel more at home in it, but . . . to abolish time within time, if only for a time.” Even writing, comments Bourdieu (1977, 156), “tears practice and discourse out of the flow of time.”

There are, of course, as many varieties of aesthetic theory as there are of social theory (see, for example, Eagleton’s (1990) brilliant treatise on the subject). But I quote these comments from Harries to illustrate one of the central themes with which aesthetic theory grapples: how spatial constructs are created and used as fixed markers of human memory and of social values in a world of rapid flux and change. There is much to be learned from aesthetic theory about how different forms of produced space inhibit or facilitate processes of social change. Interestingly, geographers now find even more support for their endeavors from literary theorists (Jameson 1984 and Ross 1988) than from the social theorists. Conversely, there is much to be learned from social theory concerning the flux and change with which aesthetic theory has to cope. Historical geography, insofar as it lies at the intersection of those two dimensions, has an immense potentiality to contribute to understanding them both. By playing these two currents of thought off against each other, we may even aspire to create a more general theoretical framework for interpreting the historical geography of space and time while simultaneously figuring how cultural and aesthetic practices—spatializations—intervene in the political-economic dynamic of social and political change.

Let me illustrate where the political significance of such an argument might lie. Aesthetic judgments (as well as the “redemptive” artistic practices that attach thereto) have frequently entered in as powerful criteria of political and social action. Kant argued that independent aesthetic judgment could act as a mediator between the worlds of objective science and of subjective moral judgment. If aesthetic judgment gives space priority over time, then it follows that spatial practices and concepts can, under certain circumstances, become central to social action.

In this regard, the German philosopher Heidegger is an interesting figure. Rejecting the Kantian dichotomies of subject and object, and fearing the descent into nihilism that Nietzschean thought seemed to promote, he proclaimed the permanence of Being over the transitoriness of Becoming and attached himself to a traditionalist vision of the truly aesthetic political state (Chytry 1989). His investigations led him away from the universals of modernism and Judeo-Christian thought and back to the intense and creative nationalism of pre-Socratic Greek thought. All metaphysics and philosophy, he declared (Heidegger 1959), are given their meaning only in relation to the destiny of the people. The geopolitical position of Germany in the interwar years, squeezed in a “great pincer” between Russia and America, threatened the search for that meaning. “If the great decision regarding Europe is not to bring annihilation,” he wrote, the German nation “must move itself and thereby the history of the West beyond the center of their future ‘happening’ and into the primordial realm of the powers of being” and “that decision must be made in terms of new spiritual energies unfolding his-
torically from out of the center.” Herein for Heidegger lay the “inner truth and greatness of the National Socialist movement” (Blitz 1981, 217).

That a great twentieth-century philosopher, who has incidentally inspired the philosophizing of Karsten Harries as well as much of the geographical writing on the meaning of place (see Relph 1976; Seamon and Mugeruaer 1989), should so compromise himself politically and throw in his lot with the Nazis is deeply troubling. But a number of useful points can be made from the standpoint of my present argument. Heidegger’s work is deeply imbued with an aesthetic sense which prioritizes Being and the specific qualities of place over Becoming and the universal propositions of modernist progress in universal space. His rejection of Judeo-Christian values, of the myth of machine rationality, and of internationalism was total. The position to which he subscribed was active and revolutionary precisely because he saw the necessity for redemptive practices which in effect depended upon the restoration of the power of myth (of blood and soil, of race and fatherland, of destiny and place) while mobilizing all of the accoutrements of social progress towards a project of sublime national achievement. The application of this particular aesthetic sense to politics helped alter the historical geography of capitalism with a vengeance.

I scarcely need to remind geographers of the tortured history of geopolitical thinking and practices in the twentieth century and the difficulty geographers have had in confronting the thorny issues involved. I note that Hartshorne’s (1939) The Nature of Geography, written in Vienna shortly after the Anschluss, totally rejects aesthetics in geography and reserves its most vitriolic condemnations for the mythologies of landscape geography. Hartshorne, following Hettner, seems to want to expel any opening for the politicizing of academic geography in an era when geography was suffused with politics and when sentiments of place and of aesthetics were being actively mobilized in the Nazi cause. The difficulty, of course, is that avoiding the problem does not eliminate it, even in academic geography.

This is not to say that everyone who, since Hartshorne, has sought to restore an aesthetic dimension to geography is a crypto-Nazi, for, as Eagleton (1990, 28) points out, the aesthetic has ever been “a contradictory, double-edged concept.” On the one hand “it figures as a genuinely emancipatory force—as a community of subjects now linked by sensuous impulse and fellow feeling” while on the other it can also serve to internalize repression, “inserting social power more deeply into the very bodies of those it subjugates and so operating as a supremely effective mode of political hegemony.” The aestheticization of politics has, for this reason, a long history, posing both problems and potentialities in relation to social progress. There are left and right versions (the Sandinistas, after all, aestheticize politics around the figure of Sandino, and Marx’s writings are full of references to an underlying project of liberation of the creative senses). The clearest form the problem takes is the shift in emphasis from historical progress and its ideologies towards practices which promote national (or even local) destinies and culture, often sparking geopolitical conflicts within the world economy. Appeals to mythologies of place, person and tradition, to the aesthetic sense, have played a vital role in geopolitical history.

Herein, I think, lies the significance of conjoining aesthetic with social theoretic perspectives, bringing together understandings that give space priority over time with those that give time priority over space. Historical geography in general, and the study of the historical geography of space and time, lies exactly at that point of intersection and therefore has a major intellectual, theoretical, political and practical role to play in understanding how human societies work. By positioning the study of geography between space and time, we evidently have much to learn and much to contribute.

The Geographical Imagination

I conclude with a brief commentary on the implications of such a perspective for the study of geography and for that relatively small group of scholars occupying a niche labeled “geographer” within the academic division of labor.

The latter is a product of late nineteenth-century conditions and concerns. It is by no means self-evident that the disciplinary boundaries then drawn up (and subsequently fossilized by professionalization and institutionalization) correspond to contemporary conditions and needs. Partly in response to this problem,
the academy has moved towards an increasing fragmentation in the division of labor within disciplines, spawned new disciplines in the interstices and looked for crosslinks on thematic topics. This history resembles the development of the division of labor in society at large. Increasing specialization of task and product differentiation, increasing roundaboutness of production and the search for horizontal linkages are as characteristic of large multinational corporations as they are of large universities. Within geography this process of fragmentation has accelerated since the mid-1960s. The effect has been to make it harder to identify the binding logic that is suggested by the word "discipline."

The turnover time of ideas in academia has also accelerated. Not so long ago, to publish more than two books in a lifetime was thought to be over-ambitious. Nowadays, it seems, leading academics have to publish a book every two years if they are to prove they are still alive. Definitions of productivity and output in academia have become much more strictly applied and career advancement is more and more measured simply in such terms. There is, of course, a certain intersection here between research and corporate/nation state requirements, between academia and the publishing trade, and the emergence of education as one of the big growth sectors in advanced capitalist societies. Speed-up in the production of ideas parallels a general push to accelerate turnover time within capitalism as a whole. But greater output of books and journals must rest on the production of new knowledge, and that implies the much fiercer competitive search for new ideas, a much greater proprietary interest in them. Such frenetic activity can converge upon some consensual and well-established "truth" only if Adam Smith's hidden hand has all those effects in academia that it plainly does not have in other markets. In practice, the competitive marketing of ideas, theories, models, topic thrusts, generates color-of-the-month fashions which exacerbate rather than ameliorate conditions of rapid turnover, speed-up and ephemeralism. Last year it was positivism and Marxism, this year structurationism, next year realism and the year after that constructivism, postmodernism, or whatever. It is easier to keep pace with the changes in Benetton's colors than to follow the gyrations of ephemeral ideas now being turned over within the academic world.

It is hard to see what we can do to resist such trends, even when we bewail their effects. Our job descriptions do not encompass those of "intellectual geographer" but much more typically specify ever narrower proficiencies in everything from mere command of techniques (remote sensing and GIS) to specialists in transport modeling, industrial location, groundwater modeling, Soviet geography, or flavor of the month topic (sustainable development, chaos theory, fractal geometry or whatever). The best we can do is appoint specialists and hope they have an interest in the discipline as a whole. Our seeming inability or unwillingness to resist fragmentation and ephemerality suggests a condition in which something is being done to us by forces beyond our control. I wish, for example, that those who now so loudly proclaim the power of individual agency in human affairs could demonstrate how their or our specific agencies have produced this macroshift in our conditions of working and living. Are we mere victims of social processes rather than their real progenitors? If here, too, I prefer the Marxian conception of individuals struggling to make history but not under conditions of their own making, it is because most of us have a lifetime of exactly that kind of experience behind us.

This same question comes to mind when we consider the resurgent interest in aesthetics, landscape geography and place as central to the concerns of many human geographers. The claim that the place of geography in academia is to be secured by attaching the discipline to a core concept of place (even understood as a unique configuration of elements) has strengthened in a phase of capitalist development when the particular qualities of place have become of much greater concern to multinational capital and when there has simultaneously been a renewed interest in the politics and image of place as an arena of supposed (even fictional) stability under conditions of powerful time-space compression. The social search for identity and roots in place has reentered geography as a leitmotif and is in turn increasingly used to provide the discipline with a more powerful (and equally fictitious) sense of identity in a rapidly changing world.

A deeper understanding of the historical geography of space and time sheds considerable light on why the discipline might cultivate such arenas of research in this time and place. It
provides a critical perspective from which to evaluate our reactions to the social pressures that surround us and suffuse our lives. Do we, in unthinkingly accepting the significance of place to our discipline, run the danger of drifting into subconscious support for a reemergence of an aestheticized geopolitics? The question does not imply avoidance of that issue but a proper confrontation of it through a conception of geography that lies at the intersection between social and aesthetic theory.

The historical geography of space and time facilitates critical reflection on who we are and what it is we might be struggling for. What concepts of space and time are we trying to establish? How do these relate to the changing historical geography of space and time under capitalism? What would the space and time of a socialist or ecologically responsible society look like? Geographers, after all, are contributors (and potentially powerful and important ones at that) to the whole question of spatiality and its meanings. Historical geographers with their potential interests in both space and time have unbounded potentiality to reflect back not only on the history of this or that place and space relations but the whole conundrum of the changing experience of space and time in social life and social reproduction.

Critical reflection on the historical geography of space and time locates the history of ideas about space and time in their material, social and political setting. Hartshorne did not write *The Nature of Geography* in a political vacuum but in post-Anschluss Vienna, and that fact (though never mentioned in consideration of that work) is surely present in its manner of construction and intervention in the world of ideas. This text of mine is likewise constructed in the light of a certain experience of time-space compression, of shifting mores of social reproduction and political argument. Even the great Kant did not develop his ideas on space and time, his distinctions between aesthetic, moral and scientific judgments, in a social vacuum. His was the grand attempt to codify and synthesize the evident contradictions inherent in the bourgeois logic of Enlightenment reason as it was then unfolding in the midst of the revolutionary impulses sweeping Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. It was a very distinctive product of that society with its particular and practical interests in commanding space and time with rational and mathematical precision, while experiencing all the frustrations and contradictions of initiating such a rational order given the nascent social relations of capitalism. If Hegel attacked Kant (on everything from aesthetics to his theory of history) and if Marx attacked both Hegel and Kant (again, on everything from aesthetics to basic conceptions of materiality and history), then these debates had everything to do with trying to redefine the paths of social change. If I, as a Marxist, still cling to that quest for an orderly social revolution that will take us beyond the contradictions, manifest injustices and senseless “accumulation for accumulation’s sake” logic of capitalism, then this commits me to a struggle to redefine the meaning of space and time as part and parcel of that quest. And if I am still so much in a minority in an academy in which neo-kantianism dominates (without, it must be said, most people even knowing it), then this quite simply testifies to the persistence of capitalist social relations and of the bourgeois ideas that derive therefrom, including those defining and objectifying space and time.

Attachment to a certain conception of space and time is a political decision, and the historical geography of space and time reveals it so to be. What kind of space and time do we, as professional geographers, seek to promote? To what processes of social reproduction do those concepts subtly but persistently allude? The current campaign for geographical literacy is laudable, but what language is it that we teach? Do we simply insist that our students learn how many countries border on Chad? Do we teach the static rationality of the Ptolemaic system and insist that geography is nothing more than GIS, the contemporary version of the Hartshornian rule that if it can be mapped, then it is geography? Or do we teach the rich language of the commodity, with all its intricate history of social and spatial relations stretching back from our dinner table into almost every niche of labor activity in the modern world? And can we go on from that to teach the rich and complex language of uneven geographical development, of environmental transformations (deforestation, soil degradation, hydrological modifications, climatic shifts) whose historical geography has scarcely begun to be reconstructed? Can we go even further and create a deep awareness of how social processes can be given aesthetic forms in political debates.
(and learn to appreciate all the dangers that lurk therein)? Can we build a language—even a whole discipline—around a project that fuses the environmental, the spatial and the social within a sense of the historical geography of space and time?

All such possibilities exist to be explored. But whatever course we take entails a political commitment as to what kind of space and time we wish to promote. We are political agents and have to be aware of it. And the politics is an everyday question. The marketing head of a U.S. communications firm in Europe commented (International Herald Tribune, 9 March 1989), on conversations with senior bankers in which he sought to go beyond the banter about it being the warmest January on record and talk seriously about the long-term effects of global warming. His clients all reacted in such a way as to suggest they thought about the environment “in the same way we practice a hobby, in the comfort of our homes” and at weekends, when we should really think about it all the time “especially at work.” But how can international bankers think about such things when their time-horizon is minutes? If twenty-four hours is a very long time in financial markets, and if finance capital is today the most powerful force in international development, then what kinds of long-term decisions can we expect from that quarter that make any sense from the standpoint of even long-term planning of investments, let alone of environmental regulation? When the commander of the Vincennes had to make the life-and-death decision on whether an image on a screen was a diving fighter or an Iranian airbus, he was caught in the terror of time-space compression which ultimately dissolves everything into ephemera and fragments such that the devil takes not the hindmost but the global totality, the whole social fabric of an internationalizing society that is more closely linked than ever before and in which the pace of change has suddenly accelerated.

Geographers cannot escape the terrors of these times. Nor can we avoid in the broad sense becoming victims of history rather than its victors. But we can certainly struggle for a different social vision and different futures with a conscious awareness of stakes and goals, albeit under conditions that are never of our own making. It is by positioning our geography between space and time, and by seeing ourselves as active participants in the historical geography of space and time, that we can, I believe, recover some clearer sense of purpose for ourselves, define an arena of serious intellectual debate and inquiry and thereby make major contributions, intellectually and politically, in a deeply troubled world.

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