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Edited by Gyan Prakash & Kevin M. Kruse: The Spaces of the Modern City

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* *Introduction* *

GYAN PRAKASH

IF MODERNITY IS A Faustian bargain to unleash human potential and subdue nature to culture, then modern cities are its most forceful and enduring expressions.¹ The breathless intensity and the awesome power of modern life have made and remade cities across the world: London and Paris, Shanghai and Hong Kong, Tokyo and Mumbai, New York and Mexico City. The great dramas of recent centuries—the triumph of industrialization and capitalism, the erection of powerful state apparatuses and the outbreaks of political insurrections, the exercise of colonial control and eruptions of anticolonial movements—were enacted on the stage of the modern cities. These urban spaces have shaped, and were shaped by, race, class, and gender relations and exclusions. Modern urban life, lived on streets and in apartments and slums, has produced new subjects, solidarities, and meanings. The cityscape—its streets and sidewalks, its public space, the ebb and flow of its crowd, its infrastructure of transportation—has served as the setting for dynamic encounters and experiences. A great deal of modern literature, art, and cinema would be unthinkable without the modern city. In an important sense, cities are the principal landscapes of modernity.

Nearly as old as the modern city is the critical attention from writers and social commentators. One has to only think of the brilliant reflections of the European urbanists of the early twentieth century: Georg Simmel on the psychic space of the metropolis; Siegfried Kracauer on the mass forms of everyday life, taste, and entertainment; and Walter Benjamin on the dreamscape of commodities.² These writings continue to inform our understanding of the contemporary urban experience. But the recent spurt of urbanization questions the idea of the European metropolis, defined as a bounded unit by modernist theory, as the paradigmatic modern city. As globalization increasingly extends urban forms across the world and integrates the existing cities into vast urbanized systems of communication, transnational flows of finance, commodities, labor, images, and ideas, the idea of the city as an organism, defined by an internally coherent civic life and structured by clear relationships to the region, nation, and wider world, appears obsolete. Urban theorists tell us that the city is dead. They suggest

that, in place of the clearly defined unity called *the city*, we live increasingly in the amorphous and expanding spaces of urban networks.

Even as recent change forces us to rethink the urban form, it is undeniable that we continue to speak of cities as specific spatial formations: London, New York, Mumbai, Hong Kong. Urban sprawl and the rise of vast urban networks connected by rapid transportation systems do not erase the idea of cities as particular places, each defined by its distinctive constellation of social space, history, and memory. It may be the case that the production of space—binding center and periphery, city and the countryside—has superseded the city, as Lefebvre suggests, but lived experience, as he himself also argues, is not subsumed by spatial practices.³ Urban dwellers experience their globally situated and connected urban space as decidedly local lifeworlds, thick with specific experiences, practices, imaginations, and memories.

Written against the background of these two opposed representations, this volume represents an effort to rethink the history of urban modernity and urban change. This means, first, expanding the focus beyond Europe and North America to include the experiences of urban modernity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It entails approaching the historical experiences of modern urban forms and transformations as ineluctably global, specific, diverse, and divergent. Second, what unites the essays dealing with cities ranging across the world and discrepant historical moments is the concentrated focus on the city *as* a spatial form of social life and power relations, not just a site of society and politics. The contributors identify historical processes in the urban form itself. This does not only mean the structure and design of the built environment but also the entire architecture of urban life and representations; they regard urban forms *as* society, economy, culture, and politics. Third, its approach is interdisciplinary. The contributions range across several disciplines—sociology, history, art history, cinema, and cultural studies—and each essay treats different fields of knowledge. This is as it should be, for cities are composed of many fragments, each one requiring the examination of several dimensions of knowledge. Any attempt to provide a singular and totalizing map of the city can only impoverish the richness and multiplicity of the urban experience.

THE CITY AND THE URBAN

Urban studies is not a new field, but the past two decades have witnessed a noticeable “urban turn” in scholarship.⁴ In disciplines ranging from anthro-

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pology to history, sociology to literature, and architecture to film and cultural studies, there is renewed interest in urbanism. This spurt of academic attention has occurred against the background of the rapidly quickening pace of urbanization. As early as 1970, Henri Lefebvre wrote about urbanization superseding industrialization as the global dynamic of capitalism.⁵ Whatever one may think of his view about the supplanting of industrialization, there is no doubt that urbanization is a central force in the contemporary world. According to UN estimates, whereas 30 percent of the world population was urban in 1950, this proportion rose to 47 percent in 2000 and is expected to reach 60 percent by 2030.⁶ Much of the developed world has been predominantly urban at least since the early twentieth century as a result of capitalist industrialization and colonial and imperial expansion. The recent spurt in urbanization, therefore, is concentrated in the developing regions of the world. Mexico City, Sao Paolo, and Mumbai are experiencing explosive growth, outstripping the populations of old cities such as London, Paris, and even New York. Breakneck expansion of manufacturing and striking economic growth animate rapid urbanization in some cases, as in China. But, in other cases, as in sub-Saharan Africa, the runaway growth of cities occurs in the context of economic stagnation, growing debt, and economic crisis, producing specters of political and social convulsions.

The spurt in urbanization is a matter not just of numbers but also of change in the urban form. Suburbanization and the proliferation of “edge” cities at highway interchanges encapsulate the transformation in the urban landscape in North America.⁷ Paris no longer consists only of the city built by Baron Haussmann but also includes the towns connected to it through roadways, airports, and metro lines.⁸ The megacities of the developing world, swollen with rural immigrants, are burgeoning with slums and squatter settlements, pointing to the increasing urbanization of poverty.⁹ As the urban network extends to fill the spaces between the city and the countryside, one can no longer speak of a strict divide between the two. Increasingly, regional urban complexes and huge urban corridors have blurred the earlier city-hinterland distinctions. China, for example, now contains two immense urban networks, one extending from Hong Kong to Guangzhou on the Pearl River Delta, and the other spreading outward from Shanghai on the Yangtze River Delta. The emergence of such regional constellations has also meant a massive urbanization of the countryside.¹⁰ These urban processes cannot be situated exclusively within national borders, for global movements of finance capital, people, ideas, and images traverse the cities. These movements across territories are not qualitatively equal—the migration of Mexi-

can laborers across the border to the United States and the circulation of Hollywood films across the globe are not the same—but globalization confounds the earlier center-periphery dichotomy.

Urban theorists contend that capitalist globalization has also overwhelmed the modernist city of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹ Classic political movements and ideologies nursed in the heyday of modernist cities have lost their appeal, and new informational networks and “pirate modernity” have marginalized old urban solidarities.¹² As globalization produces different kinds of legal regimes and citizens, and new hierarchies of cities and urban dwellers, it poses a new set of questions for citizenship, identity, and politics.¹³ The nonlegal basis of urban existence and politics in the slums and squatter settlements of the global South mocks the classic ideal of the city as the space of civil society and political discourse.¹⁴ Never realized in practice even in European cities, this ideal lies in ruins. The global processes and representations of contemporary urbanization have destroyed the halo of this modernist urbanism. Today, it is difficult to sustain the paradigmatic notion of modern cities as unified formations, securely located within their national borders, with clearly legible politics and society.

Paul Virilio had predicted the dissolution of the city by media and communication.¹⁵ But it was left to Rem Koolhaas, the architect and urban theorist, to celebrate the death of the modernist city and hail the emergent urban form: the “Generic City.” Writing in 1988 about the emergent urban forms, he emphasized a shift from the center to the periphery, fragmentation, and spontaneous processes, and described his research on the contemporary city as “a retro-active manifesto for the yet to be recognized beauty of the twentieth-century urban landscape.”¹⁶ He followed this up by directing a research program at the Harvard School of Design, called the “Project on the City,” that aimed to understand the “the maelstrom of modernization” that was creating a “completely new urban substance.”¹⁷ The project has produced three jumbo volumes of text, photographs, maps, graphics, and statistics that chart the mutations of urban culture, the explosive urbanization in China’s Pearl River Delta, and the global expansion of consumption.¹⁸ Assemblages of different materials rather than conventional books, these volumes embody in their form the fragmented, patched-together, runaway urbanism that they seek to represent. There is no prior theory that drives this investigation, only the premise that the paradigmatic European city of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provides little understanding for the emergent form. Consisting of the endless repetition of certain simple structural modules, the Generic City, according to Koolhaas, has spread across

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continents.¹⁹ “The definitive move away from the countryside, from agriculture, to the city is not a move to the city as we knew it: it is a move to the Generic City, the city so pervasive that it has come to the country.”²⁰ Spreading and sprawling, the Generic City liberates the city from the captivity of the center, from the straitjacket of identity. It self-destructs and renews according to present needs and abilities. It is free from history. The Generic City is the post-city being prepared on the site of ex-city.²¹

There is no doubt that certain urban forms—shopping malls, entertainment zones, multiplex theaters, atriums, and airports and hotels that double as cities unto themselves—have become a common sight in cities across the world. But Koolhaas gets so caught up in the present’s proclamation of its novelty and singularity that he fails to interrogate it. Consider, for example, the case of Shanghai, the paradigmatic example of China’s transformation by capitalist modernization. With its gleaming skyscrapers on the Bund, the maze of highway overpasses and bridges, efficient underground transportation, and the proliferation of generic shopping malls, restaurants, and cafés, the city evokes the power of newness. Change appears weightless, free from the burden of history. To be sure, there is a historical preservation movement and a revival of interest in the Shanghai of the 1920s—focused on its Art Deco architecture, cosmopolitan literature and cultural artifacts, and the gangster world.²² But this memory is selective; it skips over the city’s imperial and communist history in order to draw a line of continuity between the cosmopolitan culture of “old Shanghai” and the global, contemporary city to suggest that the present is the reappearance of the past.²³ This ransacks the past to suit the present chimera of novelty and dynamism. Ackbar Abbas writes that Shanghai exists today as a remake, “a shot-by-shot reworking of a classic, with a different cast, addressed to a different audience, not ‘Back to the Future’ but ‘Forward to the Past.’”²⁴ This remake glides over historical discontinuities and fuses the past and the present to create a single, spectacular image of Shanghai as a modern, global city. But cities have never been mere expressions of a singular logic or a dominant historical force—neither in the past nor in the present. To think of Paris as the embodiment of classic modernity, Los Angeles as the paradigmatic postmodern metropolis, and Shanghai as the typical expression of globalization is to simplify their complexity, smooth out their social and political contradictions. The excessive focus on “global cities” like New York, London, Tokyo, and Shanghai, and the ranking of cities according to their position on the scale of economic globalization also tends to flatten their urban processes and experiences and suggests that capital obliterates distinctions and functions without social and cultural differences.

Urban change is undeniable, but the historicist narrative of the rise and fall of the city is deeply flawed. Foucault wrote: “The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of ever accumulating past.”²⁵ Speaking this language of development, the discourse of the death of the city suppresses the spatiality of history.²⁶ The history of the modern city as a space of porosity, multiplicity, difference, division, and disruption is concealed when urban change is represented as the unfolding of one historical stage to another, from the bounded unity and identity of the city of industrial capitalism to the “placeless” and “generic city” of globalization—from modernity to postmodernity. We should remember that “placelessness,” now attributed to postmodernity, was once identified with industrial modernity. Thus, Marx spoke of capitalism’s forceful expansion across all borders and frontiers in its relentless drive to transform everything concrete into abstract measures of value: “all that is solid melts into air.” The language of temporal succession forgets this history and gets caught up in the present’s self-proclamation of its novelty and singularity.

The discourse of the demise of the city is also deeply elitist. Consider, for example, the sentiments expressed by Mr. Kapur, a character in Rohinton Mistry’s novel, *Family Matters*, set in contemporary Mumbai. “Nothing is left now except to talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs,” he says to his employee. “Let us sit upon these chairs and tell sad stories of the death of cities,” he continues, grieving for the demise of his beloved Bombay. As he pronounces Bombay’s death, he evokes its past life as a shining city on the sea, “a tropical Camelot, a golden place where races and religions lived in peace and amity.”²⁷ The city appears under siege, imperiled by spatial mutations and occupation by the uncivil masses, a wasteland of broken modernist dreams of the elites. Bombay, one often hears elites say sorrowfully, is now Slumbay. Beatriz Sarlo identifies something similar in certain literary representations of Buenos Aires in the 1990s. There, too, “slumification” produces images of the multitude spreading from the periphery to the interior of the city. The city, overtaken by migrants from the interior and other parts of Latin America, is emptied of its elite and appears to return to nature. The “ruins of buildings turn into demolition sites, the demolition sites into wasteland, the wasteland into countryside.”²⁸ The elites can no longer recognize Buenos Aires, for it no longer conforms to the contours of the imagined city of the past. As in Bombay, so in Buenos Aires, the elite memories of the city’s past unity and harmony leave no place for hierarchy and multiplicity; they mistake the earlier class and ideological dominance of the urban space for the actual description of the past.

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Lefebvre wrote that urban space has a structure more like that of flaky pastry than the homogenous and isotropic space of classical mathematics.²⁹ Layered and heterogeneous, the city can be understood as a subset of multiple urban practices and imaginations.³⁰ This is true as much of the so-called bounded places of the cities of an earlier time as it is of the new urban constellations of shopping malls and the displaced poor. The exploration of their “flaky pastry” structure, therefore, offers an opportunity to re-vision modernity, to bring to the surface its myths, delusions, opportunities, desires, contradictions, and conflicts. Sharing this understanding, this volume uses the dimension of space to explore the history of modern cities as diverse spatial constellations of intersecting, contradictory, and conflictual practices and experiences. It rejects the view that treats cities as organisms ordered and experienced according to an underlying logic, and engages with modernity’s spatial and material forms. Thus, even as the contributors analyze modern cities against the background of capitalism, empire, and globalization, they focus on the specific historical forms of urban imaginaries, everyday life, and politics in which large social forces were expressed, experienced, and reconstituted.

GLOBAL SPATIAL IMAGINARIES

Jonathan Raban wrote: “The city as we know it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city.”³¹ He did not mean, I think, that the city was only a state of mind, but that it is constituted by the interplay between its spaces and its imaginations. The brick and mortar do not exist apart from representations, nor are our ideas without material consequences or take shape outside the hard city of maps, statistics, and architecture. The city is both the actual physical environment and the space we experience in novels, films, poetry, architectural design, political government, and ideology.³² We encounter this imaginary city in Walter Benjamin’s sketches of the myths, illusions, and figurative tropes that he identified in street life, shopping arcades, the display of commodities, and images.³³ But whereas Benjamin wrote only of European cities within the context of capitalism, the authors in the first section of this book chart urban imaginaries in global contexts, underscoring their location in the broader realms of both the imperial dynamic and the world capitalist economy.

David Frisby, for instance, mines the details of urban planning in fin-de-siècle Vienna to make a broader argument about contested sites and cultural formations in metropolitan modernity. This is a territory previously covered

with great elegance by Carl Schorske.³⁴ But Frisby shows that a seemingly simple debate over street design in the Austrian city—specifically, whether they should be straight or crooked—intersected with larger issues connected to the power of capital, the circulation of commodities and individuals, traffic configurations, urban infrastructures, pathologies of urban life, and the aesthetics of the street. In short, as Frisby demonstrates, the discussion over street design was inherently part of a larger debate over Vienna's urban imaginary as a "world city," as a city of the Austro-Hapsburg Empire. This debate, which took shape as an extended comparison of Vienna and Berlin, brought to the forefront issues of history and memory, of modernity and antimodernity. Ultimately, Frisby's reading of this debate discovers different imaginaries of the modern city as the embodiment of society itself.

In his study of the global reach of modern Los Angeles, Philip Ethington chronicles a similar process unfolding in a city precisely as it came to terms with its new status as a "world city." His essay recounts the many ways in which Los Angeles first constituted itself as a global metropolis in the 1920s and 1930s through the incorporation of local histories in a global imaginary. Here, the spatial landscape of Los Angeles, itself a multiethnic and multiracial space, is connected with an unlimited array of global peripheries through economic histories of oil exploration, aircraft production, and labor. It is also represented via racial ideologies of white supremacy through cultural histories of popular fiction and Hollywood films. In a narrative that ranges from southern California across the porous frontier between Mexico and the United States and then into east Africa, Ethington tracks the ways in which the ruling powers in Los Angeles sought out familiar and friendly environments where racial and economic hierarchies mirrored their own. As he makes clear, capitalism, colonialism, and conquest combined to insert the city of Los Angeles into a global frame. But this insertion, he suggests, was ultimately framed by the white ruling class's assumptions of racial superiority and support of nonunion labor, and was driven by its larger sense of destiny.

Sheila Crane, meanwhile, explores the manifestations of architectural modernism in Marseilles and Algiers, charting their mutuality in the complex history of colonialism and decolonization. As her essay makes clear, their histories are inseparable, for the spaces of the two cities spilled into each other through the memories, experiences, and imaginations of the citizens who lived not simply inside these cities but in the blurred boundaries of an interconnected world that stretched between the French *métropole* and its north African periphery. Tracking the countless instances in which this shared culture found expression in architecture, photographs, bank notes,

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and museum spaces, Crane demonstrates the ways in which “fantasies of control” first took shape in the colonial context and then lingered on in the postcolonial world. In the end, her study makes a strong case for understanding the coexistence of Marseilles and Algiers in a dense interconnected web of historical and global imaginaries.

In the section’s last essay, Martin Murray examines the “invented city” of Johannesburg in the aftermath of apartheid. His portrayal of the city is one that accounts for its utopian and dystopian spaces in equal measure. In some ways, Murray notes, the city represented an “urban glamour zone” of affluent residential and recreational enclaves that made ostentatious displays of global integration and a celebrated “enterprise culture” of neoliberal design. He contrasts this slice of Johannesburg with a very different world that is lived in its shadows, an “urban danger zone,” defined by interstitial spaces of garrison-state confinement marked by a crumbling infrastructure, few if any amenities, and no hope of escape for its residents. In contrasting these different realities of Johannesburg and bringing them into contact, Murray demonstrates how the postapartheid metropolis shuttles between its troubled history of racial exclusion and its contemporary engagement with the global regime of capital and the spectacle of consumption. Seen from this kaleidoscopic perspective, Johannesburg appears as an intricate intersection of histories, memories, and imaginations, all taking shape at once within local and global struggles.

These essays clearly show that the city-region-nation-world framework does violence to the history of modern cities. The spatial imaginaries of Vienna, Los Angeles, Marseilles and Algiers, and Johannesburg were shaped by the histories of their global engagements. Out of such engagements, which varied from city to city, there arose “thick” local imaginaries in which capital, class, race, nation, colony and postcolony, and apartheid and postapartheid urban spaces were experienced, represented, and differentially lived.

SPATIAL POLITICS

Lefebvre writes of space as occupation. It is not geography but practice, by which he means that it is not an inert and given physical environment but a space produced by human actions. In this volume’s second section, the contributors flesh out the concept of urban space as a projection of politics, as political practices. The spaces of the modern city both shaped political concerns and were in turn shaped by them. Urban spaces could generate political clashes, as conflicts rooted in, or fought over, the built environment

lent themselves to larger clashes that spilled into the broader world of politics. But urban spaces were just as often reconfigured by such political clashes, as rival groups divided by distinctions of race, class, and politics sought to make such political divisions concrete in the physical structures and order of the city. Ultimately, this approach situates politics and political discourse in the spatial landscape of the city, while also identifying and highlighting the political lineaments of urban space.

Dina Khoury, for example, places contemporary Baghdad's dystopic violence and communal geography in historical perspective by excavating its spatial politics during the period between 1776 and 1810. She makes the case for considering the space of the city as a dynamic constellation—not just as geography but as an intersection of politics, society, and geography together. Examining the violent episodes in the wake of challenges to Ottoman hegemony, the encroachment of the Wahhabi movement, and Baghdad's incorporation into the post-Napoleonic world of the British Empire, she describes the new conceptualization of spaces within the city and the city's relationship with the hinterland. As her exploration of the spatial component of rebellion and violence makes clear, ethnic identities were reconstituted and reorganized through the spatial relations of the city. Noting the openly political agendas of the leaders in these incidents, their use of specifically sectarian language, and their mobilization of ever wider swaths of urban and tribal populations, Khoury argues that narratives of these violent incidents reveal that spatial distinctions were more than simply lived environments, but rather social constructs marking the boundaries of ethnic, sectarian, and political divisions within the city and between the city and its surroundings. Then as now, violence sparked by the crisis of political order transformed Baghdad's urban geography and the spatial practices of its diverse population.

Focusing on the Mexican city of Morelia between 1880 and 1926, Christina Jiménez likewise studies the ways in which public space has been constructed through popular politics. She begins with Angel Rama's influential argument about the role of writing—specifically, legal codes and municipal laws and regulations—in maintaining social hierarchy, and ingeniously turns it on its head by showing how the poor used the world of letters to extend the space of politics beyond the ballot box and newspaper.³⁵ She pays close attention to how street vendors lobbied municipal authorities through individual letters and collective petitions and how those authorities, in turn, responded to their pleas. The regulations that were intended to secure the place of political elites and order the city according to their needs, she argues, had the unintended consequence of empowering ordinary citizens and obli-

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gating the city council to recognize their needs and respond in kind. Through her reclamation of the political activism of these working-class vendors, Jiménez argues that popular politics forced the Porfirio regime to accept their claims to public space and free trade. Ultimately, her work underscores the generative role of popular politics in the organization and function of urban spaces, showing how it redefined “letters” and “public space.”

Belinda Davis, meanwhile, explores West Berlin in the Cold War era. She reconstructs the West Berlin of the “’68ers,” bringing to life their imaginary of the city as an island of political freedom in the midst of the communist bloc. For the international student movement of the New Left, West Berlin represented a universal source of inspiration; for activist German youths, it stood as a Mecca for their political travels. The essay provides insight into the Situationists’ imagination of creating a “happening” and, in a larger sense, turning West Berlin into a “world city” with connections across the globe. Davis argues that the relationship between the city and the activists who made it their home was both political and physical. Even as the city provided material for them, she contends, these activists reconstituted the city as a “scene” and a “movement” attuned to their own needs. In doing so, they helped reshape not simply West Berlin but West Germany as a whole, affecting the popular discourse on everything from how to raise a child to how to stage a protest.

In her study of postwar Los Angeles, Sarah Schrank explores the many meanings behind the Watts Towers. Literally constructed of urban debris by an Italian immigrant named Simon Rodia, the towers emerged as a potent symbol for Angelenos across the spectrum of race and class. As Schrank illustrates, the Watts Towers were invested with multiple and often contradictory meanings. Newspapers portrayed them as a public safety hazard, while civic boosters touted them as a sign of urban redevelopment and an attraction for tourists; art journals praised them as an important work of international significance, while neighboring African Americans claimed them as a metaphor specific to their own community. Ultimately, Schrank argues, the complicated meanings of the Watts Towers have proven to be a political challenge and a cultural irony, as the structures symbolize both the city’s failure to ensure social equality for all its citizens and the artistic possibilities of indigenous Angelenos. Built with premodern labor in a modern city, the multiple, changing, and conflictual class and racial meanings of the towers bear testimony to Los Angeles’s history as a space layered with different practices.

As these essays take us from late-eighteenth-century Baghdad to 1960s Los Angeles, they make clear that we have to take seriously the spatiality

of politics. Cities were not mere sites for the political dramas; urban spaces, constituted by their political and social locations, generated and influenced the politics of empire, rebellion, and violence (Baghdad); the meanings of public space (Morelia) and freedom (West Berlin); and struggles over representations of art and race (Los Angeles). The essays suggest that we cannot think of these modern political forces and concepts without their particular locations and histories in specific cities. Nor can we understand these cities outside their constitution by their political histories.

SPACES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The modern city is lived, above all, in everyday life. We do not mean *everyday* in the social-history sense of “ordinary life” but rather as a distinct space of routines produced and governed by modernity. It is not that pre-modern societies did not have daily routines, but that these were ruled by natural and ritual rhythms. Capitalism produced an altogether different space of daily life, ordered by the clock and industrial production. Max Weber referred to it as the “iron cage” of machinelike rationality; Walter Benjamin saw it as the space of the phantasmagoria of commodity aesthetics; and Lefebvre viewed it as the space for the reproduction of society.³⁶ It was in the realm of daily routines that radical social and cultural transformations were absorbed: the new became conventional; the unfamiliar was rendered familiar. On the other hand, it is also in the space of the everyday that the familiar is defamiliarized, where the routine can be made strange. In this sense, the everyday presents a paradox—it is the space of both the routine and strange, the familiar and unfamiliar, a domain colonized by discourse but also something hidden and evasive.³⁷ It serves not only as an arena for the operation of large historical forces—capitalism, the state, the bureaucracy, and so on—but also as a space of innovation, improvisation, change, and resistance. As urban residents confront the experiences of the everyday, especially through the construction and consumption of public culture, such as cinema, media reports, and artistic expressions and popular music, they remake the city and their world in countless ways. The essays in this final section approach everyday life in both these senses.

In his study of postwar London, for instance, Frank Mort explores the question of change in modern society at the level of everyday life. Rather than invoking narratives that unfold over a long time period, Mort investigates London in the 1950s through a close examination of a notorious murder case in Rillington Place, a working-class and racially mixed neighbor-

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hood in central London. In chronicling the discovery of the murder; the trial of the killer, John Christie; and the media coverage, Mort seeks to identify the catalysts of change. The murders, he argues, brought together in a visceral sense three related sets of problems that were understood to have a quintessentially metropolitan location: the symbolic relationship between the social elites of London and the disreputable characters at the city's fringe, contested understandings of pathological manifestations of an aggressive masculinity and a sexually deviant femininity, and a growing debate about the cultural impact of Caribbean migration on the indigenous character of a "problem" neighborhood in the central city. Tracking the public fantasies and personal transgressions of ordinary Londoners, Mort demonstrates that the crimes committed in the "liminal space" of Rillington Place sparked significant transformations in sexual morality and race relations in the aftermath of empire.

Mamadou Diouf, meanwhile, turns our attention to youth culture in Dakar during the 1980s. Providing a close analysis of the cultural forms favored by Senegalese youth, Diouf examines the ways in which they coped with the end of postcolonial dreams of nationalism and approached the opportunities and fantasies of globalization. The degradation of the urban environment, he argues, closely mirrored the degradation of political practices. In turn, the reconstitution of the city of Dakar and its reintegration as an integral part of Africa's global relations found a cultural counterpart in the cleansing rhetoric of the Set/Setal movement. As his essay makes clear, it was through artistic expression—in both traditional art forms such as wall paintings and, more important, musical expressions like hip-hop—that the youth culture in this Senegalese city helped rebuild the urban political culture and thereby renew the city and its residents in equal measure. Diouf's reconstruction of the Dakar youth culture's dynamic engagement with the shattering of postcolonial dreams and the commodification enforced by globalization brings into view a refreshingly different picture from that drawn by "Afropessimists."

In his exploration of Tokyo, Jordan Sand dissects the "memory projects" that proliferated in the city during its economic boom in the 1980s. Through their renaming of discarded materials, their elevation of found objects scattered across the urban landscape, and their larger reconstruction of Tokyo as the "bricolage city," groups such as the Street Science Observation Society successfully used nostalgia to offer a critique of the dominant culture. Operating determinedly outside the reach of larger historical preservation projects and choosing instead the space of the everyday, these projects provided a sharp challenge to the triumphalism of the city's "bubble

culture" in the midst of a fevered economic boom. Sand chronicles the work of the individuals and groups who styled themselves as observers of urban space and urban history. Like Benjamin's rag picker and collector, their deliberate focus on the ephemeral and the "useless" objects inside the city served to project an everyday utopian vision as a counterpoint to the dominant culture of commodification.

Ranjani Mazumdar brings this section and the volume to a close with her study of 1990s Mumbai as portrayed in its cinema. At the heart of the essay is her examination of the relationship between Mumbai's representation as a quintessentially modern space and the images of poverty, misery, crime, and violence that also define the city. Globalization, she argues, has introduced a new landscape of desires and images to these contradictory representations. Treating popular films as an archive of the city, she identifies the emergence of an urban delirium of commodities and crime, of spectacle and death. Mazumdar identifies this archive in two starkly different genres of Mumbai films. First, she considers a new generation of family dramas that seek to reconcile traditional Indian values with global mobility by setting their stories in panoramic interior spaces embellished with the visual signs of global commodity aesthetics. Conceived and created by a new class of professional set designers, the panoramic interior expresses a crisis of belonging, a fear of the street, and a desire for the good life all at once. Against this, Mazumdar juxtaposes a growing canon of gangster films that invert this spatial structuring by using an elaborate exploration of the dark corners and crowded streets of the urban world to heighten the sense of danger and desperation. As her work demonstrates, the crisis of the repetitive everyday world in the "imagined city" of cinema brings about unpredictable events that both challenge the banality of daily life while projecting a new community. The quotidian experience of global mobility, consumption, and street life, reflected in the traffic between the "real" and the imagined cinematic city, emerges as an urban delirium of modernity and tradition, wealth and poverty, opportunity and its absence, freedom and violence.

Like those in the previous two sections, these chapters explore the space of the everyday in particular cities while keeping their global connections in mind. Methodologically, these essays also successfully bridge the gap that exists between the social-scientific analyses of structures and discourses and forms of representation that deal with the poetics of the everyday. They read the work of larger social forces in the relentless realm of the quotidian while also capturing its unpredictable, dynamic, and critical facets. We encounter the momentous transformations of metropolises brought about by the postcolonial aftermath, globalization, consumerism, and deindustrializa-

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tion, but not the demise of the city. Instead, the authors provide us with a series of varied and vivid portraits of changes in everyday spaces of urban life, sketched to highlight the different and discrepant lived experiences of cultural modernity.

THE PROMISE OF THE MODERN CITY

Taken together, the essays in this volume present urban modernity as irreducibly global and diverse. Treating capitalism, empire, and globalization as key frames for examining urban processes, they challenge the diffusionist model according to which modernity first emerged in one center (Europe) and then spread to the peripheries. They show that there is no single city or experience that can be regarded as paradigmatic. Neither nineteenth-century Paris nor early-twentieth-century Berlin can be regarded as models of the modern capitalist city. Capitalist relations have been global and uneven since inception, and colonialism, imperialism, and globalization have operated with dissimilar effects across and within different cities. Not only do Baghdad, Berlin, Mumbai, Dakar, London, Los Angeles, Johannesburg, Marseilles, Morelia, and Tokyo look very different from each other; each one appears internally differentiated. Imaginaries and the spaces of politics and everyday life diverge. This is not to make an argument for “multiple modernities” but to suggest that urban modernity, shaped by and shaping global historical forces, must be considered differentiated and discordant.³⁸

Common to these diverse experiences of urban modernity has been their functioning as spaces for generating new forms of society. In his essay on “The Right to the City,” Lefebvre wrote of the city as a space of urban encounters to produce new experiences, to establish complex and transparent relations with the world.³⁹ These experiences and relations could be obtained neither by returning to the traditional city nor by hurtling headlong into a colossal and shapeless agglomeration, but by claiming a “transformed and renewed *right to urban life*.”⁴⁰ For him, this urban was like a virtual object, a horizon to reach, not immediately identifiable in the actual city, which he thought was no longer a coherent entity.

Such a horizon struggles to surface in contemporary urbanism. The insertion of existing metropolises in vast agglomerations of production, consumption, migration, transport, finance, media, and digital networks often generates a dystopic urban imaginary. Set against it is a utopian past of coherence and unity, the transparent public space and the rational citizenry, and the simple pleasures of face-to-face urban life. Even as urban transfor-

mations speed ahead to create “placeless” imaginaries, the rationale of economic renewal and development is used to commemorate and recreate invented pasts in festivals and fairs, turning us into tourists in our own cities. Both are ruses of the present. The images of urban dystopia and utopia act together to suppress the appearance of porosity, contradictions, and the promise of urban life. This volume acts otherwise.

NOTES

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2. Georg Simmel, *Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 324–39; Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, trans. and ed. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999). See also David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986); and Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), 25–50, 65–80, and 81–98.

3. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

4. Gyan Prakash, “The Urban Turn,” in Ravi Vasudevan et al., eds., *Sarai Reader 02: The Cities of Everyday Life* (Delhi: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, 2002), 2–7.

5. Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Originally published as *La révolution urbaine* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970). See also, David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985).

6. United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2002), 1.

7. See Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Anchor, 1992).

8. D. Sudjic, *The 100 Mile City* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1992), 296, cited in Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 2.

INTRODUCTION

9. Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (New York: Verso, 2006).
10. For a recent overview of urbanization in China, see John Friedmann, *China's Urban Transition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). For specific case studies, see *The New Chinese City*, ed. John R. Logan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). Li Zhang's *Strangers in the City: Refigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001) provides a probing account of the challenges posed by the movement of rural migrants to Beijing. Michael Dutton's *StreetLife China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) is a fascinating guide to the social, cultural, and political life in the new urbanscape.
11. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).
12. Ravi Sundaram writes about the political implications of a "pirate modernity" built around the "copy" and illegal media networks in contemporary societies. See his "Uncanny Networks: Pirate and Urban and New Globalisation," *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 1 (January 3, 2004): 64–72.
13. Arjun Appadurai and James Holston, "Introduction: Cities and Citizenship," in *Cities and Citizenship*, ed. James Holston (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 1–20.
14. Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
15. Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg (Paris: Semiotexte(e), 1991).
16. Rem Koolhaas, "Postscript: Introduction for New Research 'Contemporary City,'" *Architecture and Urbanism*, 217 (October 1988), reprinted in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 325.
17. Rem Koolhaas, "City of Exacerbated Difference ©," in *Great Leap Forward*, ed. Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas, and Sze Tsung Leong (Cologne: Taschen; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Design School, 2001), 27.
18. *Ibid.*; Rem Koolhaas/Harvard Project on the City, Stefano Boeri, Stanford Kwinter, Nadia Tazi, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Mutations* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001); and Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas, and Sze Tsung Leong, eds. *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (Cologne: Taschen; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Design School, 2001).
19. Rem Koolhaas, "The Generic City," in *S,M,L,XL*, 2nd ed. (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998), 1,248–64.
20. *Ibid.*, 1,250.
21. *Ibid.*, 1,252.
22. Elizabeth L. Perry, "Shanghai's Politicized Skyline," in *Shanghai: Architecture and Urbanism for Modern China*, ed. Seng Kuan and Peter G. Rowe (New York: Prestel, 2004), 106–7.

23. Ackbar Abbas, "Play It Again Shanghai: Urban Preservation in the Global Era," in *Shanghai Reflections*, ed. Mario Gandelsonas (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 37–55.
24. *Ibid.*, 38.
25. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22.
26. Prakash, "The Urban Turn," 5.
27. Rohinton Mistry, *Family Matters* (New York: Knopf, 2002), 263–64.
28. Beatriz Sarlo, "The Modern City: Buenos Aires, the Peripheral Metropolis," in *Through the Kaleidoscope: The Experience of Modernity in Latin America*, ed. Vivian Schelling (London: Verso, 2000), 119.
29. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 86.
30. Helen Liggett, *Urban Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xi.
31. Jonathan Raban, *Soft City* (London: Harvill Press, 1988), 4.
32. Cf. James Donald, who writes that the city is a coherence ascribed to diversity, an abstraction that emerges in the productive transactions between the physical environment and its experience and representation. "The traffic between urban fabric, representation and imagination fuzzies up the epistemological and ontological distinctions, and in doing so, produces the city between, the imagined city where we actually live." *Imagining the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 10.
33. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*. See also Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); and Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).
34. Carl E. Schorske, "The Ringstrasse, Its Critics, and the Birth of Urban Modernism," in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Vintage, 1981), 24–115.
35. Angel Rama, *The Lettered City*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996).
36. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: HarperCollins, 1991); Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of Nineteenth Century, Exposé of 1939," in *The Arcades Project*; and Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovich (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).
37. Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002), 16.
38. Cf. Jennifer Robinson's important book, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (New York: Routledge, 2006), which outlines a postcolonial approach to cities, arguing against the opposition set up between the European cities of cultural modernity and non-European cities of development.
39. Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. and ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 149.
40. *Ibid.*, 158.