

The Crisis of Leftist Urban Theory in Postmodernism:
The Case of the L.A. 'School'

by

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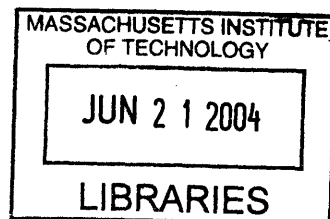
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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration into the methodology of a particular group of urbanists based in Los Angeles who call themselves the 'LA School'. It understands their varied approaches as the product of an epistemological history stretching from the mid-nineteenth century through the advent of post-structuralism and postmodernism into the present. It is not an attempt to portray the whole history of social theory in this period but instead it is an investigation into the ways a particular group of leftist scholars approach a city having selected from this heritage particular methods of explanation. In particular it is focused on postmodernism as a significant disruption in Marxist theory of the city.

The 'LA School' represents one response to this epistemological crisis in its adoption of particular methodological tools, namely a critical spatial materialism. This adoption speaks to the responsibility of leftist urban theorists to know the city if they are to help it. As the LA School is principally a school of theory, not practice, I understand its greatest contribution to lay in outlining contemporary leftist methods of explanation.

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INTRODUCTION

This is an exploration into the epistemological methods of a particular group of urbanists based in Los Angeles who call themselves the 'LA School'. It understands their varied approaches as the product of an epistemological history stretching from the mid-nineteenth century through the advent of post-structuralism and postmodernism into the present. It is not an attempt to portray the whole history of social theory in this period by any means. It is an investigation into the ways a particular group of leftist scholars approach a city having selected from this heritage particular methods of explanation. This heritage from which they work is full of disruptions, frustrations and anxiety, alternatively declaring both the impossibility of truthful knowledge and totalizing meta-narratives. This is therefore a thesis about the difficulty of presenting knowledge of something as complex as the city in the contemporary setting. In the wake of postmodernism this difficulty has for those who, to varying extents, see industrial capitalism as inherently complicated by failures and injustice, those on the left, amounted to nothing less than a crisis. The 'LA School' represents one response to this epistemological crisis present in the responsibility of leftist urban theorists to know the city if they are to help it. I therefore understand the greatest significance of the LA School to be the provision of a lens onto the heritage of contemporary leftist urbanism as a whole more so than the understanding of Los Angeles, even while the school has done much in that regard.

On October 11-12, 1987, a group of academics mostly based at the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California gathered at Lake Arrowhead in the San Bernardino Mountains to discuss the possibility of a collective project stemming from their individual studies of Los Angeles.¹ This project, still one of unclear strategies if not an unclear goal, is the Los Angeles School of urban studies, or simply the 'LA School', first described by Mike Davis in a 1989 piece "Homeowners and Homeboys: Urban restructuring in L.A." as "a new wave of Marxist geographers ...

¹ Attendants included Dana Cuff, Mike Davis, Michael Dear, Margaret FitzSimmons, Rebecca Morales, Allen Scott, Ed Soja, Michael Storper, and Jennifer Wolch. Dear, Michael. "Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a Debate." *City and Community* 1:1 (March 2002)

political economists with their space suits on” (qtd. in Dear “Los Angeles and the Chicago School” 11). These geographers and planners had throughout the 1980s used Los Angeles as a laboratory for exposing such ideas as the post-Fordist metropolis or the postmodern metropolis and by 1987 evidently thought a more collaborative approach to benefit the presentation of their findings. Consequently many adherents of the LA School, it seems, now agree that the purpose of their writings is to relate through a variety of examinations the myriad social repercussions of a perceived global economic restructuring since the 1970s, while others, for example Marco Cenzatti, are at loss for a “common denominator” among the literature. (Cenzatti, “Los Angeles and the LA School” 1)

It seems to me, having read a great body of the school’s criticism, that their effort went un-noticed for quite some time, perhaps because of this lack of an explicit collective strategy. Criticism of LA school adherents such as Edward Soja or Allen Scott remained limited to their individual works through the mid-1990s, as it often remains; it was not until the last five years that one finds an abundance of criticism squarely aimed at an ‘LA School’. Why this is the case is largely a matter of the school’s ability to promote its image, a project not launched in earnest until 1996 with the publication of The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century, edited by Allen Scott and Edward Soja, and Rethinking Los Angeles, edited by Michael Dear, H. Eric Schockman, and Greg Hise. Accusations of urban boosterism and self promotion ensued; the title of the first work is a conscious reference to Park and Burgess’ 1925 work The City, the defining product of Chicago School sociology.

There are those criticisms that pose the works of the LA school as dependent upon a certain aesthetic of irreparable conflict or merely as resurrecting old tropes of a failed dreamscape. Feminists and others approach the writings of the LA school armed with epistemological questions, accusing Soja, Dear and others of feigning total knowledge. Still more argue that the use of a macro perspective, something shunned by many planners and social theorists, relegates individuals and active collectives to the realm of ‘the masses’ where, void of human agency they are passive to the will of regimes of accumulation and modes of production. Correspondingly, many LA school adherents are

criticized for seemingly embodying such abstract concepts as ‘capital’ with will and personality, exacting action on its human subjects. Much of this criticism comes together as a general notion of the LA school as the hasty ramblings of alarmist social theorists who conjure up images of Borges’ the Aleph, Bladerunner, and other doomsday scenarios when discussing Los Angeles.

However this idea of the LA urbanists as reckless or up-start has an earlier germination than the publication of The City and other works in 1996. In 1990 with City of Quartz, much of America’s leftist readership felt vindicated in the exposure of Los Angeles as the wasteful paradigmatic behemoth of cowboy capitalism, the type of place that with the election of conservative governments in the United States and the United Kingdom was destined to overrun the carefully manicured landscape of the postwar welfare state with pollution, sweatshops, union busts, militarized police brigades, and immutable landscapes of poverty. Davis and his readers in turn felt proven when the behemoth exploded in 1992.

What happened in the advent of Davis’ popularity and the press coverage of 1992 was the launch of yet another mythic Los Angeles, and one far more parasitic than that of Chandler or Brecht in that unlike its noir predecessors, Davis’ Los Angeles was not contained and could potentially swallow up whole countries if not the world. Furthermore, termed as “history”, Davis’ work garnered the attention of scholars eager to see if Bladerunner had actually materialized on the west coast (qtd. in Davis City of Quartz, jacket). Attempting to “excavate the future in Los Angeles” as Davis had implored of his readers, I have over the last few months discovered somewhat of an exaggeration on Davis’ part, and in my search for other viewpoints a group of urbanists calling themselves members of an ‘LA School’ (Davis City of Quartz). For better or worse they had tentatively attached themselves to Davis both explicitly in 1987 and implicitly in their leftist lean, and with that, his literary blockbuster, even as their own collective project remained elusive to insiders and outsiders.

From there I attempted to identify them and box them into a history of myth-builders. My effort was hasty but understandable; Los Angeles has consistently been, since the 1884 publication of Ramona, perhaps more so than other cities, subject to a

most seductive series of mythologies, romanticized as built utopia in found arcadia, noir landscape of failed dreams, or playful pastiche by the sea. Was it possible that an entire group of academics had, in self-promotion, carefully selected certain empirical data while ignoring other research, perhaps only looked at Los Angeles through the most macro lens, and in a language of superlatives and neologisms, erected Los Angeles as prophetic oracle of doomsday? As my research revealed, the reality is more complex. The body of work consigned to the 'LA School' simply can not be described as such, not even a small portion of the time.

What my research instead revealed was the carefully disordered projection of Los Angeles as a possible laboratory, not necessarily a paradigm or harbinger, for research into subjects as varied as racial dynamics in the American city, labor structures in the global city, the role of immigrants in the post-Fordist city, and the concept of heritage and identity in a postmodern city. Furthermore the writings of the LA School tend to approach their subjects with a careful avoidance of dualisms if not an explicit attack on them, challenging the reader to reconsider so many structuralisms: global vs. local, macro vs. micro, simulation vs. dissimulation, urban vs. non-urban, and so on. Almost immediately I found myself dealing with a significant epistemological heritage, one that brought to surface nineteenth century Marxist theorists, the Chicago School and ecological urbanism, Regulation Theory and late capitalism, Derrida and post-structuralism, Lefebvre and the Social Production of Space, Castells and neo-Marxism, Jameson and "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", together leading in the direction of a new leftist critical geography, evident among Los Angeles based scholars from the early 1980s.

Of course, the new leftist critical geography is not a project unique to academics at UCLA and USC, so why an 'LA School'? Did UCLA's Department of Urban Planning have a particularly targeted hiring practice over the course of the 1960s and 70s that brought together these ideas in one place? Is there something peculiar about the city of Los Angeles, as so many historians and social critics have maintained, that in the 1980s allowed its envisioning as an especially postmodern landscape in which particular systems of labor organization, production, accumulation, urban form and cultural

phenomena had become most explicit? It is my belief that the appointment of social scientists from a variety of backgrounds into the Department of Planning at UCLA by Harvey Perloff reflected a nationwide trend in the 1960s and 1970s dictating that planners had to engage themselves in social theory if they were to help communities rather than harm them, as so much renewal had done. (Violich) That Los Angeles has a particular form and systems of organization is obvious, but adherents of the LA school are the first to tell readers that what they see in Los Angeles is visible elsewhere, in fact that is among their principal assertions. The fact that many writings of the LA school contradict and even explicitly criticize one another further complicates the reasoning for an 'LA School'; I have already touched upon the elusive nature of a common project, and will elaborate on that very much in this thesis.

One would imagine the LA School, given convention, to be an easily identifiable self-consciously assembled group of thinkers with a common strategy and a particular notion of an easily definable place as the best site for their study.² But the LA School is anything but that; there is no widely agreed upon list of adherents, discussions of Los Angeles are consistently grounded in the notion that its social conditions are unique in their assemblage but also visible in Boston, Sao Paulo, and Singapore, and no member of the LA School seems clear as a consequence of just where their 'Los Angeles' ends, let alone what may result from a collective project in the way of solid practice.³ As such, one may be better off to picture the LA School as a cottage industry, operating for the most part outside the old city walls of structuralist social theories among many other theorists with similar projects related to restructuring, global cities, increased social polarization and spatial justice.⁴ Here, outside these walls, production is flexible and largely liberated

² In "Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a Debate." Dear gives four criteria for a school: "1. engaged in a common project (however defined); 2. geographically proximate (however delimited); 3. self-consciously collaborative (to whatever extent); 4. externally recognized (to whatever threshold)." It is my impression that his parenthesized disclaimers defeat any attempt at definition as they negate each preceding criteria.

³ In *The 100 Mile City* Sudjic presents such a list, saying "Los Angeles has within it a Singapore and a Managua, a Boston and a Detroit: rust belts, Third World sweat shops, and the highest concentration of PhDs and engineers in the world."

⁴ Michael J. Engh, in "At Home in the Heteropolis: Understanding Postmodern L.A." also uses the analogy of a cottage industry, but more in reference to the multi-nodal nature of the school rather than the capabilities of a new mode of production.

from narratives that codify method. I believe the greatest error of the LA School therefore lays in promoting the very notion of a 'school', as this is itself one of these archaic structures indicating a privileged approach to, in this case, the subject of urban studies.

Yet beyond this question of whether or not so many scholars have been errant in their assertion of an LA School since October, 1987, I am more significantly interested in the general state of urban theory, visible not necessarily through the city of Los Angeles but through that group of scholars who just happen to be focused on that city. In the writings of the Los Angeles school I will engage in an epistemological dig. My dig will lead me to evidence of various approaches to the study of urban form and society, some more defined than others. It will most importantly lead me to the epistemological crisis that was postmodernism which, citing the apparent failure of the modernist project to construct a world of codified relationships in the linear pursuit of human progress, frustratingly declared an end to knowledge as we knew it. Urban theorists, like other social scientists, were left to pick up the pieces, perhaps celebrating, like Reyner Banham in Los Angeles: the Architecture of the Four Ecologies, the arrival of an aesthetic of haphazard quotationism and pastiche. Alternatively social theorists may have retreated into a faith in a totalizing order, like Castells, dismissing in The Urban Question even the city as an individual subject of analysis, one that distracted our attention from the only worthy subject of discussion: capitalism. Many more scholars used the condition of epistemological disorder as an opportunity for more partial protests against modernist narratives of gender or race, pointing to their 'constructedness'. Still others pointed to the replacement of modernism by a postmodern super-structure, if postmodernism is understood solely as the particular materialist logic of a restructured economy. And some, including I believe some adherents of the LA School, along with many others, approach postmodernism as a refined modernism, one that is multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and fragmented in a landscape of so many conflicting and cooperating agents. In other words, many LA School adherents see multiple modernisms providing a condition where we may talk of many voices and the possibility of multiple readings, one in which we should talk of 'a' city rather than 'the' city.

This thesis is organized into three chapters. The first, 'A Pre-History of the LA School: The Evolution of a New Critical Geography', broadly considers the heritage of social and particularly urban social theory from which the adherents of the Los Angeles School have gathered their principal tenets from. By no means does this attempt to acknowledge all of the influences evident in the writings of Edward Soja, Michael Dear, Jennifer Wolch and many others. It is a project that follows those theories made most explicit in the majority of LA School literature, and only discusses these theories insofar as they inform these writings. I will discuss the Chicago School then but principally within the context of the ecological approach to cities and the definition of the city as a particular, separate subject of analysis, as these are aspects of Chicago thought with which adherents of the LA School take issue. I will furthermore discuss how other scholars, not those of the LA School but certainly to their inspiration, have critiqued the methodology of the Chicago School. Also necessary here is a discussion of Regulation Theory and its criticism. More significantly I will discuss the importance of an urban phenomenology in social theory, from the Chicago School to Lefebvre's assertion of urban space as the fundamental phenomenology of capitalism through which social justice must be pursued. From Lefebvre's neo-Marxist stance I will then proceed to a discussion of other neo-Marxists, including Castells, who for a time most determinately dismissed the city as a subject of inquiry, and David Harvey, who called for an activist postmodern left. I will also discuss general discourse on 'the global city' and some case studies of postmodernism's growing presence in urban theory from the 1970s.

In the following chapter, 'The Rise of the LA School', I will disembark at Los Angeles in the 1980s, with Edward Soja's Postmodern Geographies and the early works of Allen Scott and Michael Storper in political economy and a related critical theory. Here I will also discuss the most pop-culture alarmist productions of the school's adherents, those of Mike Davis, and the initial movement to define and LA School. In the final chapter, 'An LA School Heyday?', I will explore how "the chrysalis unfolds" in the further articulation of an 'LA School' from 1996, reviewing the many studies collected in various volumes into subjects as varied as hi-tech clusters, immigration, labor niches, and political organization. (Dear and Flusty, "Resistible Rise of the LA School" 8) In

between these volumes there are many essays, articles and books that approach Los Angeles from the micro, meso and macro levels and build upon empirical studies to at once think locally and globally about Los Angeles, de-construct its particular political economy and expose it as relevant to studies of urban regions across the globe. This section will demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of LA School literature, and draw insights into particularly powerful inspirations, for example regulation theory, feminism, or Marxist political economy.

Also in this final chapter I will, aside from presenting my own criticism, explore the body of criticism, or that which I could excavate, directed at the works of individual members of the LA School, collective efforts, as well as the very concept of an LA School. I will explore how much of the criticism, especially that directed at the LA School as an idea, has been selective and therefore may lend readers of Dear, Scott, Soja, Morales or Wolch a pre-disposition towards cynicism. Critics have often approached the school by selecting a particular piece of work as representative of the LA School, something which is understandable given the traditional notion of a 'school' as fairly unified in approach and strategy, but not appropriate in this case. Often, for example, critics come to the errant conclusion that given a particular piece of work, the LA School is as a whole distanced from empirical approaches. This is not only wrong, but it draws attention away from many LA School adherents' protests that it is exactly macro-level critiques that have been missing in urban theory since a relativist postmodernism forced social theorists into the tiny niches that they knew most well. Such criticism may possibly (re)reduce urban theory to a purposefully narrowed scope and theory's resulting practice to so many incremental steps that have little effect on the 'bigger picture'. Other critics select certain works and relegate the LA School into the arena of 'pop-urbanism' or portray the school as the Southland's new story-tellers. Usually what this criticism fails to grasp is the LA School in its entirety, and this is in no small part due to the fact that the school is so multi-faceted and furthermore lacks any single seminal work; collective efforts have thus far mostly arrived in the form of essay compilations with open-ended introductory pieces. If anything, what the criticism of the LA School reveals is that, as I discussed above, 'school' may not be the right term for the multiple projects going on

between UCLA and USC sometimes under the auspices of certain centers for research, but often independently of each other.

The value of the LA School then, 'school' or not, lies in its peculiar disorderliness. When evaluating the LA School we are forced to question why a group of academics, supposedly working together in a common project as their title of 'school' would have it, have to a lesser extent than the Chicago School, with its ecological method, or the Frankfurt School, with its highly fixed Marxism, arrived at a specific picture of the state of contemporary urbanism and society. What can we make of a 'school' of 'urban' theorists who through an unbridled attack on structuralism argue that a privileged view is impossible and that the very territoriality of the 'urban' has been debased? We must ask what epistemological shifts have provided for such a disruption in method and resulted in such a fragmented view of the city. I find that in the fragmented lens of the LA School, the most profound dig through the epistemological heritage of contemporary urban theory becomes possible.

CHAPTER 1: A PRE-HISTORY OF THE LA SCHOOL: THE EVOLUTION OF A NEW CRITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Adherents of the LA School tend to position their subjects, whether they are immigrants, the homeless, or hi-tech clusters, within a generally shared social geography of Los Angeles, and then judge that geography based on certain values. The adherents of the LA School tend to understand the city in such a way that highlights notions of injustice according to a specific leftist ethic in which analysts talk about notions of political and economic opportunity or equality, justice being the understanding that some critical measurement of opportunity or equality has been attained by a person, a group, or the entire populace. The purpose of this section is to understand both the evolution of this normative ethic and the way Los Angeles School adherents understand geography to be social in the first place. It is, as I said in the introduction, a project that follows those theories made most explicit in the majority of LA School literature, and one that only discusses these theories insofar as they inform these writings. This chapter thus answers to what theory predates the LA School, which when adopted by LA School adherents frames their principal contribution as one limited for the most part to the grounding of this theory in one city's particular material and cultural condition, as others have done elsewhere. Here I am consequently excavating two elements that I consider to be pervasive in LA School literature: social theory's definition of space, particularly urban space, and the left's criteria for judging that subject.

It is my stance that social theory is not inherently productive of criteria for judgment, because it may be limited simply to observation, which is always biased but not necessarily communicating a notion of 'right' or 'wrong'. While observation is always slighted it may decidedly leave judgment up to the reader. What is generally true of the LA School is that their observations are explicitly tied to a normative ethic leading to judgment; adherents of the LA School strongly criticize that social theory which does not in some way seek resolve in a value judgment. It is also my stance that geography, as an understanding of the earth's surface, natural or man-made, is not inherently social. As

Edward Soja tells us in Postmodern Geographies, for much of the twentieth century the question of space was left out of social theory and geography was not understood as a mode of social understanding or criticism.

Given the particular character of LA School adherents as leftist critical geographers drawing from a diverse but generally easily navigable epistemological heritage, I will discuss the following subjects in this section. First I will consider the Chicago School, its selection of the city as a subject of analysis, its inspiration in ecology and also in the work of Georg Simmel and other European theorists, and a sampling of the school's criticism from the left. Secondly, I will look at what is generally termed neo-Marxism, that Marxist thought of Western European thinkers in the 1960s and 1970s, Castells for example, and also the spatial materialism of Harvey and others. I will consider neo-Marxism's reaction to the rise of a post-structuralist critique in 1960s France and the beginning of a material, periodized notion of postmodernism even while it was not explicitly discussed as 'postmodernism'. I will then consider Regulation Theory and its rise to prominence in Britain and America, followed by a brief discussion of the 'global city' hypothesis. Finally I will look into four pieces on cities that illustrate the flexibility of postmodern discourse and its themes, and the tendency of the left, in seeking social change, to ground it in a phenomenological materialism. Having reviewed this epistemological heritage of LA School adherents the basis for a departure to Los Angeles in the 1980s will be set. Their literature is thus made understandable as a grounding of a particular lineage in that city's condition, rendering that city understandable within the boundaries of a leftist critical geography but possibly, as I will show, excluding other understandings.

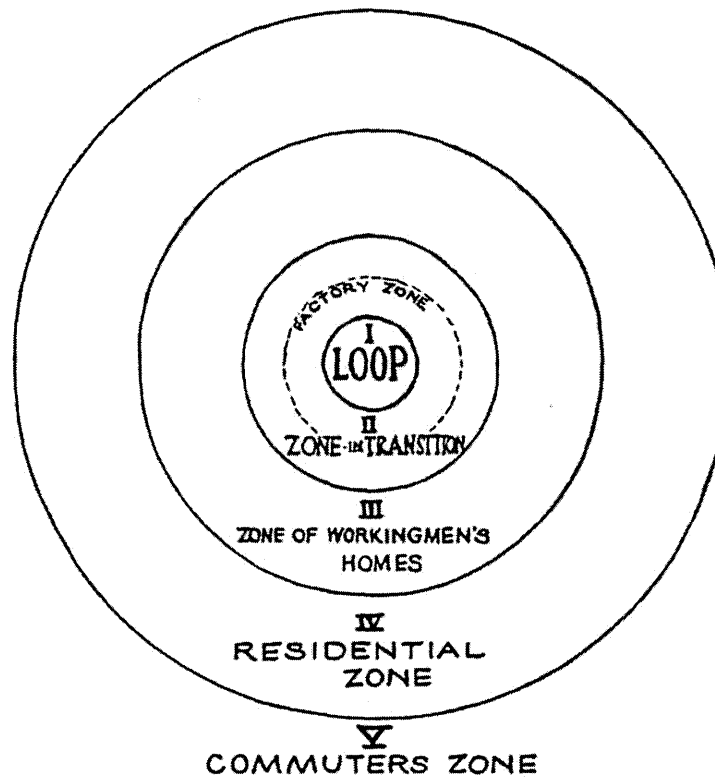
1.1 The Chicago School, Ecology and Objectivity

In his introduction to the 1984 Midway Reprint of Park and Burgess' The City Morris Janowitz states that the Chicago School was "strongly motivated by a drive to view the city as an object of detached sociological analysis. These men were fascinated with the complexities of the urban community and the prospect of discovering patterns of

regularity in its apparent confusion ... They did not produce definitive answers, but they posed crucial questions which still dominate the thinking of urban sociologists. It was inevitable that as their original theoretical formulations diffused they lost their subtlety. Some of the contemporary arguments in urban sociology seem to contribute to such oversimplification because of a failure to confront their original formulations.” (Park and Burgess, viii) Janowitz indicates in his introduction that the Chicago School is widely recognized for its particular contribution to sociology, principally in its definition of urban studies as a specific realm of sociology, but that this focus on the city has also attracted criticism. This criticism focuses both on individual methods or findings of Chicago sociologists and also more generally on their treatment of the city as a detached object in the first place.

The City is the seminal work of the Chicago School. Six chapters were written by Robert F. Park, two by Ernest W. Burgess and one each by Roderick McKenzie and Louis Wirth. Published in 1925 it reveals what I take to be the three principal tenets of Chicago School method: the understanding of the city as an object behaving according to specifically urban phenomena and therefore worthy of analysis detached from society as a whole, the possibility of objectivity, and the use of human ecology. These three tenets are represented in opening statements: “It [the city] is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly human nature...” (Park and Burgess, 1) The city therefore represented a distinct unit capable of complete understanding; while part of society, its parts e.g. neighborhoods, worker groups, immigrant communities, interacted according to the particularly urban codes of behavior brought about by industrialization. At the same time the city could impose its will on an ‘outside’ non-industrial world: “the city is the nucleus of a wider zone of activity from which it draws its resources and over which it exerts its influence ... From another point of view the city sends out its tentacles to the remotest corners of the world ...” (Park and Burgess, 182-183) The city was therefore a place defined by commerce, something dynamic and changing like an organism rather than a place defined by security like the fortress cities of a previous era. Most basically, the industrial, commercial city was conceived as a plant in the soil, which, while existing with other organisms, was in itself

defined as unique, related to the outside only through inputs and outputs, and within organized into relationships of dominance and subordination that enabled efficiency, sustainability and growth.



Burgess' concentric zone model. (Dear and Flusty "Los Angeles as" 57)

When talking about the performance of the organism as a whole, Burgess' concentric zone model, an "ideal construction," comes to mind. (Park and Burgess, 50) The different rings were understood as housing particular groups with particular functions e.g. 'the workers belt.' The zones were subject to change and nuance, not always logical but determinately natural. "The general process of expansion in urban growth involves the antagonistic and yet complementary process of concentration and decentralization," as represented by the rise of commercial districts and factory districts in the industrial city, combined with simultaneous dispersion of population across

surrounding territories according to individual function. (Park and Burgess, 52) This disorganization “must be conceived not as pathological, but as normal,” and with that they affirm the normalization of change and demote human agency. (Park and Burgess, 52) On residential communities for example they explicitly denote the ‘natural’ character of community formation, thereby understanding community as functionalist, determined rather than determinable. If Park and Burgess are to talk about immigrant communities for example, they talk about them in terms of a natural accommodation or organization into the existing structure. “I was impressed by the marked differences, as between immigrant groups, with respect to their ability to accommodate themselves to the American environment and within the limitations imposed upon them by our customs and our laws, to provide for all the interests of life” (Park and Burgess, 119) Immigrant ‘invasion’ and ‘accommodation’ also result normatively in community: “The general effect of the continuous processes of invasions and accommodations is to give the developed community well-defined areas, each having its own peculiar selective and cultural characteristics. Such units of communal life may be termed ‘natural areas’ or formations, to use the term of the plant ecologist.” (Park and Burgess, 77) And yet the interest of Park and Burgess in differences, ‘peculiar selective and cultural characteristics,’ seems to challenge the existence of normative process.

As stated before the Chicago School did not arrive at a unified theory of the city; this is apparent in contradicting discussions of active human agency on the one hand and the passivity of human units to ‘natural’ laws on the other. They elaborate on human communities’ peculiarity: “The human community differs from the plant community in the two dominant characteristics of mobility and purpose, that is, in the power to select a habitat and in the ability to control or modify the conditions of the habitat.” (Park and Burgess, 65) Homelessness for Park and Burgess was also a question of individual temperament, not structural processes. Similarly, while the replacement of pulpit by the printed page was believed to be a natural process in the evolution of urban communities, individual communities, immigrant or not, may realize their own moral codes, giving to distinct ‘moral regions’ within the city. Alternatively individual action may lead to decadence; on the subject of relationships they state that “movement in the person, as

from one social location to another, or any sudden change as caused by an invention, carries with it the possibility of cultural decadence.” (Park and Burgess, 150) An encounter between subject from community ‘A’ and subject from community ‘B’ would occur in a region of promiscuity, geographically definable as a “bright light area.” Such a region is not a productive component of the organism but a result of exterior threats, such as the automobile, which they perceived as overly mobilizing, or the failure of interior components, in this case individuals, to behave correctly.

The contradictions apparent in The City: on the one hand the control of agents by immutable patterns of succession, invasion, or accommodation and on the other hand the possibility of individual agents’ self-enhancement or demise through individual action is worthy of exploration. That Park and Burgess held personal beliefs in social reform is not doubted and this becomes apparent in their discussion of human agency, but their tendency to portray action as inevitably limited has attracted lengthy and diverse critique. The inspiration of the Chicago School and its evolution need to be considered here.

In the late 19th century sociology was, due to European theorists’ macro-level approach to social theory, usually treated by departments of philosophy in universities. On the other hand there was the more politically engaged activity of social reform at universities and elsewhere. Lester Kurtz in Evaluating Chicago Sociology understands the early 20th century Department of Sociology at The University of Chicago as an effort to combine concern for social problems with empirical research but at the same time incorporate the macro-theory of Europeans with the goal of explaining the myriad phenomena of America’s largest purely Industrial Age boomtown. Although no one solid explanation evolved, their ideas of human ecology, studies of social organization, social psychology and methods of social control were generally shared and reveal much about the early and present status of urban theory.

Of first concern here is the European heritage of social theory. Robert Park, co-author of The City, had much personal contact with both Durkheim and Simmel as a student in Germany. Chicago’s human ecology was significantly inspired by Comte’s and Durkheim’s organismic analogies (Kurtz, 21) While Park did specifically examine those issues that concerned Marxists, Kurtz speculates that because of the influence of Simmel,

Park often did so without explicit judgment and thus without suggested remedies. Simmel was particularly concerned with critical distance i.e. how the observer engages with any given subject. Simmel expressed this in a distrust of history, which he understood as real experience subjected to re-telling and therefore mutation. History was therefore not any accurate reflection of what really was. Ian Craib quotes Simmel: “How does the raw material of immediate experience become the theoretical structure that we call history? ... To demonstrate this is to develop a critique of historical realism – of the view that the science of history should provide a mirror image of the past ‘as it really was.’” (qtd. in Craib, 54) Simmel’s principal departure from Marx was therefore in his interest in historicism more so than history. In this way even while he tended towards a Marxist economism, he did so almost in the interest of producing an aesthetic of society, not an accurate picture or policy for reform.

He writes of society as composed of relationships between people and their combination, but he gives society, in its inability to be known, a reality of its own, producing and reproducing itself by socializing its members into fixed relationships. This immutability of society is something that distanced him from Marx, and something when carried over to Chicago School sociology led to the criticism of Chicago as conservative and unconcerned with social change. But at the same time, Simmel, like those at Chicago, wished to “preserve the autonomy of the spirit” and believed that “society should not provide the explanatory base of every aspect of human life.” (Craib, 54) He therefore avoided a teleology at the same time he talked about social determination. This apparent contradiction was resolved in saying that every way of seeing presumed totality. He thus preserves individual autonomy but this too represented a ‘retreat from politics’: “Simmel sees society, system cohesion and social cohesion as objective culture, a process which increases the choices open to the individual whilst at the same time freezing and colonizing the internal life process. We cannot analyze the life process without turning it into its opposite, and in the end there is only the integrity of the individual perspective. This represents a retreat from politics”(Craib, 263) Here we see the leftist critique of that discourse which treats perspective as objective on the one hand, but ‘freezes’ individual knowledge into a position of inherent inadequacy on the other and thus implies

the irrationality of political action. Simmel is therefore criticized by leftist thinkers for seeing society as an aesthetic, largely immutable object. Given his influence in the rise of American sociology in Chicago, and Chicago's evidently 'Simmelesque' treatment of the city, the same leftist criticism is usually leveled at Park, Burgess and others.

Leftist criticism accuses the Chicago School of being overly dedicated to empirical study at the expense of coming up with a solid judgment of societal structures. Alternatively they have been criticized for making implicit theories in their research that are inherently conservative. Kurtz considers Herman and Julia R. Schwendingers' criticism in Sociology of the chair: a radical analysis of the formative years of North American Sociology (1974), saying: "A number of Chicago sociologists maintained assumptions that legitimated capitalism and systems of racist and sexist exploitation." (Kurtz, 16) Kurtz speculates that "at the core of their critique is a distrust of so-called 'value-free' sociology and the effort to separate facts from values." (Kurtz, 16) For Herman and Julia Schwendinger Chicago theory was "a reification and generalization of the concrete relations considered necessary for the emergence of a stable and harmonious capitalist society." (qtd. in Kurtz, 16) These ideas are carried into much Los Angeles school criticism of Chicago, as I will discuss later.

Kurtz believes that "Park and Burgess' view of the city as an ensemble of natural areas, with natural processes of succession, conflict, accommodation and competition, implied to some an inevitability in patterns of racial, ethnic and class domination." (Kurtz, 27) Walter Firey's 1947 Land Use in Central Boston argued that the concentric zone model did not allow for the intervention of "symbols and sentiments" on the urban landscape such as racism. (Kurtz, 26) Others, such as Gans' "Urbanism and Suburbanism as ways of Life" (1962) argue that the Chicago emphasis on the breakdown of community via increasing personal mobility in the city leads them to neglect alternative forms of social organization. (Kurtz, 26) Further to the left there is the accusation that the Chicago school is merely 'activist'; while indicating an underlying order, they at best encourage incremental action rather than large-scale systematic change. Gunnar Myrdal's 1944 An American Dilemma stated that Park's approach to racial problems "is naturalistic and fatalistic, and leads to resistance of social change." (Kurtz, 27)

The nature of criticism obviously depends however on individual critics' notion of what reform entails. Castells, who in the 1970s was a radical leftist and found conventional activism to be conservative as it simply worked for change within the existing superstructure, ironically lauded the Chicago School. Castells praises the school for its portrayal, however unintended, of industrial capitalism as the fundamental phenomenology of cities, resistant to change and oppressive. In The Urban Question he emphasizes that the Chicago School reveals those material factors manifested by capitalism. Kurtz concludes his analysis of the Chicago School's critics saying:

Although the Chicago ecologists were sensitive toward profound barriers to social change, it is doubtful that the fatalism that Myrdal dislikes is inherent in the ecological model ... As Castells points out there are some parallels between ecological and Marxist perspectives. Furthermore, the fundamental assumption lying behind the entire effort to develop sociology at Chicago is the possibility of human initiative in changing the patterns of social organization (Kurtz, 28-29)

Kurtz also implies that much criticism is simply unwarranted, as it disregards the lack of agreement among different models' empirical accuracy and the fact that models were not applied dogmatically but produced from research. What the Chicago School achieved therefore largely depends on what its interpreters expect of theory. The predominant LA School interpretation of Chicago, as I will show, echoes these accusations of distance and naturalism, revealing their stance as staunch promoters of a leftist normative ethic, but at the same time they often carry over Castells' interpretation in their own understanding of industrial capitalism in the city.

1.2 Neo-Marxism and Postmodernism in 1970s Urban Theory

To pair Neo-Marxism with Postmodernism may seem illogical; the former is traditionally concerned with capitalist accumulation over time as the basis for societal structures, while the latter is often thought of as taking a more multi-faceted view of social construction and even being a-historical. This perception of neo-Marxism is better consigned to a notion of orthodox Marxism, while this perception of postmodernism is a result, as many leftists would have it, of the conflation of post-structuralism (a way of

understanding) with postmodernism (a material condition). Through the course of the 1970s many social theorists moved towards the notion of a materialist postmodernism, although few called it that, for which space became a privileged interpretive vehicle. Critical leftist theory was still frequently iterated in accordance with tradition through historical materialism but in a new progression it was often exercised through a spatial materialism, grounding any condition, postmodern or not, in explanation but also taking into account a more post-structuralist interpretation of societal structures in ideas of layering and fragmentation. None of this is very clear cut of course, and as this thesis will show neo-Marxist geographers, past and present, are constantly battered by accusations of rigidity and even adhering to a strict economism and structuralism in an era when post-structuralism rules social theory.

This portion will therefore seek to answer how and why neo-Marxist theorists such as Lefebvre, Castells and Harvey maneuvered an uneasy relationship with post-structuralist themes of simultaneity and fragmentation by adding new variables to the Marxist vocabulary. It will explore most significantly how these theorists began to consider the spatial conditions of capitalism. The 1970s is a time when we see the question of space asserted in social theory as an active agent i.e. something that produced societal structures and individuals at the same time that it was enacted upon. Unlike the Chicago School, which scripted social action onto relatively passive spaces, thinkers such as Lefebvre activated space, making it at once a shaped and shaping force. These Marxist thinkers therefore also represented a new breed of geographers. On a more pragmatic level they observed the profound changes affecting European and North American cities during the 1960s and 1970s such as the withdrawal of large-scale industrial production and the crisis of the welfare state. They were thus concerned with a variety of issues that could answer to the apparent urban crisis. These included place-making, new economic landscapes, and the division of labor. Yet the principal concern for these theorists lay in method. A significant challenge for neo-Marxist theorists lay in post-structuralism's increasing effect on social theory from the 1960s. The theory's extreme relativism delivered a problem for any group bent on profound social change; Marxists had to answer, as the post-structuralists arguably had, to disruptions in the Modernist meta-

narrative made apparent by civil rights and independence movements along with the collapse of individual liberties in the Soviet Union. It became increasingly difficult by the 1970s, especially in the wake of the failure of the 1968 uprising in Paris, to talk about a single trajectory towards the realization of socialism based on only class struggle. There was little room for relativism in Marxist thought, but at the same time the rigidity of economism, cultural differences and alternate ways of viewing could no longer be denied. While Marxist theory in the 1970s did not arrive at an over-arching union between Marxism and a more multi-faceted notion of social process characteristic of postmodernism, it did make significant gestures in discussions of culture and the grass roots, especially in the spatial turn. The differentiation of postmodernism and post-structuralism became a more explicit concern in the 1980s as postmodernism rose to buzz-word status. This discussion is also inevitably tied up with understandings of planning; it will explore how an understanding of planning expanded to accommodate for both changing conditions in the welfare state and new ways of understanding the city. The evolution of these elements is absolutely fundamental to any understanding of the LA School. In addition to evaluating the foundational texts of these ideas, here I will often refer to LA School adherent Edward Soja, as his Postmodern Geographies (1989) addresses the Marxist heritage of the LA School and presents a good understanding of this tradition and its role in contemporary theory. Marxist econometrics was more explicitly the concern of Regulation Theorists, who will be discussed later.

Neo-Marxism or Western Marxism, as in non Leninist or Maoist Marxism, has its foundations in the Frankfurt School, with the works of Benjamin, Gramsci and Althusser. The Frankfurt School initially set about a theoretical critique of capitalism for the practical purpose of organizing a revolutionary movement. Nazism however had the effect of disbanding the school and after the war the rise of stable welfare states in Western Europe led to a detachment of the Marxist critique from workers' movements. The current of Marxist thought was certainly kept alive however. Sartre, significantly, merged existentialism with Marxist thought in his Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960). Sartre's observation of the Soviet Union's crushing of individual liberty led him to the conclusion that Marxist theory had failed. A refined Marxist existentialism was one that

allowed for the spontaneity of the present e.g. political action and therein a de-emphasis on class as the object of change. The University of Chicago recruited during and after the war many Marxist intellectuals; Gary Fine has recently speculated the rise of a 'Second Chicago School' in the postwar years characterized by these recruits. Fine says that while a solid program of research was not attained, the newly diversified department of Sociology expanded its concerns to comparative history and Marxist political economy while maintaining the pragmatist, liberal base, but giving it a more critical edge.

Contemporary leftist geography, and with that the bulk of urban studies, is generally assumed not to have germinated in Europe until the 1970s. (Dear and Flusty, Spaces of Postmodernity) It was not until the late 1960s, with growing instability and significant urban crises and challenges in the form of declining economic opportunity, the civil rights movement, and Paris' 1968 uprising that a Marxist theory explicitly attached to political change re-emerged and Marxist thought gained new faces. Sartre, in reaction to the 1968 uprising's failure, penned The Communists Are Afraid of Revolution and later declared himself to be an anarchist. The Marxist theorists of the 1970s were, due to the nature of the observed crisis, explicitly focused on the urban as a realm of inquiry. Thinkers such as David Harvey, Lefebvre, and Castells, among others, were concerned with cities, albeit to different extents and at different times, but unlike the Chicago School, they saw urban space as a forum not simply for observation but for action. If social justice was to be achieved, it could be motivated in the urban spaces of oppressed minorities and an estranged working class. Lefebvre, Harvey and Castells, while not always outlining a detailed route to social justice in the city, all lent to the socialization of geography, or alternatively the spatializing of the social, and thereby created a new urban studies in which both urban spaces and their inhabitants were understood as active agents, or at least capable of activation.

Generally, the new Marxist theorists of the 1970s asserted the making of geography over the making of history as the best critical window; they for the most part argued against the treatment of space as an only incidental side-product of capitalism's development, as in Chicago and European social theory from Marx through Sartre. The question of spatial organization in the development of capitalism remained hidden for this

time, “rooted in the same problematic as the making of history.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 35) Until the 1970s, space was thought of by Marxist theorists instead as a useless positivist determinism, or a naturalism. Lewis Mumford’s highly influential The City in History (1961), discussed for example the grid as the passive agent of capitalist accumulation from the seventeenth century: “the resurgent capitalism of the seventeenth century allocated the individual lot and the block, the street and the avenue, as abstract units for buying and selling, without respect for historic uses, for topographic conditions or for social needs.” (Mumford, 421) Here the capitalization of land is a process blind to the power of space, whether cultural, historical, ideological or simply physical, uniformly set across a space of undetermined (or insignificant rather) proportions and character. While he is elsewhere concerned with the spatial expression of power, space is here again a passive agent to institutions of religion or government. Space complicated the Marxist focus on unity as it forced an observation of simultaneity, fragmentation and therein disunion. Time is linear, and provides more explicitly the possibility of mutual progress towards a goal, but that this was an unrealistic interpretation of societal processes had become increasingly evident.

In the 1970s and later in the 1980s French Marxist historians such as Foucault or Derrida developed the idea of a “randomization of history and the triumphant ascendancy of a poststructuralist (and by implication post-Marxist) episteme.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 41) Soja uses Foucault’s Of Other Spaces (1986) to explain this, quoting:

The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world.... The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present-day polemics oppose the pious descendants of time and the determined inhabitants of space. (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies, 10)

For Foucault, and thus for followers such as LA School adherent Edward Soja, the Modernist obsession with time is very apparent in Marxism as “a virtually sanctified vision of the ever-accumulating past.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 13) In such a

vision society is set on a single trajectory, or in a more existentialist vision like that of Sartre there is some room for individual agency but nonetheless one can only locate himself in his own period. In a postwar, post-colonial period of social instability and reinvention, the turn to space represented “not just a shift in metaphorical preference” but “the opening up of history to an interpretive geography,” in which the dissection of layers through the recognition of simultaneity is made possible in the wake of Modernism’s failure. (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 18). Foucault described the relevance of this metaphorical shift to the cacophonous condition he understood as postmodernity: “In any case I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time. Time probably appears to us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space.” (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies 18-19) Soja moves on to Marshall Berman in excavating this understanding of modernism. Berman, in All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity (1982) described modernism as an attempt to rationalize modernization in so many concepts of linear progress, one of which is Marxism. “Modernism is, in essence, a reaction formation, a conjunctural social movement mobilized to face the challenging question of what now is to be done given that the context of the contemporary has significantly changed.” (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies 29). Of course, postmodernism is also a ‘social movement mobilized to face the challenging question of what now is to be done’ in the face of perceived trauma to a previous rationalism. The Marxist theorists of the 1970s that I will discuss below did not consider themselves to be postmodernists, or even to live in a postmodern world, at least in the time of the writings I am considering; they did however, for the most part, make a significant departure from traditional Marxist critical social theory, one that produced a spatial materialism. The shifting of materialist culture in their eyes, combined with their geographical mode of understanding, is what many, like Soja as I have shown here, look back upon and call the beginning of postmodern geography.

Henri Lefebvre consistently argued from the 1960s, famously in 1968’s Le Droit a la Ville that capitalism had a particular spatiality because of its tendency to simultaneously homogenize, fragment and stratify, as represented in Foucault’s later

discourse on heterotopias and the association of space, knowledge and power in Of Other Spaces, to which Soja again turns here:

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another. (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies 17)

This shows how Lefebvre's conclusion that space makes societal process visible translated to later generations and other locations, whether we are talking about Foucault in France or Soja in Los Angeles. Soja also quotes John Berger in The Look of Things (1974): "it is space, not time, that hides consequences from us," these being material consequences. (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies 93) However it is Lefebvre's work that is widely taken by LA School adherents and others to constitute the critical turning point in the development of a spatial materialism, and one that meshed with traditional historical materialism. Edward Soja says: "Historical materialism became the preferred route to connect spatial form with social process, and thereby to combine human geography with class analysis, the description of geographical outcomes with the explanations provided by a Marxian political economy. One by one, the familiar themes of Modern Geography were subjected to a Marxist analysis and interpretation." (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 52)

In The Production of Space (1974), Henri Lefebvre argued that space serves as an underlying logic of a social system, which may or may not be capitalist. In his contemporary situation however, he understood this system to be capitalist; Marxist historical materialism was thus an appropriate vehicle for the understanding of society, if only to be integrated with a spatial materialism. In understanding space, Lefebvre treats physical place as the point of departure from which space, an economic or cultural entity, may be drawn out. Thus by granting culture a position alongside with economy, Lefebvre allowed for each society to create its own spatial code for its economic and cultural maintenance, empowerment, and restructuring in times of crisis. Important to Lefebvre as the assertion of space as an active unit in society was its role as a re-productive unit, one

that in times of crisis could function radically to preserve or remove societal structures via restructuring. “Social space contains – and assigns (more or less) appropriate places to (i) the social relations of production, i.e. the bio-physiological relations between the sexes and between age groups, along with the specific organization of the family; and (ii) the relations of production i.e. the division of labor and its organization in the form of hierarchical social functions.” (Lefebvre, 32) Therefore space provides both the processes for cultural practice and capital accumulation through the production system, but also what some term the mode of regulation: the ensured reproduction and stability of society.

Elaborating on how space enables production and reproduction, Lefebvre defines three ways in which space may act or be acted upon. Firstly space, since the age of industrial capitalism, involves a close association between daily routine and the networks in urban space which link the places set aside of work, private life and leisure. This is spatial practice, or the way in which agents act within space. Meanwhile cultural and political institutions inscribe within space the way in which it may be used, this being the representation of space, the way we come to know space and therein the nature of power in society. Finally there is the ideological inscription of space, representational spaces, that space which is lived through images and symbols, in which agents may actively negotiate through imagination and, given the power, act. Within these three spatial dynamics Lefebvre outlines a spatial materialism that simultaneously acts and is acted upon and is therefore fundamentally co-constitutional with the social. Space therefore simultaneously produces as it reproduces; it is acted upon by individual agents at the same time that it defines them. Lefebvre famously asserted that in the just city, all actors have access to representational spaces, or “the right to the city.”

. In Social Justice and the City (1973), David Harvey posed the question “how is it that different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualizations of space?” (Harvey, Social Justice and the City 13-14) In a landscape understood as simultaneously witness to so many events, how does the city function as a productive and reproductive unit? Harvey sought the answer in the city’s parts, its spaces of control, movement, accumulation and rejection. “An understanding of urbanism and of the social-process-spatial form theme requires that we understand how human activity creates

the need for specific spatial concepts and how daily social practice solves with consummate ease seemingly deep philosophical mysteries concerning the nature of space and the relationships between social processes and spatial form.” (Harvey, Social Justice and the City 14) Therefore space is also an active agent: “We must recognize that once a particular spatial form is created it tends to institutionalize, and in some respects, to determine the future development of social process. We need, above all, to formulate concepts which will allow us to harmonize and integrate strategies to deal with the intricacies of social process and the elements of spatial form.” (Harvey, Social Justice and the City 27) Thus he came to a similar vision of spatial materialism as Lefebvre. Harvey was likewise explicitly interested in the ethical validity of any observed spatial materialism. According to Social Justice and the City maximum efficiency comes with social justice, defined as equal opportunity, and socialism, defined as the collapse of the difference between production and distribution. He moves onto an agenda of income redistribution that solves the tendency of capitalism to generate value in some locales by de-valuing others, posing the capitalist city as a generator of inequality in its very nature. Although he said this was not through conspiracy as much as standard competition, he tends towards a strict economism, with politics in capitalist society remaining subservient to the economy. Zoning and urban planning in capitalist society, according to Harvey, simply submit to market tendencies. He says that the public realm must act as a free agent if justice is to be achieved.

For some Marxists the spatial turn of Lefebvre, Harvey and others represented a danger. Orthodox Marxists saw a spatial will as a dangerous constraint upon the ability of class consciousness to produce history; this was the ‘realist’ counter-assertion. For these thinkers the opinion of space as a mere indicator of a more fundamental system of production and social evolution remained firm, in the earlier writings of Castells for example. In The Urban Question (1972) Castells points to the significance of the orthodox tradition in understanding the contemporary situation because “we had to answer questions linked to topics such as social classes, change, struggle, revolt, contradiction, conflict, politics,” themes assumed by him to only be explained by an historical materialism as they traditionally had been. (Castells, Urban Question viii) In

the opening of The Urban Question he nevertheless stated that the Marxist tradition is not a schema, but a perspective; he seems to answer here to the contemporary challenge by saying that new concepts are necessary. Furthermore, saying that there generally existed a limited understanding of the 1960s and 1970s upheavals and political shifts, Castells suggested that theory be treated as a sketch, not concrete analysis, and that it was only a starting point. But lest there be any confusion in the fragmentation of approach, Castells lets the reader know that the ultimate goal is a complete conception of social process, a totalizing theory in the Modernist tradition. He states: “analysis cannot really be made if in the study of one element, industry for example, one does not indicate the structural relations that unite it with other elements. Theoretically, we ought to begin by exposing the whole of the structure in order then to deduce the behavior of each element, always caught up in a given combination.” (Castells, Urban Question 128) Here we are reminded of his orthodoxy.⁵

In his analysis he explains that the fragmentation of the production process under contemporary industrial capitalism i.e. the separation of work from home combined with the standardization of consumption processes, neutralizes class identity formation. This is achieved in the contemporary situation through the power of a restructured bourgeoisie he conceives as a ‘technocracy’: “the increasing concentration of political power and the formation of a technocracy that ensures the long-term interests of the system gradually eliminates particularisms and tends through ‘urban planning’ to treat the problems of the functioning of the ensemble on the basis of a division into significant spatial units, that is to say, based on the networks of interdependencies of the productive system.” (Castells, Urban Question 23) The planning practices of the welfare state supplied standardized consumer goods, such as housing, while maintaining the fragmentation of the production system through ‘division into significant spatial units.’ This is something like Debord’s search for urban space untouched by what he termed ‘spectacle’. Mind, however, that these ‘units’ were mere by-products for Castells. The planning ideology of the welfare

⁵ In “Depoliticizing Globalization: From neo-Marxism to the Network Society of Manuel Castells”, Peter Marcuse follows the more recent movement of Castells towards the study of information technology, and how this too remains for Castells an agent of capital, enabling some while through its denial to others disabling a greater number.

state is reactionary, something like what Harvey called 'counter-revolutionary theory' in Social Justice and the City, drawing attention away from the 'real' problem of class struggle by erecting a superficial picture of citizen equality through token hand-outs. For Castells, planning in the welfare state "describes the everyday problems experienced by people, while offering an interpretation of them in terms of natural evolution, from which the division into antagonistic classes is absent. This has a certain concrete force and gives the reassuring impression of an integrated society, united in facing up to its 'common problems'." (Castells, Urban Question 85) For Castells, contemporary planning creates spaces that 'give the reassuring impression of an integrated society' but in reality ensure the survival of a divisive and oppressive capitalist system.

Importantly however space is not the enactor of social process for Castells, but merely a passive agent that is endlessly manipulated from above: "Although spatial forms may accentuate or deflect certain systems of behavior, through the interaction of the social elements that constitute them, they have no independent effect, and, consequently, there is no systematic link between different urban contexts and ways of life." (Castells, Urban Question 108) By discussing planning as a systematized agent of the capitalist system, operating from above in the interests of capital and regardless of either cultural or political differences, Castells erased the question of 'urban culture' that Lefebvre had concerned himself with. In arguing that the space of the city had no independent effect, Castells was in Soja's opinion "centering urban sociology in the structure and structuring effects of the social relations of production, consumption, exchange, and administration." (Soja, Postmetropolis 103) He effectively eradicated the city as "a relatively autonomous social system, organized around specific objectives." (Castells, Urban Question 14) He criticized both the Chicago School's interest in urban culture and also Lefebvre's discussion of urban culture in the landscape, saying that "the myth of urban culture" was a threat to the Marxist project as it represented a divisive force.

In dismissing urban space as a subject of inquiry, hence the title of his work, he showed that 'ways of life' could not be understood in a situation where planning 'gradually eliminated particularisms,' and he effectively returned the Marxist debate back to the question of an historical materialism that operated menacingly on society as a

whole. Urban space for Castells was therefore simply “a question of establishing in the same way as for any other real object, the structural ... laws that govern its existence and transformation, and the specificity of its articulation with the other elements of a historical reality.” (Castells, Urban Question 115). With The Urban Question the debate over the meaning of space in Marxist theory thus continued. Soja contrasts Castells’ work in Postmodern Geographies with that of Derek Gregory. In Ideology, Science and Human Geography (1978), Gregory stated that “spatial structures cannot be *theorized* without social structures, *and vice versa*, and ... social structures cannot be *practiced* without spatial structures, *and vice versa*.” (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies 57) This represented a more flexible geography that built towards a socio-spatial dialectic, a post-structuralist rendering of the relationship of space and society in which space was not an impediment, nor passive, but intrinsic to society as society was to it, and therein a revealing understanding of material culture. This built on Lefebvre clearly, and attempted to resolve Marxism with the shift away from meta-narrative through a spatial materialism, space being communicative of process but also intrinsically multi-layered.

Interestingly, Castells pulled a near U-turn in his attitude towards urban culture by 1983. In The City and the Grassroots: A cross-cultural theory of urban social movements (1983) he begins with the point that class struggle is not the only source of social change in the city. He points to the state, gender, ethnicities, and nationality as alternative sites of change. If he considered the privileging of the urban as harmful in The Urban Question, he used the urban as the very basis for social change in 1983. Through comparative studies he arrived at the notion that social change could be affected through the solidarity of the many disadvantaged groups observable in cities. He asserts that all such groups can share an identity of themselves as affected by a particularly disempowering urban spatiality, and that they therefore share a geographical solidarity. Though he returns to the city, Castells does not reverse his conception of space as a passive element of material culture. Instead in the tradition of historical materialism he continues to explain cities as the result of an endless historical struggle over what the city is perceived to be versus what it should be according to the different social actors who reside there. He furthermore stresses that every urban social movement differs because cities have

evolved in distinct historical contexts. Awakening to the city as a subject of inquiry but maintaining distance from an explicitly spatial dialectic, I interpret Castells as staying within a relatively orthodox materialism throughout his early career. For him, the challenge of space as the setting of simultaneity and fragmentation proved too risky for a truly activist leftist agenda. Castells demonstrates that such postmodern themes, though not discussed by Lefebvre and Castells as necessarily 'postmodern' in the writings discussed here, had by the mid 1980s not been resolved with a leftist agenda by all, as it still perhaps has not. Conflated with post-structuralism, postmodernism continues to represent to many on the left a view of social process as relativist, and a muting of political action. It is important to point out that this is not a problem solved by the LA School; most adherents have in my understanding merely taken sides and gone with the spatial turn as a non-relativist solution, but this continues to be a contentious issue. Having considered these neo-Marxists' dealing with space and the setting of postmodern geography's foundations, I will now consider another strand of neo-Marxist thinkers who have a clear presence in the literature of LA School adherents, Regulation theorists.

1.3 Regulation Theory in the 1970s and 1980s

In France in the 1970s a group of economic theorists known as the French Regulation School began to postulate a new theory of development in capitalist society. It was largely an effort to explain the survival and thriving of capitalism in postwar western welfare states after years of depression and social upheaval in early to mid century. By the 1980s regulation theory was a part of economic discourse in the United States and United Kingdom. Regulation theory differs from mainstream economic theory in emphasizing capitalism's survival through periods of radical reconstruction rather than smooth evolution in an even accumulation of capital through continued innovation and enhanced competition. It is a theory of the left, hypothesizing a particular role of the state as sustaining capitalism through the management of class struggle. It posits that capitalism depends on the continuation of accumulation, which is in turn dependent upon the positive interaction between accumulation and community through politics. John

Mollenkopf stated that “those with a stake in the prevailing system of accumulation must create a positive following.” (Mollenkopf, 321) Capitalism’s survival therein depends on a political consensus favoring the rules of accumulation; this consensus must have a multi-class appeal through the promotion of an ideology and legal structures in society. It often seems to me that regulationism amounts to something of a conspiracy theory, positioning politics, family, or community as somehow always oppressing mechanisms of capitalism’s reproduction. Members of the LA School, and others, as I will explore here and in the following chapters, have at least diversified the tone of regulationism.

According to Joe Painter, regulation theory (1) provides an account of the changing character of capitalist economies, and therefore a context in which to discuss political change, (2) explores the connection between social, political, economic and cultural change and (3) distances itself from orthodox Marxism by re-asserting political and cultural process. (Painter, 92) In this regard it was closely related to the projects discussed previously, though regulation theory was explicitly about the development of a solid theory over the exploration of a proper method to create a theory of capitalist development in the first place. It took as a given the notion of class as the dominant driving agent in capitalist society through time and space; I disagree with Painter that it explores, explicitly at least, agents of change beyond the political and economic spheres. It may at best only leave room for cultural and social process as passive agents to notions of restructuring.

Regulation theorists hold that capitalism and the capitalist state, following periodic crises such as overproduction, are restructured in order to restore capital accumulation *through* a refined system of production and social reproduction. Social reproduction: ideas of proper legal structures, equality, education, home and family, are not really considered as driving forces in and of themselves. In theorizing the relationship between capitalism and the state, it does not really expand beyond Gordon Clark and Michael Dear’s notion of ‘good’ state theory their 1981 essay, “The State in Capitalism and the Capitalist State.” According to them a theory of the state should (1) identify the range of productive and reproductive activities, (2) identify how the form of the state promotes these activities, (3) understand the relationship between political and economic

spheres, (4) allow for the evolution of state apparatuses, and (5) expose tractable analytical propositions. While such a theory adds to traditional Marxist discourse the idea of the state as a driving force, it does not add much else i.e. the economy *and* the state now drive production and social reproduction, but not other factors.

Regulation theory holds that capitalism is inherently characterized by the rise and fall of “regimes of accumulation,” the macroeconomic relations which allow for accumulation, namely the balance between production and consumption and the balance between the supply and demand of labor. Secondly, it holds that each regime necessitates a particular “mode of regulation,” the political structure which secures the regime of accumulation. This involves the organization of labor to create surplus value, the way in which labor is reproduced, and the way in which surplus value is realized through sales and re-investment (Edel). Shoukry Roweis, in “Urban Planning in Early and Late Capitalist Societies: Outline of a Theoretical Perspective” (1981), holds that in capitalism re-production entails the expanding role of the state to maintain legal rights and democratic practice to create a modicum of social equality, increased public works for the purpose of accumulation and social stability, the subjugation of private property to politically decided limitations, the political organization of labor, and increased regulation of trade by the state for the maintenance of competition. Here the state maintains the social structure and never the other way around. Such a state is solely the result of industrial capitalism and its massing of individuals into the components of the production system. Resources will at once be directed towards those most likely to create crises, defined narrowly as the poor, while resources will also be directed at those directing accumulation, defined narrowly as the rich.

Regulation theory is often erroneously conflated with specific regimes and modes that are simply expressed through regulation theory, such as Fordism, post-Fordism, the post-Industrial or late capitalism. Regulation theory merely explains the construction of such periods. Regimes and modes of similar characteristics have gone by different names e.g. post-Fordism is understood by many as ‘late capitalism,’ after the German neo-Marxist Ernest Mandel’s 1972 theorizing of capitalism’s survival in Late Capitalism. The term ‘late capitalism’ was also used by Fredric Jameson in “Late Capitalism or the

Cultural Logic of Postmodernism” (1984) to be discussed later in this chapter. R.J. Johnston, in The American Urban System: A Geographical Perspective (1982), divided the history of accumulation and regulation into three stages: mercantile capitalism, characteristic of the pre-1850 city, industrial capitalism, which he discusses as lasting from the mid nineteenth century to the depression, and late capitalism, which is what most would describe as the Fordist or Keynesian mode of regulation. Evidently in 1982 Johnston did not consider there to be sufficient evidence of an additional regime of accumulation, while others did. My case in bringing up these examples is that many different narratives of economic history have been framed within regulation theory. Beyond naming and dating, principal to different interpretations is the variable of geography. In “The Changing World Economy and Urban Restructuring” (2002) Susan Fainstein argues that there are two approaches, the local and the global, while others take a less structuralist approach. Regulation theory generally holds that geography is inexorably tied to the social and economic context of the production system, the distribution of capital and the role of government, but the proper size of the geography, if you will, is not agreed upon. The issue of geographic context e.g. how we may talk about ‘global restructuring’ when features reticent of an assumedly previous regime and mode appear locally, is thus contentious and may differ massively from study to study, while names and dates for macro-phenomena have been less flexible. Michael Harloe (“Notes on Comparative Urban Research”), Susan Fainstein (“Changing World Economy”) and others have continually called for more to be done in the realm of comparative research between different spaces of different sizes if underlying modes of capitalist development are to be understood. This is a criticism frequently carried over to the LA School theorists as I will show in the next chapters.

As to the characteristics of these regimes, they are generally widely agreed upon by regulation theorists, whether they go by ‘post-Fordism’ or ‘late capitalism’. The most commonly discussed are Fordism and post-Fordism. Joe Painter describes the theorizing of Fordism and post-Fordism in “Regulation Theory, Post-Fordism and Urban Politics”. As a regime of accumulation, it is widely agreed that Fordism dominated the character of developed capitalist economies roughly from 1930 until 1970 and involves, in the words

of Jessop in “Fordism and post-Fordism: A critical reformulation” (1992), “a virtuous cycle of growth based on mass production and mass consumption.” (qtd. in Painter, 94) For theorists adopting regulation theory such as adherents of the LA School, the mode of regulation in Fordism involves a form of wage relations, a system of money supply through central banks and private credit, mass media, and a Keynesian state that manages an expanding aggregate demand, as opposed to more conventional ‘choice theory’ which emphasizes individual will.

However abrupt the following discussion of Fordism and suburbanization seems, I feel it important to cover as LA School adherents tend to take it as a fairly solid basis from which to operate. Generally, Fordism, for LA School adherents and others, explains that the depression, the Second World War and ensuing Cold War together brought about the increased role of the state in the west, providing both a social ‘safety net’ and a military-industrial complex. Nationally, in 1937, 16% of the GNP was based on government expenditure, and by 1944 it was due to the war 49%; correspondingly, the GNP doubled between 1940 and 1945. (Cuff, 34) This government role was expanded by federal policies such as the 1956 Highway Act, at first a defensive measure but later, in its sponsoring of intra-metropolitan networks, concerned with more than defense. Fordism, more so in the United States, was largely dependent on the market created by suburbanization, propelled by federal policies of road-building and postwar mortgage and subsidy systems that precipitated individual investment and speculation in the real estate and finance sector. Previous to the war, suburbanization had for the most part been the luxury of the wealthy. By the turn of the twentieth century the perceived balance of the cost of urban taxes outweighed the benefits of urban services and many wealthy citizens began to move out, but this was generally not an option open to the rest of the population.

Already however in 1931 with the depression there had occurred a presidential conference to discuss the improvement of wage-earner housing and homeownership. Large scale subsidizing of suburban development was determined to be economical, modern, efficiently designed, and promoting of value through its homogeneous character. The Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Housing Administration were established in the 1930s to ensure the build-up of individual credit, and therein the

provision of mortgages and low-interest loans. The postwar role of government in infrastructure and subsidizing, combined with private speculation, “generated the demand for goods and services to sustain the virtuous circle of growth in Fordism” and enabled the wide-scale “imitation of the bourgeois trend.” (Painter, 98; Walker, 393) Inner cities in the meantime experienced declining values and were subsidized by housing programs that served to stagnate the poor.

With mass-suburbanization by most enabled by a combination of public and private practices, capital shifted out of many urban areas. Richard Walker, in “A Theory of Suburbanization: capitalism and the construction of urban space in the United States” (1981) states that mass suburban development “promoted mutually supportive land values in order to secure the maximum level of differential rents; property investors would be foolish to dilute such values by randomly mixing people. ... if people are sorting themselves out from the top down, suppliers have a parallel interest in helping the cream rise to the top in their areas.” (Walker, 393) Walker discusses this as the ‘culture’ of pursuit of gain from property effectively turned to full speed. Culturally speaking, Fordism, dependent in large part on the marketplace of suburbanization, was a comprehensive, modernist agenda organized around an idea of collective progress, albeit explicitly exclusionary of some. Left behind was a population of poor and disproportionately black ‘peripheral’ workers, victims of housing and employment discrimination, while whites, often including working class whites, became the privileged agents of the suburban marketplace. As low-wage, mostly minority workers came into industrialized cities, driven away from the rural south by the depression, they met white flight, creating a lucrative situation for slumlords who held onto older housing, which however de-valued, was effectively monopolized and made exploitative.

Correspondingly, so the argument goes, most government sponsored expansion occurred in places of a higher speculated exchange value, on the edges. While most demolition in the immediate post-war period occurred in central cities, most construction occurred elsewhere. The racial dynamics of suburbanization are not always considered however. Harvey summarized spatial phenomena of capitalist survival in “The Urban Process Under Capitalism”:

Capitalist development has therefore to negotiate a knife-edge path between preserving the exchange values of past capital investments in the built environment and destroying the value of these investments in order to open up fresh room for accumulation. Under capitalism there is, then, a perpetual struggle in which capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time ... The effects of the internal contradictions of capitalism, [e.g. overproduction] when projected into the specific context of fixed and immobile investment in the built environment, are thus writ large in the historical geography of the landscape which results. (Harvey, "Urban Process" 113)

Here it is very unclear what designates this 'knife-edge path,' with capitalism seemingly having its own personality. Nevertheless this statement is valuable in describing notions of destroyed spaces versus the opening of new ones. In the US and the UK, these destroyed spaces were typically in cities, which by the 1970s faced fiscal crisis at a time when public services encountered their highest demand due to the relative over-concentration of poverty in their municipalities. Responsive urban renewal programs had mixed results, often re-valuing downtown urban land through infrastructure improvements, the installation of new civic spaces and public-private partnerships, but they maintained the segregation of de-valued spaces by either walling them off or wiping them out entirely. Urban planning, mimicking the demand-stimulating interventions that allowed for suburbanization, targeted specific areas with relative advantage, mainly downtown areas with access to existing infrastructure, at the expense of outlying neighborhoods. LA School adherents for example frequently apply this theory to the re-making of Bunker Hill, although variably as I will show. Government was in poor areas involved, as it often is today, in a fairly static procedure of provision, "with performance criteria based on procedure, rather than results" simply playing the roll of "filling-in gaps left by private provision." (Painter, 100) There were certainly, to a greater extent in Europe than the United States for historical reasons, influential dynamics of unions and class-based politics, but when "urban political unrest began to challenge the rules of the game itself, the state was often swift in its retribution," (Painter, 100) as in Paris in 1968, or Watts in 1965. In such an understanding the culture of class conflict is relegated to a back seat.

Regulation theorists and with them many of the contemporary geographers of Los Angeles and elsewhere generally take Fordism to have suffered a debilitating crisis in the 1970s with a crisis of overproduction and price shocks, leading to profit decreases and structural unemployment: “The productivity increases on which the regime of accumulation depended could not be sustained indefinitely given the existing technical and organization approaches.” (Painter, 101) The political system was meanwhile forced to meet rising demands for services in the face of increased fiscal stress, especially in cities as discussed above. Many large cities neared or experienced bankruptcy in the mid to late 1970s. Post-Fordism, the successor of Fordism, is generally theorized as a regime of accumulation based on flexible production and specialization by small firms and producer networks. The post-Fordist condition involves more flexible, de-regulated wage relations, a global division of labor and an increased polarization between high and low skilled workers, the diversification of marketplaces and the diversification of products. This was accompanied by privatization and the withdrawal of many government services. In the last twenty to thirty years the Fordist role of government has been de-legitimized in conservative electoral triumphs, privatization, and the arrival of more flexible modes of production and labor. The transfer has been uneven, benefiting some but worsening the condition of others, and it is varied across time and space. There has been simultaneous growth and decline in some regions at the same time that some observations can be made on a global scale. The Fordist regime of accumulation and its accompanying mode of regulation broke down unevenly in different places and at different times depending on a wide variety of factors, which is why geography remains such a contentious issue. This debate is carried over into the contradiction apparent in the LA School’s limited area of observation on the one hand, and their discussion of Los Angeles’ condition’s global relevance on the other.

Turning to notions of post-Fordism in more detail, Hogget, in “A farewell to mass production? Decentralization as an emergent private and public sector paradigm” (1987) states that decentralization of service provision from government to a growing private service sector involved a critique of the Fordist mode of production, one pointing out its inflexibility and remoteness in times of crisis. (Painter, 97) However there exists debate

over exactly what the post-Fordist mode of regulation is given the withdrawal of the state from the accumulation process. German economist J.A. Schumpeter speculated what he called the Schumpeterian Workfare State (SWS). Jessop, in “Towards a Schumpeterian Workfare State? Preliminary remarks on post-Fordist political economy” (1993), says the goal of the SWS is to “promote process, organization and market innovation and enhance the structural competitiveness of open economies mainly through supply-side intervention; and to subordinate social policy to the demands of labor market flexibility and structural competitiveness.” (qtd. in Painter, 101) The SWS thus involves the promotion of workforce flexibility combined with new methods of enforcing authority and control to deal with corresponding social polarization. Others (Szelenyi, Hirsch) postulated, perhaps incorrectly, that the crisis in the 1970s would lead to an increased role of the state, what Lefebvre had called the “state mode of production” as a distinct concept from both socialism and capitalism. There seems to me to be, with these exceptions, broad agreement that the post-Fordist mode of regulation involves privatization, the creation of a more flexible workforce through free trade and union busting, and a new role for information technology in both the private sector and government services. Joe Painter stated that the privatization of government services “simultaneously reduces the costs of providing labor intensive services as workers are removed from the protection of collective agreements and provides new sources of capital accumulation for the private sector” and also “resolves the fiscal crisis of the local state.” (Painter, 102) On the creation of a more flexible workforce, Stoker, in “Creating a local government for a post-Fordist society: The Thatcherite project?” (1989) said that “the availability of information technology in all its forms – data processing, communications and control, computer-aided design, office automation – offers the possibility of recasting traditionally labor-intensive service activities.” (qtd. in Painter, 97) However, fundamentally faulty here is the fact that in any case, as the evolution of a new mode of regulation occurs “it will be highly uneven, partial and, in some places, bitterly contested,” in the words of Joe Painter. (Painter, 104)

This is where much criticism, much of it from the left, kicks in. Often critiques are limited to a particular interpretation. Susan Fainstein in “The Changing World

Economy and Urban Restructuring” upholds the ability of regulation theory on the one hand to produce understanding, while on the other she laments how its aura of inevitability and its erection of a monolithic uncontrollable capitalism renders leftists either inactive or thinking in unpractical ways. She asks of contemporary leftists to simply come to terms with the dominant trends of the day and work from there, citing leftist bitterness towards the multi-national corporation. Instead of framing the multi-national corporation as the debaser of nations, legal rights and culture, “The reality that giant multinational corporations dominate economic transactions means that the left must find ways of tapping into their economic power rather than dismissing them on moral grounds.” (Fainstein, “Changing World Economy” 120) Even more challenging is that criticism which accuses regulation theory of limiting the scope of political intervention to that accommodating of the regime of accumulation, saying it automatically subordinates the mode of regulation. This critique accuses regulation theory of being functionalist; in other words, it constructs an understanding in which political change only happens because a given regime of accumulation needs it. Expectedly, Marxists say regulation theory overstates class compromise; Painter relates this saying that according to regulation theory, “once a mode of regulation has been established the working class, and especially other oppressed groups, simply have to sit it out.” (Painter, 105) Painter concludes that:

Given that regulationism is a developing theory, what is required here are more detailed and nuanced accounts of particular modes of regulation operating at particular times in particular countries. In discussing concrete cases, it may well make sense to talk about ‘regulatory processes’ or ‘tendencies towards regulation’ rather than coherent ‘modes of regulation’. Furthermore, all those who would abandon regulation theory are still left with the conundrum posed at the beginning of this chapter, namely, how, given the inherently contradictory nature of capital accumulation, has capitalism not only survived, but from time to time generated relatively stable economic growth? (Painter, 105)

A postmodern regulation theory may be one in which political process and the extent to which perceived regimes of accumulation are popularly resented should not automatically be relegated to secondary status. While regulation theory may arguably explain economic process, it also privileges economic process over other processes and thereby meets challenges from any postmodern mindset. Herein lies my impression of regulationism as

sometimes tending towards conspiratorial paranoia, framing schools or neighborhoods for example as fairly one-dimensional mechanisms of reproduction, discounting any alternative agency. A postmodern regulation theory is one that requires the examination of the ways in which regimes and modes fluctuate at different times and in different spaces and in turn what problems they cause socially and culturally. It is also one which for leftists should remain motivating rather than discouraging or angering. The extent to which the LA School has achieved such a theory in melding regulationism on to their setting, albeit not always explicitly, will be explored in the next chapters.

1.4 The Global City

In 1986, one year before the gathering of UCLA and USC academics at Lake Arrowhead and three years before the mentioning of a Los Angeles School of geographers by Mike Davis in “Homeowners and Homeboys: Urban restructuring in L.A.”, John Friedmann, at UCLA’s Department of Urban Planning from 1969, published “The World City Hypothesis” in Development and Change. While Friedmann was not among the group at Lake Arrowhead, his hypothesis was significant to discourse in Los Angeles and around the world. Of course Friedmann was not the first geographer, economist or planner to postulate the idea of ‘global cities’ but he did provide a concise theory that on the one hand provided a defined starting point for the study of changing urban environments around the world. On the other hand, perhaps as with all theories, it proved too inflexible for some. LA School adherents discuss Los Angeles in a way that responds to both these benefits and constraints; some like Soja structure from smaller components a more macro idea of Los Angeles as a ‘global city’, while many more stay at a more micro level lending concise support and challenges to Soja and others’ macro approach.

In “The World City Hypothesis” Friedmann first credits Harvey and Castells for linking the city to the wider process of industrial capitalism: “Henceforth the city was no longer to be interpreted as a social ecology, subject to natural forces inherent in the dynamics of population and space; it came to be viewed instead as a product of

specifically social forces set in motion by capitalist relations of production.” (Friedmann, 68) The job of Friedmann and others, namely Saskia Sassen who had an article on immigration and restructuring in New York appearing in the same issue of Development and Change, was to tie the city to ideas of the global economy as the result of observed trends from the 1970s. These included the division of labor on an increasingly international scale and the declining relevance of political territory in global management. Friedmann importantly considered his theory to be a starting point and not anything attempting to totalize discourse on cities. He said: “We would expect cities to differ among themselves according to not only the mode of their integration with the global economy but also their own historical past, national policies, and cultural influences. The economic variable however is likely to be decisive for all attempts at explanation.” (Friedmann, 69) While he left room for flexibility, he did tend to an economism others have found troubling. I will touch on this later.

Friedmann presented seven theses: (1) the form and extent of a city’s global integration is decisive in interior structural changes, (2) certain cities over others are used by global capital as basing points in articulation of production and markets, (3) global control functions are directly reflected in the dynamics of the city’s production sectors and employment, (4) world cities are major sites for the concentration and accumulation of capital, (5) world cities are points of destination for domestic and international immigrants, (6) they bring into geographical focus the contradictions of global capitalism such as spatial and class polarization and (7) their growth generates costs that exceed the fiscal capacity of the city and state. All of these theses remain part of discourse on global cities today and are vital to any understanding of how LA School literature understands the environment it investigates. LA School adherents use such theses sometimes as givens, as points of departure for further exploration, and at some times they critique assumed aspects of the world city and work to promote a more flexible idea of world cities.

Postulations of global cities or something possessing certain characteristics of what came to be known as the global city have been present as I said, from before Friedmann’s piece. In “The New International Division of Labor, Multinational

Corporations and Urban Hierarchy” (1981) R.B. Cohen explores the division of labor on a global scale and the developing role of many cities as global control centers and/or production centers. He theorized that the rise of newly industrializing countries created global control centers in the first world and new global production centers in the third world. He observed that until recently, the international division of labor represented the sourcing of raw material inputs from under-developed areas. Crisis ensued from the 1970s with increasing bargaining power of developing countries as costs rose in developed countries, tighter markets due to price shocks, and increasing international competition from quickly growing countries like Japan. The international spread of manufacturing and free trade zones in place of colonial-based markets followed. Correspondingly there has been a growing sophistication of corporate-related services and international financial markets that allow companies to adapt their production mechanisms to diverse situations in order to use less expensive labor. Importantly the ownership of production remained in the first world; thus “while centers of production have arisen in developing countries, centers of corporate strategy formulation and international finance have not ... this development bodes ill for the ability of the developing nations to control their own future.” (Cohen, 293) Cohen attributed the rise of such control centers and their concentration in the first world to the need to control a more dispersed and diversified system of production, the need to process more financial information such as exchange-rate risks and interest rate differences, communications and more heterogeneous management, the expansion of corporate cash flow, and new specializations with the internalization of market interactions in service firms. Specific cities in the first world tended to rise above others as centers of control due to a critical pre-existing mass of human capital in existing banks, educational institutions and financial services as well as state investment. He shows how these cities, for example New York, Chicago and Los Angeles had had relatively smaller percentages of workers in old ‘core industries’ compared to Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburg.

Doreen Massey’s “The UK electrical engineering and electronics industries: the implications of the crisis for the restructuring of capital and locational change” and C.G. Pickvance’s “Policies as chameleons: an interpretation of regional policy and office

policy in Britain”, also from 1981, both examine the spatial redistribution capital and employment in Britain. They detailed the rise of London as a global trade center in comparison with the decay of the central industrial regions, which in turn became more dependent on government subsidies.

Discourse on global cities, as Friedmann had postulated, soon took on questions of urban form. By 1988 Joel Garreau was saying that “Every single American city that is growing is growing in the fashion of Los Angeles, with multiple urban cores.” (Garreau, 3) In Edge City: Life on the New Frontier Garreau looked at how various cities’ position in a global marketplace was leading to increased polarization within the metropolitan area itself as some areas became rust-belt with the movement of industry offshore, the wealthy sought new enclaves of even higher value, dispersed commercial clusters evolved in response to the resulting spatial polarization, and downtowns, often through international investment, re-emerged as compact corporate control centers for the globalized flow of investment. Perhaps because Los Angeles is prototypical of horizontal spread in the popular imagination he chose that city as a model. LA School adherents have usually been more careful and nuanced in presenting Los Angeles. With some communities left outside the cycle of accumulation, the most privileged walling themselves off in distant places, and many commercial centers developing in peripheral areas to reflect this dispersion, Garreau theorizes a loss of citizenship in these new peripheral edge cities. Here, if we are to speak of the residential component, ‘community’ is “what every new residential development is described as being ... In this usage, it is irrelevant whether anybody in this community knows or cares about anybody else in it.” (Garreau, 447)

Deyan Sudjic in 1992 made the similar claim that Los Angeles is the paradigmatic “100 mile city.” His work, The 100 Mile City is not however limited to a study of Los Angeles; like Garreau I assume he found it a convenient example given the city’s position in the popular imagination as prototypical of sprawl. Employing the themes of Friedmann’s world city, he took a macro look at the urban condition in the first world and postulated changing aspects of production, management, labor, and spatial organization. “It is already clear that the eighties were the decade in which the industrial city finally shook off the last traces of its nineteenth-century self and mutated into a completely new

species. Migration and economic development changed it beyond recognition. Technological innovations eliminated traditional industries and scattered new ones in unpredictable places over ever wider distances.” (Sudjic, 5) On how global management was distancing itself from the barriers of political territory he says: “Culturally the successful cities have distanced themselves from their national contexts. Paris and London now have much more in common with each other than they do with their respective nations.” (Sudjic, 5) As global cities, such places bring into focus, as Friedmann theorized, global phenomena. “Los Angeles has within it a Singapore and a Managua, a Boston and a Detroit: rust belts, Third World sweat shops, and the highest concentration of PhDs and engineers in the world.” (Sudjic, 290) Exploring this idea of simultaneous concentration and fragmentation, he describes the evolution of ‘edge cities’ as the exodus of corporations from the metropolitan core to capitalize on the value of their urban holdings and at the same time avoid high rents. Using the example of the Community Redevelopment Authority and its 1980s project in Bunker Hill, he goes on to explore the erection of corporate control centers as theme parks and the simulacra of the new downtown. “In the force field city, nothing is unself-conscious, any urban gesture is calculated,” pointing to the perceived intendedness of the ‘100 Mile City’ as a reformed site for overall accumulation, within it increasingly fragmented into sites of hyper-valuation and de-valuation. (Sudjic, 308) Sudjic laments the departure of secure jobs to overseas and the resulting pressure on the middle class, pointing to the rising percentage of income spent on securing mortgages in the 1980s. On the fate of more low-income individuals and families he points to zoning restrictions as having the effect of eliminating affordable housing by presenting minimum lot size and other restrictions. On the federal level in nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, he argues that the old ‘safety net’ of public housing strategies have disappeared, become fragmented or privatized out of mostly valid criticism but with little to replace their important function. In light of such crises, cities in the global economy have had to finagle complex deals or affordable housing ratios to persuade developers to provide more housing, the difficulty of which is exacerbated by rising immigrant populations.

While Sudjic tried to cover all the bases some works have limited the definition of world cities and at the same time created other categories of cities. Saskia Sassen recently focused on world cities as ‘command centers.’ Like Cohen, she credits their rise to their having developed a critical mass of financial services at the advent of the current trend of globalization. This enables certain cities to compete as capital exporters, sites for transnational mergers and acquisitions, and sites for monitoring the flow of transnational services, innovative services and marketplace identification. Sassen says in “Cities in a World Economy” (2002) that global cities are (1) command points for the organization of the world economy, (2) key locations and marketplaces for leading industries of the current period – finance and specialized services for firms and (3) major sites of production for these industries, including the production of innovation. She does not however intend, as some have, that other first world cities simply fall off by the way-side, their one time geographical advantage, e.g. proximity to a river, made obsolete by communications. She theorizes that they have instead fallen into the orbit of global cities as mini control centers maintained by (1) their material infrastructure which makes the transmission of information possible, (2) the continued need for workers who produce those outputs, and (3) the continued multiplicity of cultural environments, reasserting the dynamic of identity politics in a way. In her essay she identifies thirty global cities, and elaborating on Friedmann’s hypothesis she says that global cities are also sites for new types of inequality, a new politics of identity, dynamics of radicalization, and a new spatial politics although she does not explore these ideas extensively. Such an elaborated theory is common and typical of the Los Angeles School literature to be explored in the next chapters, although it is, as Sassen shows, not unique to them.

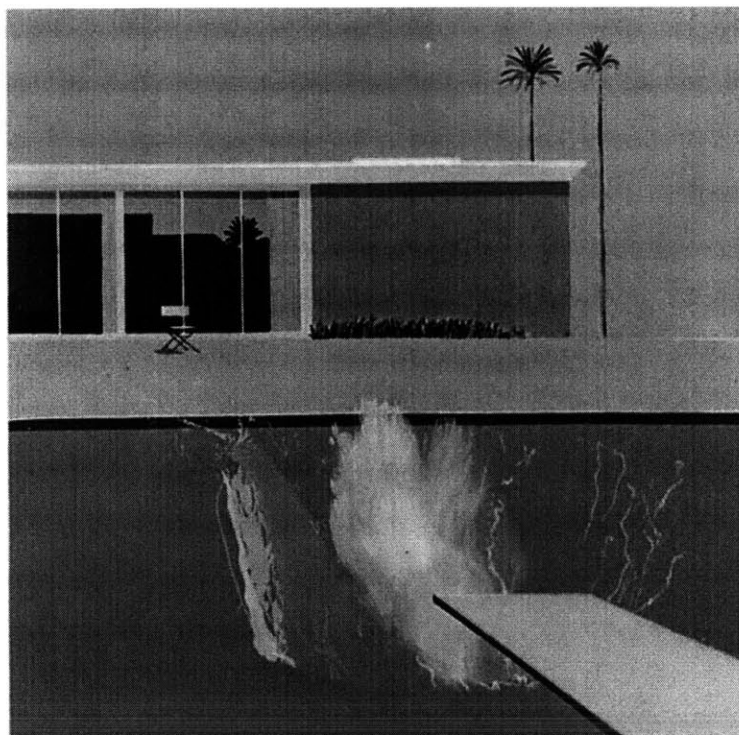
1.5 Postmodernism: Conservative, Radical or Between?

Before moving on to the writings of the LA School, I am going to look at four different pieces that present different modes of postmodern thinking related to the city and planning, whether they specifically use the word postmodernism or not. These are Banham’s Los Angeles: The Architecture of the Four Ecologies (1971), Webber and

Rittel's essay "Planning Problems are Wicked Problems" (1984), Iain Chambers' Border Dialogues: Journeys in Postmodernism (1990), and Fredric Jameson's "Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1984). All have been recognized in discussions of postmodernism because they explicitly use the term or recognize certain themes pertinent to the discourse. The point here is simply to consider the discourse's overall flexibility. All of these pieces present a condition in which different perspectives of the metropolis are a given, but the extent to which that complicates intervention in process is less clear. As such it is cause for anxiety. This is usually resolved by taking one particular stand. Postmodernism, or if not recognized, its themes, may be grounds for celebration or business as usual, used to indicate the need for caution in action, renounce the fear of action but leave a future direction unclear, or create an explicit platform for enabling understanding and therein action.

For Reyner Banham, Los Angeles was a city entirely based on the convenience enabled by the workings of technology on a particular natural setting. He was deeply interested in the British Group Archigram's "Plug-In City", a pop-influenced technological place of "indeterminacy" and "constant change". (Fishman, Rev. 62) Seeing Los Angeles as perhaps a near plug-in city, Banham's Los Angeles made visible new urban aesthetics, or ecologies as he called them. These aesthetics, as ecologies, were thusly posed as very natural results of the progression of modern society. Sprawl, however criticized by others, represented a supreme achievement for individual desire, a drive-in lifestyle, where "the crudest urban lusts and most fundamental aspirations are created, manipulated, and, with luck, satisfied." (Banham, 132) In the foothills, the flatlands, the beach or on the freeway, the individual is always a mobile unit free from the density, filth and tribalism of eastern cities. Banham thus subjects Angeleno space to highly activated individual agents who assumedly use it democratically. The suggestion of inequality, pollution, immobility or anything else consistently critical is entirely lacking; his judgment of the flatlands as the "Plains of Id" for example is purely an aesthetic judgment. Referring to the LA School of architecture, Robert Fishman, in a 2002 review for Harvard Design Magazine, criticized Banham's hope that his very democratic Los Angeles and its architecture would set an example for the world.

Banham's hope was that "LA architects can lead the world, but only if they respond to the city's contemporary Pop vitality ... Exactly as Banham had hoped, the special qualities of Los Angeles urbanism have indeed provoked an important new school of architecture. But this architecture at its best synthesizes sunshine and noir. It ultimately embodies an interpretation of the city that is more nuanced and profound than anything in Banham's book." (Fishman, Rev. 63) If for Fishman Banham's approach is simply one sided, for leftists it is not only simplistic but retrograde. Banham turns a blind eye to inequality and the possibility that such a sprawling 'mobile' landscape may signify heightened segregation and inequality. Banham not only denies a systemic shift in economy or culture but simply re-incorporates what I and others consider a material postmodernism's evidence into a modernism that sees new features, however radical, as the benign outcome of a progress that is inherently democratic. Banham's postmodernism is a place for denial and celebration.



The cover of the 1971 edition of Los Angeles: The Architecture of the Four Ecologies shows a playful Hockney.

Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber talk of 'wicked problems' in a social setting where goals, strategies and solutions have been blurred by the fragmentation of any traditional notion of the 'common good', something that previously could be more easily comprehended and acted upon by the individual or collective voice. Rittel and Webber find that this voice has broken into an infinite number of equally valid perspectives. If the planner has an agenda for societal change he inevitably steps on others' equally valid agendas; the best he or she may do is to step on as few as possible. In this most pluralistic of places, there is little room for expressing one's value or judgment lest cause offense. The panoptical lens of the Modernist planner has been limited to a miniscule peek onto an inevitably complicated landscape. The best planners can hope for is to be mostly right. Some leftists may see this as conservative, what is at best advocacy planning that nevertheless upholds an existing superstructure. Soukry Roweis provides an interesting contrast to Webber and Rittel, considering his 1981 essay "Urban Planning in Early and Late Capitalist Societies: Outline of a Theoretical Perspective". Roweis says the failure of advocacy planning results from its working within a capitalist society that at once needs it for survival but resists it as 'intervention' and inevitably weakens or even condemns it. Roweis' planner may fail like Webber and Rittel's, but is redeemed by the possibility of seeing the wider picture and taking a more radical stance. Alternatively, Webber and Rittel's planner remains apologetic, subservient and incremental. Webber and Rittel's implied postmodernism, a method of interpretation, is a most splintered place where we must step cautiously to solve problems lest we step on the always valid agendas of others.

Iain Chambers, in Border Dialogues: Journeys into Postmodernism (1990) clearly takes postmodernism to signal a radical shift in material culture and the understanding of culture:

In the late twentieth century, cities in North America and Europe are coming less and less to represent the culmination of local and territorial cultures. Many of these cities themselves threaten to become residual; abandoned and obsolete monuments to an earlier epoch. Or else, as twilight regions of once confident and rational projects, they are transformed into aestheticized cityscapes (in architecture and art galleries, cultural and heritage centers, loft living and designer homes), while their previous populations, if they have no role to play in this act, are inserted into other discourse: ethnic communities, urban poverty, inner-city decay, industrial decline, drugs, organized crime. ... Yet precisely because of its allegorical extension, we can no longer hope to map the modern metropolis, for that implies that we know its extremes, its borders, confines, limits. We now know that the city we inhabit, the streets we walk in and dive through, has been invaded by an infectious presence. It is no longer the actual city but an image of it that has taken over. (Chambers, 53-54)

In the splintering of the modern metropolis, we also have a splintering of modern consciousness, which like that of Webber and Rittel can never conceive the whole picture. Postmodernism is here both a method of interpretation and a material state. But here one can never even capture any portion of that material picture and assume it to be 'actual'; corrupted by media reproduction and continual regurgitation, the city is simulacra. The material condition of the postmodern city is here entirely obfuscated by post-structuralist mechanisms of interpretation. How is social action possible in a place we can never truthfully know? Building from a denouncement of Marxism as hypocritical, in which he dissects its faith in a phenomenological 'use value' on the one hand and a historically determined social condition, capitalism, on the other, he returns to the possibility of social action. All there is, Chambers leads us to assume, is the determined, but this is neither 'irrational' or 'empty.' (Chambers, 64) By his logic if everything is determined and inauthentic, it is exactly that process of corruption which makes it very real. In this way he comes to a criticism of capitalism and engages it with other 'real' social agents: culture, home and family. These agents are not hidden by one specific social condition as Marxists would have it; they are all here and as real as they will ever be. Together with economy they comprise some entirely different notion of capitalism:

For by capitalism we mean not just the precise logic of its mode of production but also developments occurring elsewhere in the formation of the leisure, culture, home, family and 'free time' of the social individuals that constitute the historical forces of production and which remained completely marginal and purely incidental to Marx's own analysis of nineteenth-century capitalist society ... now freed of a prescriptive referent and ontological closure, it leads to its extension and complication. It is finally here that our plastic and seemingly inauthentic world comes finally to be recognized in its potential to be molded, modified, transformed and made to fit our possibilities, hopes, desires, needs. (Chambers, 66)

The over-arching rule of this re-authenticized postmodern world is "a radical heterogeneity." (Chambers, 78) Chambers attacks any existing hegemony and denounces the privileging of any specific societal component over another as a failure to understand society's kaleidoscopic character. While the individual agent may here grasp a fuller picture than that of Webber and Rittel, the agent is also made to seem inherently foolish in using anything but a "radically heterogeneous" approach, which given Chambers' definition of society, must entail the voice of everyone. Are we to assume, with the appearance of so many voices 'from below' that these voices may become, in the words of Michael Peter Smith, the "decontextualized kings and queens of the world"? (Smith, 115) In Chambers' postmodernism, our gaze extends further, we are told to proceed with confidence, but we are hindered by a cacophony of empowered and individualized voices so immense that it drowns out the possibility of cooperation and debases individual leadership.

In "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1984), Jameson partnered leftist theory of a specific historical and spatial materialism, late capitalism, not with culture in general but with that culture that can be explained by late capitalism, which he took to be postmodernism. He therefore limits economism in his understanding of society but at the same time portrays a portion of culture, having a specific spatial and historical orientation, as understandable through a materialist lens. In doing so, he automatically periodizes the culture of postmodernism, grounding it in space and time in a phenomenological understanding. He also thus rejects it as a style or method of understanding, a direction others have refused to take. Post-structuralism is in such a case just one feature of a postmodern culture that is in essence quite structuralist. He defends this on the position that the conflation of postmodernism with the style of post-

structuralism ironically resurrects ‘massive homogeneity’ in interpretation: “One of the concerns frequently aroused by the periodizing hypotheses is that these tend to obliterate difference and to project an idea of the historical period as massive homogeneity ... This is however precisely why it seems essential to grasp postmodernism not as a style but rather as a cultural dominant: a conception which allows for the presence and coexistence of a range of very different, yet subordinate features.” (qtd. in Jameson, 145) Here, postmodernism is at once limited as a narrative, but it makes possible the understanding of particular situations affected by late capitalism.

That the LA School engages with the cultural condition of postmodernism seems not so much an option for them; they observe it constantly although different authors frame it slightly differently, as will become evident in the next two chapters. However the discourse of postmodernism as used previous to much of their work and today represents a crisis in its possible relativism. What I have tried to show here is that postmodernism may also be the grounds for leftist agendas, albeit often within a phenomenological understanding that effectively relegates post-structuralism to a ‘subordinate’ position to use Jameson’s words. The following chapters will demonstrate to what extent this postmodernism is that of the LA School.

1.6 Fragmented Geography: An Introduction

Departing for Los Angeles in the 1980s we may see, from the topics discussed in this chapter, how by this time various thinkers had come to reassert the role of urban space in social theory and maintain a leftist normative ethic in the crisis of postmodernism. The Chicago School explicitly designated the city as a locale of peculiar social phenomena. Lefebvre performed a marriage between space and a critical Marxist social theory, while many others specified the material condition in which contemporary geographers and others operate to be a postmodern one. But the causality of Marxism, that the economic base determines the social superstructure, was simultaneously overturned by post-structuralists such as Derrida; approaching the ‘economy versus superstructure’ structuralism critical theorists now may find it necessary to consider that

the superstructure could in fact determine the economic base. Consequently there is a distrust of this structuralism in contemporary geography, a new appreciation for diversity accompanied by the diversification of theoretical and empirical approaches, and a self-conscious inquiry into the relationship between geographical knowledge and political action along with a material concept of postmodernism. A principal commonality among LA School geographers and others, inheriting the heritage discussed above, is therefore the understanding of postmodernism as one condition of the superstructure and the understanding of post-structuralism as one possible epistemological device for interpreting the superstructure in all possible conditions, though not always an essential one. For such a geographer the job is therefore to understand materialism in the state of postmodernism within or at least aware of the post-structuralist themes of fragmentation, multiplicity, and layering. This is the socio-spatial dialectic, as Soja calls it, in which adherents of the LA School and others perform a critical geography.

CHAPTER 2: THE RISE OF THE LA SCHOOL

Previous to the 1980s Los Angeles was primarily, as it arguably remains today, most prominent ideologically as a rather confusing projection of sunshine and noir, endlessly replayed in celluloid and on page. The portrayal of Los Angeles by Hollywood and many of its more dejected writers has over the last century continually involved the holistic imagining of the city as easily legible metaphor, communicative of the city to the outside. Representations of Los Angeles in fiction are therefore indebted to the capacity of an outside audience to understand Angeleno landscapes as referential to their own knowledge and expectations; in other words the use of Los Angeles depends for the most part on what is desired of the city. We therefore rarely encounter a Los Angeles that is expressive of anything we may assume to be a real place, the city is instead presented as an allegory that accentuates or explains the experiences of the characters who find it their setting. In most films and texts the lens or pen tends to capture the city and its parts in an embrace that delivers the landscape's character in a way that sets a general tone or mood and indicates what is to come. This useable Los Angeles is a flexible place, able to achieve the aesthetic values of utopia, dystopia, arcadia, the exceptional, or the post-apocalyptic. Largely the property of real estate boosters, under-employed writers and sensation-seeking directors, the rendering of Los Angeles throughout its history is therefore best understood as serving an arbitrary quotationism that meets the diverse demands for settings as metaphorically tragic, beautiful, threatening, urban, suburban, or wild all at the same time, should people desire to move there, avoid there, dream of there, or despise there.

That said Los Angeles has always, like other cities, had chroniclers who are less concerned with advertising or damning. Most prominently, these include, previous to 1980, Carey McWilliams, who while not fully escaping a noir tendency, delivered to America a history of the up-start metropolis on the west coast in 1946, Robert Fogelson, who in a supreme excavation produced in 1967 The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930, and the works of Kevin Starr on Los Angeles' early twentieth

century history. Strangely, there are no all inclusive histories of Los Angeles that cover the latter part of the twentieth century. There are attempts, namely Mike Davis' City of Quartz, which as I will discuss later is barely history at all.

2.1 New Voices in Southern California

One of the most significant stories in Los Angeles' historiography unfolds at UCLA from 1968. In that year the School of Architecture and Urban Planning was initiated under Dean Harvey Perloff. From that point on the school pursued a hiring practice bringing individuals from diverse backgrounds who would inevitably use Los Angeles as a laboratory for their studies. In the last written work authored by Perloff before his death, "The Past Fifteen and the Next Fifteen" (1983), Perloff discusses how his previous career in Chicago convinced him of planning's need for better integration with the social sciences lest it be left in the realm of architects and engineers. This was not a unique experience. At UC Berkeley, Francis Violich has in a working paper initiated in 2001, "Intellectual Evolution in the Field of City and Regional Planning: A Personal Perspective", brought together samples of numerous works that among other things demonstrate planning's arrival during the 1960s at a concern with community, social justice, and the negative effects of many urban interventions. This trend was reflective of a general cultural tone and precipitated across the country the evolution of an inter-disciplinary approach that distinguished the field from architecture or engineering as concerned with the social sciences. Violich states that "the latter half of the century saw the role of practitioner as teacher replaced by the social scientist." (Violich, 42) Enter the ongoing debate over the significance of practice versus the significance of theory. Whatever the case, my point is that social science did emerge as a significant component of urban planning programs across the country by the 1960s and has remained as such ever since. Perloff was very concerned with the recruitment of social scientists, particularly economic geographers and those with experience in the developing world due to his own interest and work in regional economic development in the United States and Puerto Rico. The noticeable character of the LA School as a school of theory

interested in abstract notions of global development trends, albeit in a local context, over a school of concrete practice is corresponding. One of the most significant complaints directed at LA School literature is consequently that it produces little in the way of policy suggestions, as I will discuss here and in the next chapter. Whether it is their responsibility to the field of planning to produce concrete suggestions is not what I am investigating, but as already stated, why that theory and empirical study produced between UCLA and USC over the last twenty years has acquired a certain character.

In the previous section I considered ecology, neo-Marxism, postmodernism, regulation theory, and theories of globalization as effecting LA School adherents. These were gathered by many of Harvey's recruits, all solidly on the left, over the course of their education in social theory across the globe but particularly Europe. Many of these recruits at UCLA, importantly, were British geographers. These included Edward Soja, appointed in 1972, who until the mid-1980s focused primarily on African development, and Allen Scott in 1981, an economic geographer who had previously instructed at University College London. Take also the case of Michael Dear, in Los Angeles from 1985 and at USC since 1986, who was taught by Allen Scott at University College London and then cooperated with him in the editing of Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society (1981) while Scott was in his first year at UCLA and Dear at MacMaster in Ontario. I used a great many number of essays from this volume in researching the previous chapter. What the coming together of the book signifies is a particular piece of the LA School's heritage in this new geography, in this case quite explicitly traceable from Los Angeles back to Britain in the 1960s and that nation's fostering of the critical geography I discussed in the first chapter with David Harvey and others. Thus it could be argued perhaps that the experience of certain LA School adherents previous to their presence in Los Angeles lends to the school's concern with social geography and with that the lean towards the production of understanding and theory over announcing explicit directions for planning practice.

Dear and Scott expressed their adherence to the new critical geography in the introductory piece to Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society, "Towards a Framework for Analysis". Here they frame the structure, logic and history of land use and

planning as the outcome of private and political decision making within capitalism. Here we thus see the contemporary leftist critique en route from Britain to Los Angeles. They point in their introduction to the need for a wider theory of the underlying productive mechanism which is capitalism. This entails an understanding of the construction of capitalist society, however multi-faceted, as a total and evolving structure, and the role of individual and collective action within it. Only one theory they argue, historical materialism, historically involves itself in a theoretical concept of capitalist society. Their concept of materialism is however, in the tradition of Castells, Lefebvre and Harvey a spatialized historical materialism. For them, capitalism entails the interests of producers, the socialization of a labor force into the rationality of production, exchange and consumption, and simultaneously the necessity that limitations on production, exchange and accumulation be eliminated through spatial praxis even as this leads to crisis. (Dear and Scott, 7) The role of the state is to be the guarantor of production and reproduction of necessary social relations via the allocation of resources such as housing, education and medical care. Thus in a tone of regulationism they iterate the role of accumulation, the role of the state as sustaining accumulation, and how the state thus takes its meaning from accumulation, i.e. a subservient role, in Fordist capitalism. They describe capitalist cities as appearing at clusters of raw materials and transport nodes, thus minimizing costs, and creating the concentration of firms (production space) necessary to minimize the shift of secondary inputs and outputs, surrounded by residences (reproduction space). Planning exists as an agent of efficiency through infrastructure provision and the formalization of land-use in the differentiation and maximizing of land value for some or many but inevitably at the expense of others. However urban planning is limited by the possibility of social disruption from any direction; as intervention it does not always communicate its intentions and generates resistance by capitalism. "The failures of planning in practice are less failures of knowledge than they are inevitable concomitants of collective intervention in a society that at once clamors for and yet restrains such intervention." (Dear and Scott, 14) In the case that planning generates social conflict, Dear and Scott postulate that it is when planning as a reproductive force is made most obvious e.g. renewal, eminent domain and relocation. Their essay thus reflects the typical tone of

regulation theory, with the role of planning in capitalist society understood as the passive agent of the regulating state. Here we see these ideas, rooted in the past, well articulated in 1981 by future LA School adherents, as or before they enter into UCLA and USC.

Enter postmodernism. In 1986, Dear's first year at USC, he composed his essay "Postmodernism and Planning", articulating postmodernism as the agent of planning's passivity in the capitalist state, building on what he had described in 1981 with Allen Scott. He argued that in the postwar state there was a systems theory, or scientific planning, dependent on quantitative methods, rules and rational decision making, that remained passive to the existing regime of accumulation. He contrasts this with 1960s populism which sought legitimacy in the problems of groups perceived as excluded or underprivileged, calling this choice theory. But criticizing this choice theory, elsewhere called advocacy planning (Cenzatti "Marxism and Planning Theory"), he stated that it lacked an over-arching theory of the state by being incremental in focus and practice. Dear emphasizes the subordination of both scientific and choice planning to capitalism, legitimizing the regime of accumulation. Planning had to in his mind incorporate ideas of political economy. Dear then places postmodernism in materialist terms. He states that over the course of the 1970s an international postmodern political economy was established, transgressing national boundaries, and planning was left behind within national borders. Exacerbating the downfall of planning was the fact that in the 70s and 80s the neo-marxist critique "was generally conducted at such a high level of abstraction that practitioners and theoreticians alike had difficulty in making it to everyday practice." (Dear, "Postmodernism and Planning" 165) He discusses the contemporary condition of planning as rejuvenated but he remains critical. Planning in 1986 he says simply supports the postmodern city, luring re-investment by simultaneously placating disadvantaged communities while catering to the interests of private capital, in the end producing gentrification. Planning is thus revived in the postmodern economy, postmodernism here being understood in the phenomenological materialist terms of Jameson and others, but continues to be the facilitator of accumulation in which the "development planner" would be "the dominant species" in the 1980s. (Dear, "Postmodernism and Planning" 167) Advocacy planning, hindered by always being too narrow scope, also remains passive.

Turning to a voice outside of Los Angeles but important to the roots of LA School theorists in their continuing evolution, David Harvey leant a scathing attack on planning and the possibility of a relativist postmodernism in 1989. In his essay “The Condition of Postmodernity” he attacks what he sees as planning’s contemporary favoring of incrementalism and argues for a return to Marxist values. He stages postmodernism as, once again, a material condition, as just one of many stages of capitalism, a shift on the surface, one crisis within a greater one. He then laments post-structuralism’s tendency to dissect those sites from which opposition may be launched. Such a fractured understanding, he argues, belies any meta-theory relating to capital and the division of labor, hindering an understanding of the roots of injustice. But this is only the case apparently when postmodernism is conflated with post-structuralism making it a-political or conservative: “While it opens up a radical prospect by acknowledging the authenticity of other voices, postmodernist thinking immediately shuts off those other voices from access to more universal sources of power by ghettoizing them within an opaque otherness.” (Harvey, “Condition of Postmodernity” 172) On such a postmodernism Harvey says: “a rhetoric that justifies homelessness, unemployment, increasing impoverishment, disempowerment and the like by appeal to supposedly traditional values of self-reliance and entrepreneurialism will just as freely laud the shift from ethics to aesthetics as its dominant value system.” (Harvey, “Condition of Postmodernity” 174) From this understanding of postmodernism he lends explanation to the floundering of the Democratic Party over the last twenty-five years. He says that the new left of incrementalist advocates has failed in insisting “that it was culture and politics that mattered, and that it was neither reasonable nor proper to invoke economic determination even in the last instance ... it was unable to stop its own drift into ideological positions that were weak in contest with the new-found strength of the neo-conservatives.” (Harvey, “Condition of Postmodernity” 175) While the left maintained a debate over culture and politics, they forgot economic determination as a motivation, whereas the right posed its economic reforms as the very basis for the new pluralism i.e. trickle-down economics. Therefore the left in the condition of postmodernity must impose a new meta-theory grounded in economism like that of the neo-conservatives but something

advocating socialism over laissez-faire. If leftists are to make use of postmodernism they must do so on Marxist materialist terms, mapping new sites of resistance for the molding of the economic order, as opposed to fostering the passive conservative view that postmodernism is simply a trend that will replace the outdated modernist superstructure. Interestingly however he includes the post-structuralist disclaimer that any new leftist theory of social understanding and praxis “is not a statement of total truth but an attempt to come to terms with the historical and geographical truths that characterize capitalism.” (Harvey, “Condition of Postmodernity” 176) Postmodernism, if it is to be useful to the left at all, must become an understanding of society grounded in materialism, albeit confusingly, and thus a politically motivating understanding, not one productive of the ‘weak ideological positions’ of a relativist postmodernism that he perceives the left to have pursued thus far.

Marco Cenzatti, a graduate student at UCLA in 1987, had similarly taken up the torch of a critical materialist postmodernism in his essay “Marxism and Planning Theory”. He argues that planning on the left has since the 1960s been linked with ‘advocacy planning,’ but accompanied by a more radical Marxist critique that has continually opened new questions and therefore affected more general understandings of cities even while planning action tends toward more conservative incremental attacks on social injustice.

Cenzatti firstly criticizes ‘mainstream planning’. Mainstream planning may instruct us of a notion of the common good, making it seem concerned with social justice, but it does not tell us what obstacles lay beyond a shallow, most explicit level, or even that there are any obstacles at all. Mainstream planning simply represents guidelines for interventions that may temporarily improve the condition of a number of disadvantaged people as a provision, but in the long run work to produce profitable investment for an outside party e.g. young professionals or a developer, thereby reinforcing the existing distribution of wealth.

Cenzatti describes ‘advocacy planning’ as the effecting of social change by explicitly supporting certain social groups perceived as excluded. However he argues that traditional advocacy planners have an unwillingness to theorize a bigger picture of what

causes the individual problems they tackle. He ultimately criticizes incrementalism for its pluralistic process that recognizes an existing power structure but does not change it. Alternatively the planner may move towards a more Marxist stance, adopting a critical theory of political economy: “Either advocacy moves into a Marxist interpretation, by recognizing in the dynamics between classes the lines of demarcation between the interests of different groups, in which case it is no longer ‘advocacy planning,’ or it subscribes to an understanding of the public interest that, although no longer a ‘given’ but constructed through political debate and even conflict, nevertheless is the motor of social processes and the final goal of planning in the public domain.” (Cenzatti, “Marxism and Planning Theory” 7) Even if traditional advocates work outside the public domain, they thus work with it and help it, and are therefore working to sustain the status quo by pacifying excluded groups. “By contrast, action-oriented Marxist studies linked to advocacy focus on the collective actor i.e. social movements and community action. Although existing planning practice is recognized as serving the status quo, new forms of social action are actively sought in order to establish different planning practices.” (Cenzatti, “Marxism and Planning Theory” 8)

Here Cenzatti probes Allen Scott and Shoukry Roweis’ Urban Planning in Theory and Practice: A Re-Appraisal (1977), showing the contradiction apparent in the ability of an individual to purchase housing on the one hand while in actuality having little power over the direction of the investment; the market, and often the planning that enforces its spatial dynamic through land use, will always create a stratified system into which different groups fit. Many of course are able to exploit this, and find their investments to increase in value, while others have no choice and find their options to decrease as spatial patterns become more entrenched. Cenzatti argues that this detracts from the efficiency of individuals in the marketplace. Advocacy planning, through zoning, services, low-income housing, and street and public transport improvements may try to aid individual efficiency in the city by allowing them a flexibility otherwise not possible. Unfortunately Cenzatti believes that injustice, in the form of market failures, is always one step ahead, and advocacy planning always remains reactionary or after-the-fact. Older cities are particularly susceptible. Due to the “long life and immobility of the artifacts” in the older

city, the advent of a rent increase, precipitating a wage hike, can “make the urban system particularly vulnerable to market failures. Insufficient urban investment creates bottlenecks in production, circulation and consumption, can generate social strife and diminish the supply of labor.” (Cenzatti, “Marxism and Planning Theory” 14) There is in conclusion “a political question of how class struggle should adjust to social changes and extend into new areas ... the answer must appear from a conception of planning as a terrain of debate, confrontations, and elaborations of alternatives within the organizations of the working class.” (Cenzatti, “Marxism and Planning Theory” 16) How to motivate the working class to focus on division and inequality over unity in politics? Not in dated terms such as “revolution” or “proletariat” and nor in friendly terms such as “community action,” which localizes effort. The movement should instead be staged as “part of the social wage and therefore fundamentally economic,” like that of the neo-Conservatives according to Harvey. (Cenzatti, “Marxism and Planning Theory” 17) Cenzatti pleads that the essential argument of the new left should be that justice creates opportunity and efficiency for a greater number of people, and opportunity creates growth.

In 1989 Allen Scott and Michael Storper, at UCLA from 1982, turned specifically to the examination of a post-Fordist regime, contributing to the writing of a new political economy in which planners and others could act. In “The Geographical Foundations and Social Regulation of Flexible Production Complexes” they theorized a model of urbanization based on the deindustrialization of many core regions and the redeployment of capital to some core and peripheral areas, attracted by lower costs and allowing growth in output based on alternative spatial and social productive systems. Technology has enabled this, as has the eventual rising costs of labor and the fall of profits in core regions under the Fordist system. Resulting from de-centralization is the decay of old aspects of social reproduction such as unions. Industry was now geared towards flexible production, characterized by an ability to rapidly shift what was produced and how much of it was produced in a more un-regulated, more competitive international market. This was especially true of emerging craft and hi-tech industries, emerging across the breadth of metropolitan regions, in the core and the periphery. Taking a cue from Los Angeles, they argue that the core of some cities has re-centralized through the emergence of these new

production functions. Never however were new craft or hi-tech clusters in the same place. Likewise most industry had physically distanced itself from the locations of Fordist production to recruit a more dispersed workforce located in suburban spaces. There was thus a growing spatial dichotomy between skilled hi tech and management workers and low skill service or craft workers. Downtowns across the country had meanwhile been re-erected as the cultural crucible of the high-brow, re-made as domains of leisure, international taste and gentrification, as the “loci of mass spectacle of the sort described by Debord.” (Storper and Scott, 213) These writings of Storper, Scott, Dear and Cenzatti demonstrate the arrival of the new critical geography I discussed in the first chapter in Los Angeles, and show from an early date the role of that geography in what would eventually materialize as an LA School.

2.2 Why Los Angeles? The Initiation of a Debate

Having analyzed these earlier works of Dear, Storper, Cenzatti and Scott, I return to the question of Los Angeles as a laboratory for the application of this leftist critical geography. Hiring in UCLA’s planning department did, as I stated before, target social scientists. But this happened elsewhere as Violich chronicles, although UCLA may have experienced a particularly large influx of geographers. So why did this group of planners and geographers decide in 1987 that the study of Los Angeles was worthy of privilege? Indeed it is inevitable that a geographer or urban planner is likely to use his or her own environment as a laboratory, but why did a group in Los Angeles, in 1987, decide that their local laboratory was particularly worthy? These questions have been repeated by others again and again, and will be asked again in this thesis. Most commonly, critics of the LA school assert that the privileging of Los Angeles as a laboratory by the LA school undermines a perceived need for a more comparative approach or that it leads people to talk about Los Angeles as ‘paradigmatic’, rendering the unique experiences of other cities irrelevant. So why Los Angeles in 1987? I can speculate from the writings of Dear, Soja, Davis and others that the group of critical theorists in planning and geography who came to be concentrated in Los Angeles over the course of the last thirty years perceive the

history of Los Angeles to be ‘untold’. As said before, nobody has produced a comprehensive history of later twentieth century Los Angeles. However, neither have adherents of the LA School; they either produce empirical studies of selected areas or topics, or provide over-arching theories of Los Angeles’ urban development as the product of many trends, some of which are very abstract and of unsure geographical dimension. It is frequently argued by LA School adherents that Los Angeles should be privileged because it is paradigmatic of current conditions. That Los Angeles does actually display the materialist condition of postmodernism more than anywhere else is not something I wish to speculate. The best answer I can provide here is thus that a group of scholars in 1987 and ever since then have evidently found this to be at least arguable, as Allen Scott shows in Metropolis: From the Division of Labor to Urban Form (1988). Here Scott provides an explanation of his empirical bias towards Los Angeles:

I make no apologies for this empirical bias. On the contrary it seems to me to add a certain spice to the proceedings, for it so happens that Los Angeles (and more broadly the whole of the great megalopolis of Southern California) is now certainly one of the premier growth regions of the United States, if not indeed the whole world. It is probably not too exaggerated a claim to describe LA and its surrounding region as one of the paradigmatic cases of late capitalist industrialization and urbanization just as Chicago was widely taken to be the paradigmatic expression of the industrial metropolis of the 1920s. (Scott, Metropolis 2)

Thus the question of Los Angeles’ status as paradigmatic, exemplary, prophetic, or maybe just as a place revealing trends that are simply more explicit there than elsewhere, was in the works.

Armed with the critical geography of Lefebvre and Harvey, what did Allen Scott uncover in a privileged Los Angeles? Scott’s investigation of Los Angeles in Metropolis was problematically perhaps, given his scope, for the benefit of all urban theory as his Los Angeles was assumedly paradigmatic:

What is crucial about the production system . . . is that it creates the powerful forces that, first, give rise to metropolitan agglomeration as a purely locational phenomenon, and, second, influence in many intimate ways the workaday existence of the entire citizenry. As the argument of the book unfolds I hope to be able to demonstrate that this manner of approaching the metropolis (i.e., by maneuvering analytically from industrialization to urbanization by way of the division of labor) can contribute significantly to a revitalization of urban theory in general. (Scott, Metropolis 2)

Uncovering the production system in Los Angeles, he stresses that many theorists, such as those of the Chicago School or neoclassical urban economists have been concerned with social phenomena or behavioristic economic process independently of and even at the expense of the production system. He allows them an excuse however, saying that under welfare-state capitalism, production may have been taken for granted because it was so explicitly part of the urban landscape; in such a situation the theorist's focus may become biased in favor of consumption and social reproduction. With the redistribution of the production system from the 1970s, he says that many theorists have come to recognize its significance and that this is most easily recognizable in Los Angeles. "They are now to an ever-increasing degree concerned with the dynamics of the production system and its role in the growth, reproduction, and (and in some cases) stagnation and decay of metropolitan centers. By contrast, the old urban theory tended to relegate those dynamics to the status of mere background ... or even nonproblematical." (Scott, Metropolis 6) Careful to prevent contemporary theorists from taking the more outdated direction, he attacks the postindustrial hypothesis. He agrees that capitalism in its present form is distinguishable from that of the welfare state, but cannot be understood as a fundamental shift away from the logic of industrial capitalism. He explains for example that much of the service sector is organized around the principal of commodity production; many contemporary shifts were based on the continued managing and financing of a worldwide system of industrial commodity production. Production in any case remains the basic motivation of capitalist society, with Los Angeles as his shining example. Los Angeles for Scott shows that de-industrialization or de-urbanization is not necessarily occurring in the first world, but that shifts in the production system are merely affecting patterns of growth, shifting growth elsewhere or outwards. This is visible in the region's new areas of development, increasing municipal fragmentation, and the new edge cities that provide the sites of accumulation for the successful expansion of the new urban complex.

Thus like Harvey, Dear and Cenzatti he uses an historical and spatial materialism to explain social process within the capitalist system. Scott's study of the production system in Los Angeles was thus inspired from theory developed outside Los Angeles, a

result as I said of his personal background, but assumed to be applicable to it given Los Angeles' position in a capitalist society and as he argues Los Angeles' position as *the* city of contemporary capitalism. My greatest interest here therefore lies in the extent to which he believed this one city reveals the workings of the industrial system as it may be 'paradigmatic'. The extent of this belief, demonstrated here at an early date following the 1987 meeting, is a persistent factor in the debate surrounding the LA School. It is also something I do not wish to draw a solid conclusion upon, as I find that impossible. If one is to ask 'Why Los Angeles?' my response is simply that this group of scholars finds the proposition of a paradigmatically postmodern Los Angeles possible given its spectacular contemporary growth, which I can take to be factual. I will show in the next chapters how later, with Mike Davis and then with the explosion of LA School literature in the mid-1990s, this question came to the front for a wide academic audience.

2.3 Edward Soja's 'Postmodern Geographies'

Throughout the early to mid-1980s, Edward Soja produced several essays on spatiality and Los Angeles' political economy that eventually resulted in his 1989 publishing of Postmodern Geographies: the Reassessment of Space in Critical Social Theory, a significant effort to simultaneously explore the heritage of a spatial materialism and notions of a post-Fordist political economy and then apply these to the geography of Los Angeles. He reviews in the first chapters of the book how by the 1970s geography was being used to explain spatial patterns and the spatial processes that enable or constrain everyday action. As I showed in the first chapter he relays how these conceived spatial patterns are at once created by knowledgeable human agents who simultaneously find themselves in a spatial context of social structures, institutions and other individual agents.

Soja goes about detailing the debate over an evolving spatial materialism, reviewing Lefebvre, Castells and Foucault. Soja shows that this is at the time of his publication ongoing with his critique of Anthony Giddens' work; this critique answers to where Soja stands in the debate. In 1984 Anthony Giddens expressed in The Constitution

of Society that society is organized into a multi-layered system of nodal regions that represent activity clustering. Giddens talks about these as 'locales', but does not talk about them in a concept of survival through restructuring and stabilization. This, Soja says, is what we must do when we talk about urban spaces. Giddens, in Soja's opinion, maintains the course of the Chicago School, limiting cities to ideas of size, density, and contents, but not spaces of power, the geography of confinement, fragmentation and surveillance. The activation of space as more than a simple reflection of social forces, an actual productive force, was therefore not a totally shared process or an easy task, but Soja lets his readers know where he stands:

The challenge was clear. There was a complex and problem-filled interaction between the production of human geographies and the constitution of social relations and practices which needed to be recognized and opened up to theoretical and political interpretation. This could not be done by continuing to see human geography only as a reflection of social processes. The created spatiality of social life had to be seen as simultaneously contingent and conditioning, as both an outcome and a medium for the making of history. (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 58)

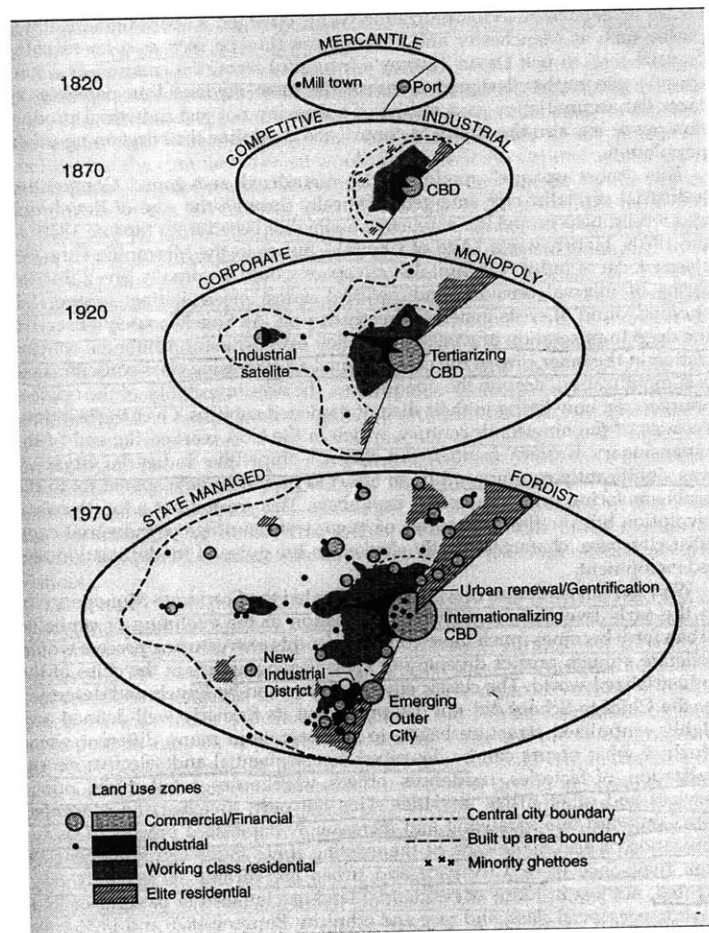
Soja thus, after discussing the history I reviewed in the first chapter, squarely places himself on a particular side of the debate with his discussion of Giddens. This is a stand followed in most LA School literature. Dear and Flusty state in Spaces of Postmodernity, a 2002 reader on geography according to the LA School: "The focal concern in human geography is to understand the simultaneity of time and space in structuring social behaviors. Human geography is the study of the contemporaneity of social process and spatial patterns over time and space." (3) Geography for the LA School is therefore the synergy of the spatial and social. Borrowing on the lineage of theorists I discussed in the first chapter, Soja outlines this synergy as a socio-spatial dialectic. If we are to approach the socio-spatial dialectic from the spatial side, we may understand that interaction in space is complicated by the physical or human boundaries created by social structures such as gender or race, institutions such as government, or other individuals e.g. one person's private property. If we are to approach it from the social side we may understand individuals or collectives operating within spatialized structures, enacting or changing them, or outside of them, in resistance. From either approach we come to understand the integral role of the other. This integrated structure is furthermore observable from an

individual, meso or macro perspective, and from each of these, though often problematically, one may talk about anything from the most intimately local to the most abstractly global. This also implies an understanding of a global system of cores and peripheries as the energized successor to other social theorists' passive 'city and countryside' backdrop.

The socio-spatial dialectic is here and elsewhere as I will show particularly geared towards the understanding of capitalism which through the horizontal dispersion of production is understood to create fragmentation and hierarchies. Postmodern geographies are defined as "the most recent products of a sequence of spatialities that can be complexly correlated to successive eras of capitalist development." (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 3) Soja describes three approaches to postmodern geographies: post-historicism as a method of social interpretation, post-Fordism as a method of describing the new capitalism, and postmodernism as describing the spatial logic of this materialism. Firstly, following Jameson in understanding postmodernism he says: "Postmodern (or multinational) space is not merely a cultural ideology or fantasy, but has a genuine historical (and socio-economic) reality as an ... expansion of capitalism around the globe." (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 62) Post-historicism, a spatial materialism, post-Fordism, and postmodernism, the particular spatial logic of post-Fordism, together reveal a new leftist political agenda, a politics of spatial resistance. This was both de-constructive and re-constructive; Soja accounts for the post-structuralist critique in his post-historicism as I will discuss now, but he maintains a rigid structuralism in his erection of a postmodernism that is also, as the spatial logic of post-Fordism, a fundamentally material condition that can be broken up into parts and understood as a machine.

On post-historicism, Soja says that unlike time, which understands linearity, space can be used to, as Lefebvre and others had shown, understand simultaneity i.e. the notion that at any given time, in a space, however defined, a number of histories are being performed. Thus its appeal to Soja and other LA School adherents who feel the need to account for the post-structuralist trope while not eliminating the possibility of explanation. Space, understood as both a social product and a shaping force in society,

allows such explanation. It is space that enables a viewing of contemporaneity, and therefore a reading of history that is fractured and multiple, assumedly more like that which we collectively experience and therefore explanatory. The geography of Soja and many of his Los Angeles counterparts therefore understands space as the arena for a more democratic making of history, distanced from the possibility of establishing a single narrative alike any conventional, modernist history. This justified his more explicit structuralism elsewhere.



“Evolution of urban form in the USA” (Soja 1989, 174)

On post-Fordism, Soja maintains that capitalism is sustained through restructuring, which conservatism disguises at each stage as an evolution or a progression rather than a reaction to direct threats. For Soja, space is “progressively occupied by an

advancing capitalism, fragmented into parcels, homogenized into discrete commodities, organized into locations of control, and extended to the global scale ... Thus, class struggle ... must encompass and focus upon the vulnerable point: the production of space, the territorial structure of exploitation and domination, the spatially controlled reproduction of the system as a whole” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 92) Any social change therefore is a spatial change and vice versa. Regulationism is thus useful as it can explain elements of restructuring such as geographically uneven development, regionalism, and the division of labor. Soja follows Mandel’s Late Capitalism in setting out long waves of industrial capitalism. He poses Freely Competitive Capitalism, lasting from 1820-1870, as the successor to the Mercantile System. This system established a dichotomy of city and country, exploitation of local resources through nodality, and the factory system. Corporate Monopoly Capitalism reigned from 1870 to 1920 through imperialism, incorporating large underdeveloped territories as suppliers of raw materials and establishing the dichotomy of core and periphery. This was succeeded by the Fordist-Keynesian system, lasting from 1920 until 1970, entailing the role of the state as driving both production and reproduction through demand stimulation, suburbanization, urban renewal, monetary controls, economic planning, state investments, and social welfare. Over the course of the depression and WWII, this role of government became especially explicit through the development of urban planning, first in land use regulation.

This system Soja says has been replaced by a capitalism of a renewed core/periphery dynamic, flexible specialization in production, sub-regional recycling, edge cities, the ascent of the global in the local, de-unionizing, new sources of labor, the weakening of the state, wage gap polarization, and accelerated capital mobility in search of profits. Significantly, “the contemporary period of restructuring has been accompanied by an accentuated visibility and consciousness of spatiality.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 173) Post-Fordism is just the latest in a succession of capitalist long waves, with postmodernism as its fundamental spatial logic and the fractured lens of a post-historicist spatiality as its method of understanding and political motivation. Soja accuses Hollywood and other neo-conservative sources of using postmodernism as de-constructivism to build an “even more obfuscating veil over the instrumentality of

restructuring and spatialization, reducing both history and geography to meaningless whimsy and pastiche ... in an effort to celebrate the postmodern as the best of all possible worlds.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 74) Such celebration eliminates postmodernism as motivation for political action. Soja’s union of post-historicism, post-Fordism and postmodernism asserts otherwise.

From his assertion of the socio-spatial dialectic and his analysis of restructuring and postmodernism, Soja moves in the last two chapters of Postmodern Geographies to Los Angeles, incorporating his essay “Taking Los Angeles Apart” (1986) as the last chapter. In the first of the two chapters, “It all comes together in Los Angeles” he performs an historical review using the critical theory of spatial materialism and themes of regulation. In Los Angeles, Soja places the advent of industrial capitalism before the turn of the twentieth century, pointing to large-scale real estate speculation, the development of the oil industry, and large-scale agricultural markets made possible through irrigation projects. Inevitably this is arguable, as the railroads arrived earlier and the first large speculative real estate boom was in the 1880s. Also, as Fogelson details in The Fragmented Metropolis, the role of government in the form of rather autonomous county departments often operating as profiteering corporations, had a developed expertise in the business of attracting capital through market-building infrastructure. They also maintained alliances at the federal level for the attraction of rail and the building of Los Angeles’ artificial port. This may be something more attuned to a Fordist notion of industrial capitalism; could it be argued that Los Angeles possessed a Fordist character from the turn of the century? But at the same time the elites of Los Angeles, operating through the municipality and county’s fragmented mechanisms of government, were dedicated to free enterprise. The open shop was brutally upheld in Los Angeles over years of violence in the early twentieth century through union busting. Fogelson shows how the elite of Los Angeles was also dedicated to the political project of progressivism, often with a very explicit racial dynamic. From early in the century, progressive politics, involving the absence of parties, made difficult the building of alliances and inevitably alienated minorities. Thus any discussion of something like corporate monopoly capitalism or Fordism here must be attuned to the peculiarity of Los Angeles, as it must

be for any other city, and then involved in comparative studies if some wider theory of regulation is to be revealed.

Soja points to wartime and postwar federal investment in the defense industry, labor-stabilizing contracts, highway building and suburbanization as indicative of a Fordist regime of accumulation in Los Angeles. Those left out of the 'virtuous cycle' of Fordist growth rebelled in Watts in 1965. Of course the political fragmentation of Los Angeles county and the regional rail system had made extensive suburbanization an aspect of the city and county's growth from well before the war, all this precipitated by government practice and progressive politics as I said before. Again, Soja's theory encounters challenges here. From Fordism, Soja reviews how the advent of a more flexible means of production has caused a further fragmentation of the populace, and given the relaxing of immigrant restrictions this has taken on a strongly racial dynamic. He reviews the bipolar nature of contemporary growth with the expansion of both high paying and low paying jobs, the squeeze on the middle class, downtown renewal, and simultaneous deindustrialization and reindustrialization. Like Sudjic, he indicates how 'it all comes together in Los Angeles' i.e. there is a Detroit, a Silicon Valley, a Houston, and a Sao Paolo all in Los Angeles; a rustbelt, a hi-tech economy, a downtown crucible of international finance, and low-wage industrial production. Here is the city as mesocosm "an ordered world in which the micro and the macro, the idiographic and the nomothetic, the concrete and the abstract, can be seen simultaneously in an articulated and interactive combination." (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 191) Therefore in Los Angeles we may talk about a variety of new landscapes: there are the edge cities of LAX and Orange County, the third world of the garment industry, the downtown of global capital and corporate simulacra, and the rustbelt of south central, all at once. This all points to the continuing prominence of industrial capitalism and its new-found order in post-Fordism, accompanied by the post-structuralist trope that all which is local is becoming a reflection of global trends at the same time that the global is made local. But this is not obfuscating of the fundamental order of capitalism and its accompanying racial and gender dynamics. Just as there exists, in the words of N. Poulantzas' State, Power, Socialism (1978), "separation and division in order to unify ... atomization in order to encompass;

segmentation in order to totalize; closure in order to homogenize; and individualization in order to obliterate differences and otherness,” there exists a corresponding unified and encompassing political agenda. (qtd. in Soja, Postmodern Geographies 215) This agenda lies in environmental justice, affordable housing initiatives, and the political representation of peripheralized groups. At the end of the chapter he moves into that traditionally problematic territory for the LA School when he says that Los Angeles is now finally being realized as paradigmatic. He says that what is happening elsewhere is being duplicated in Los Angeles to some extent. But he performs a partial retreat in saying that what happens in Los Angeles is not necessarily being duplicated elsewhere.

In the final chapter, “Taking Los Angeles Apart: Toward a Postmodern Geography” he invokes Jorge Luis Borges’ ‘The Aleph’: “the only place on earth where all places are – seen from every angle.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 222) From here Soja gets purposefully vague it seems. Tending towards a Simmelian outlook with obscuring language and sometimes florid gestures, using terms such as “LA-leph,” he introduces the chapter asking whether truthful knowledge of the city is possible. Nevertheless he is determined to tell a particular story. He renders a sensational geography onto downtown: “Perhaps more than ever before, downtown serves in ways no other place can as a strategic vantage point, an urban panopticon counterposed to the encirclement of watchful military ramparts and defensive outer cities.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 236) He criticizes ecological urbanism, saying that empirical regularities may be discovered on the surface but that they are not explained by themselves. They are only explained by an underlying structure about which nothing is ‘natural’ but intended. This structure, he concludes, is “an instrumental nodal structure, an essentially exploitative division of labor.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 246) The city amounts to so many “attractively packaged places for rest and recreation all cleverly hiding the buzzing workstations and labor processes which help to keep it together.” (Soja, Postmodern Geographies 246) Here Soja delivers to the reader a fairly noir vision, often repeated in leftist criticism, as the fundamental postmodern geography of Los Angeles. That said, he does present it as an opinion over any truth, saying his observation is incomplete, and that the basic project remains not any total knowledge of Los Angeles or

any other place, as this is not possible, but an epistemological question of developing a critical social theory and a critical political praxis. Soja thus in the end frames Postmodern Geographies as the pursuit of a flexible method while producing just one possible outcome in the final chapters.

2.4 The Misadventures of Mike Davis

For something less apologetic, step forward one year to Mike Davis' City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles. Many place City of Quartz within a tradition of imagining Los Angeles as sunshine or noir, a tradition which accompanies the histories of most cities. Much Angeleno 'history' as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter puts the story simply one way or the other, usually with some ulterior motive, for example the selling of real estate or a film; even McWilliams called his 1946 history of Southern California Southern California: an Island on the Land. My take is that Davis' particular 'history' is informative of Los Angeles in the same way as Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles, another, if only entirely metaphorical, criticism of Los Angeles. In The Martian Chronicles, the earth people, tired of their overcrowded and corrupt planet, leave for a bright golden place where they find Martians, and destroy them. In City of Quartz the Martians are the natural environment and minorities, and the humans are white people, and it is a very interesting story, based on many truths but even more anger. In City of Quartz Los Angeles thus becomes pure nightmare, with very little room for nuance.⁶ It is an alarmist rant, damning of humanity, and as such it has served to draw much attention to Southern California. Unfortunately, it works, like Raymond Chandler, or the boosters, or Chinatown, to contaminate the Los Angeles region in the most biased and perversely entertaining light. It is an entertaining and occasionally insightful story; unfortunately The London Times called it "A history as fascinating as it is instructive". (qtd. in Davis, City of Quartz, jacket) Fascinating yes, but instructive of what?

⁶ Particularly critical is William McClung, who in Landscapes of Desire: Anglo Mythologies of Los Angeles (2000) frames Davis as resurrecting the 'tired' trope of noir Los Angeles.

Davis has been associated with the LA School often, in Soja's discussion of 'Carceral Cities' to be reviewed later, or in his presence at Lake Arrowhead, if only as the most pop-oriented and loudest strain of a wider critique. After all, I have little doubt that the popularity of LA's urbanist 'stars' derives at least partially from their pure-pop renegade friend now enjoying his first academic appointment at Stony Brook. Having placed the social history of a dynamic metropolis within such a spectacular guise, it is not the history that is worth analysis so much as how Davis achieved the damning of Los Angeles through careful selection: selling millions to disgruntled leftists in the sensationalist fashion that Sean Hannity sells to disgruntled conservatives.



"Like Tokyo in 1945" (Davis, City of Quartz 419)

To present City of Quartz, I will review some of the photo captions, as their irony presents a good synopsis of the mood. There is "The lost elephants", for a junkyard with two concrete elephants, "Death Alley", for a truck lot surrounded by a fence, "Like Tokyo in 1945", for the ruins of Kaiser steel, "Big Bess, 1990," for Kaiser's ruined smokestack, "Phantom Orchard," for one of many disused orchards across the region, "Dream House" for a decaying gunshot style home, and "The Miracle Man Cometh", for

a Kaiser Steel poster, as if employees should have predicted the demise of the steel industry. (Davis, City of Quartz 433; 431; 419; 409; 377; 405; 391) We have “Fontana Farms” for an abandoned Sunkist shop, and “The Forgotten Ones,” for a homeless man sleeping in front of a church. In this city even the traditionally charitable have forgotten apparently. (Davis, City of Quartz 383; 367) We have “Inner City Crossword” for graffiti, “Gangs will never die” for Bloods and Crips graffiti, and “Fast Food” for a mural of a violent police bust at a fast food joint, “Vietnam in the Streets” for a bullet pierced police car door and so on. (Davis, City of Quartz 317; 303; 285; 269) The only aspect of Los Angeles that escapes Davis’ attack is the Latino community, who become unwielding guardians of faith and identity in the face of oppression. And yet this too has a more implicit bite, rendering in the most patronizing way Latinos as an imprisoned mass, void of individual agency and will. Davis was, to his credit, partially redeemed in his Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City (2000).

City of Quartz is surely the most alarmist rendition of the city not to come out of Hollywood or the pen of Bertold Brecht, in which politics fragment and oppress, capitalism controls and watches, and culture frightens and murders. It is achieved by a reductive lens that selects anecdotes and images which no doubt are truly alarming, but can not be taken as constituting any entirety that is ‘Los Angeles’. Here, human agents have somehow disappeared in a debacle of monolithic ‘isms’. While the work’s counterparts may be located among the more nuanced and more solidly grounded critiques of Los Angeles examined throughout my thesis, this work carries the distinct honor of fictionalizing Los Angeles, well beyond the wildest neologisms of Michael Dear, at the same time it feigns some idea of ‘truth’.⁷ Unfortunately any potential for an educated investigation has in City of Quartz been trounced by sensational conspiratorial paranoia inducing in the reader the feeling of having viewed a John Carpenter action film.⁸

⁷ When I say ‘more solidly grounded’ I am referring to the revelation that many of Davis’ ‘facts’ have proven to be false. See Brady Westwater, Research Exposes Getty Fellow, McArthur Recipient Mike Davis as Purposefully Misleading Liar in Coagula Art Journal.

⁸ Escape from L.A. (1996) in particular came to mind

Davis returned with Ecology of Fear, the riots of 1992 supposedly confirming his prophetic status, to discuss, in the words of his chapters' titles: "how Eden lost its garden", "the case for letting Malibu burn", "our secret Kansas", "Maneaters of the Sierra Madre", "Beyond Bladerunner" and "the literary destruction of Los Angeles", in which he somehow forgets to mention his own City of Quartz. Granted, this work, so far as it attacks popular fear-production as profit-motivated, hate-motivated, sponsoring of racial hatreds, environmental destruction, biases and social fragmentation, is insightful. But once again, Los Angeles never escapes from the most ill-minded intentions of mankind, and the book acts as a further punishment of this city which as Davis points out has already been fabricated as a sinful Babylon so many times.

2.5 The Articulation of an LA School

While Mike Davis had described an LA School in 1989 as "political economists with their space suits on," Marco Cenzatti scribed the first comprehensive review of an LA School in "Los Angeles and the L.A. School: Postmodernism and Urban Studies" (1993), and remained for the most part less fantastical. (Dear, "Los Angeles and the Chicago School" 11) For Cenzatti, the Los Angeles school defines a group of researchers exploring a certain series of social, economic and spatial trends "symptomatic of a general transformation." (Cenzatti, "Los Angeles and the LA School" 1) He indicates that there are multiple centers of research, and that it is "equally difficult to find the school's common conceptual denominator". (Cenzatti, "Los Angeles and the LA School" 1) So is the work of LA school adherents more about Los Angeles or shared theoretical assumptions? Is it like Chicago, about a place, or like Frankfurt, about an idea? Cenzatti introduces the idea that it is a blend.

He reviews the Chicago school and their use of the urban as an autonomous subject of analysis, thus differentiating urban studies from sociology. While the LA School maintains the city as a subject of inquiry, Cenzatti finds this complicated in the minds of LA School writers. For most, Los Angeles cannot be imagined as such an isolated subject because its social structures are so involved with a globalized political

economy that denies any 'urban versus non-urban' structuralism. Los Angeles is therefore a city that demands a shift in the theoretical perspective, and this perspective is furthermore not of a singular character, but like that fragmented lens I have spoken of. My question is, does Los Angeles demand this new way of thinking, as Michael Dear ("Los Angeles and the Chicago School") poses, or is this demanded generally of urban theory? I argue here, as I argue throughout this thesis, that the 'perspective' of the LA School represents a much more general shift, something independent of Los Angeles' particular structure but applicable there, demanded there per se as it is elsewhere.

Cenzatti links the theoretical restructuring present in the LA School to the critique of linear narratives and the tendency towards describing a multi-faceted causality of urban development. While Cenzatti pointed out the lack of a common denominator, he does indicate that as with Frankfurt, there is a dominant denominator, indicating this to be a multi-faceted causality, what he calls postmodernism: "this parallel with Frankfurt has its limits, however. It can hardly be maintained that postmodernism (and restructuring studies) originated in Los Angeles." (Cenzatti, "Los Angeles and the LA School" 3) Here then we have an answer to the question that Los Angeles observers' did not generate their perspective, but inherited it.

He takes the French Regulation School as another example. From Regulation Theory LA theorists gain notions of Fordism versus post-Fordism and then observe it in their city. They take from others, as I reviewed in the first chapter, that the inflexibility of Fordism left industries vulnerable in the problem of balancing the expansion of the market through higher labor costs with the decline in profitability caused by higher labor costs. In response the production system turned towards flexible production, multipurpose machinery, and simultaneous decentralization and recentralization.⁹ Cenzatti says that the LA school employs these ideas but at the same time must avoid rigid economism. For Soja this is solved through the simultaneity inevitable in the socio-spatial dialectic. Here Cenzatti follows the evolution of space, as a concept, in western history. He traces it from physical space, when social life took place in a largely

⁹ As opposed to Product Cycle theory, Cenzatti says, which holds dispersion from the center as the rule of the day.

unchangeable place, to that shaped by man, as evident in uneven development, to that of simulacra, not human adaptation to territory but territory as only referential to a hidden notion of itself. For the LA School and others, all three of these tend to appear in any place; this is a multi-faceted causality, what Cenzatti considers their particular postmodern approach.

Given that the notion of a methodological postmodernism containing an historical and spatial materialism is the dominant denominator, the numerator must be considered. The definition of the LA school therefore lies at an intersection where what Los Angeles is about can not be solely constructed from local empirical studies, while on the other hand it is not a blank slate onto which a pre-supposed model is placed. It is at once a laboratory revealing a larger picture that is a condition of postmodernity and an understanding of postmodernity as revealing a laboratory. Cenzatti argues that this laboratory is especially well conditioned for this exercise because of its very explicit differentiation from modernist models, for example, the concentric zone model, that makes it a more likely testing ground for new concepts of industrial capitalism. Cenzatti says that in the “cases like Chicago or New York, the argument goes, this new urban form may be difficult to recognize, since it is masked by the pre-existence of earlier urban forms.” (Cenzatti, “Los Angeles and the LA School” 4) One may ask here if New York and Chicago have edge cities, or if Los Angeles has a rust belt; the case of the LA School is that the answers to both of these questions may be ‘yes’ but that Los Angeles makes the geography of postmodernism most explicit. This may lead to the dropping of superlatives e.g. ‘higher than’, ‘exceeded only by’, or ‘largest’, if this is to be proven. This attracts much criticism, as I will more fully explore, because it makes other cities, equally but differently affected by restructuring, seem less important when in fact, as many critics I have and will cite argue, it is comparative studies that are most important if one is to talk about restructuring in general. In partial retreat, Cenzatti concludes with the notion of ‘city as text.’ Here he says that inevitably every story contains other stories, not intending that anything can be assigned to a given story, but that no text can “be established in isolation.” (Cenzatti, “Los Angeles and the LA School” 16) Thus theory in postmodernity has become one with the city itself: something multi-faceted and multi-

layered. Any particular story of an LA School adherent can therefore neither be understood as completely isolated or conversely as all-telling.

In “The Spaces that Difference Makes: Some Notes on the Geographical Margins of the New Cultural Politics” (1993), investigating this notion of city as text as a revealing device, Edward Soja and Barbara Hooper explore how the text of the margins, those excluded from accumulation, is inevitably tied to the text of the center and vice versa. They theorize in the fashion of post-colonial discourse that the margins have in the era of postmodernism become sites of resistance in their very difference. The margins have sought empowerment to change the existing order through the existing order. In this subversive negotiation we may talk about “the disordering of difference from its persistent binary structuring.” (Soja and Hooper, 381) Here the postmodern map becomes a map of tension, disorder and resistance, not the smooth picture of neo-conservative ‘multiculturalism’.

In The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History, Dolores Hayden, at UCLA from 1979 to 1991, criticizes history that ignores working men and women of diverse ethnic groups. ‘Power of Place’ was launched in 1984 as a nonprofit dedicated to installations of historic districts, public art, museums, and monuments in downtown Los Angeles as narration of this under-told history. Mike Davis did not discuss this space of resistance in his telling of downtown Los Angeles. Dolores Hayden has not to my knowledge been explicitly linked to an LA School by direct reference. However she does cite Michael Dear, Jennifer Wolch, Derek Gregory and David Harvey, the first two of whom are LA School adherents, as belonging to a theoretical project that incorporates political economy but remains attached to the more intimate experiences of places. Additionally, she answers to some members of the LA School in her discussion of the practice of spatial justice, or one aspect of the practice of spatial justice. However in her focus on practice, she also implies criticism of many LA School adherents. “As the productive landscape is more densely inhabited, the economic and social forces are more complex, change is rapid, layers proliferate, and often abrupt spatial discontinuities result that cultural landscape studies seem unable to address adequately. One can’t simply turn to economic geography ... because there the human experience of place is lost.”

(Hayden, 17) She praises Davis and Soja for their critique of perceived power structures but also criticizes Soja's imagining Los Angeles as a "corporate citadel ... upon a broadening base of alien populations." (qtd. in Hayden, 101) She says "In this context, these 'alien populations' seem to be new immigrants, but Soja has little interest in distinguishing them from people of color who have lived and worked in the city for a long time. He conflates them all, and women, in 'the reserve army of migrant and minority workers.'" (Hayden, 101) Perhaps this can be resolved by contrasting her privileging of detachment from heritage with Soja's privileging of detachment from economic opportunity. However there remains the problem that Soja's metaphor denies individual will to a great number of people. Soja's response came with Thirdspace the following year, to be discussed later.¹⁰

However like Soja, Hayden begins her explanation of Los Angeles' geography with Lefebvre's idea that every society has shaped a distinctive social space that reflects the intertwined demands of economic production and social reproduction. She follows him and others in worrying about the costs in terms of identity in the separation of work from home and the re-arrangement of individuals into the production system with industrial capitalism. As I showed previously, Castells, in The City and the Grassroots or Debord, in Society of the Spectacle had similarly feared that the ordering of capital across urban space by the production system leads in the city to detachment from heritage and culture. There is thus a clear lineage here that she shares with LA School adherents even while here and elsewhere avoiding explicit implication in the school. She then moves towards the discourse of 'political territories' i.e. the limitations put on certain groups in the city via their bodies, neighborhoods, employment, means of transportation, or cultural recognition. Her projects are mostly focused on re-diversifying the culture of the city, building monuments such as museums and historical districts that in being so institutionalized bring their stories into the mainstream. She most interestingly suggests the insertion into places like the South Bronx or South Central the narrations of 'moral

¹⁰ In 'The People in Parentheses': Space under pressure in the postmodern City, (1997) Elisabeth Mahoney also criticized Soja's tendency towards 'mastering' the city, re-producing monolithic narratives that render the city's inhabitants as passive and discount resistance. She argues that feminists have been slower to announce such narratives if only because such mastery is masculine.

imagination' that have made landscapes such as Gettysburg into monuments of national struggle. That such neighborhoods have not been commemorated points to the injustice presently involved in the building of American history. While not implicated within the LA School, Hayden, in her critique of Davis and Soja, and in her shared epistemological lineage provides a good backdrop for the explosion of LA School literature in the last half of the 1990s. As if to answer directly to Hayden, this literature was diverse, varied in subject and scope, and often self-contradictory.

CHAPTER 3: AN LA SCHOOL HEYDAY?

By 1996 Los Angeles was coming to look, thanks largely to media coverage of the 1992 riots and the O.J. Simpson trial, like a bifurcated place; a war-zone divided between a rebellious minority underclass and a privileged, punishing elite. As Dolores Hayden suggests, this image was not eroded by writers such as Mike Davis who portrayed the city as operated by a small white rich capitalist class controlling the social reproduction of a minority workforce through police force. Academic responses came from both inside and outside the LA School. All stressed an examination of the events and the social and spatial setting that precipitated them, and many desired the formalization of Los Angeles' study into that school originally imagined in 1987 as an alerting vehicle for contemporary urbanism's evolving condition. Using a particular but multi-faceted approach, such a school could expose the real diversity hidden behind sensational Hollywood and media images, draw attention to a possibly paradigmatic, prophetic or at least a spreading condition, and set an example for urbanists elsewhere.

Ethnic Los Angeles, edited by two UCLA sociologists, with all contributing writers at UCLA, some in the urban planning department, was a significant example of the academic response. While it was not an 'LA School' product like the other major works of 1996, The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century, Rethinking Los Angeles, and also Soja's more nuanced return to Los Angeles in Thirdspace, it represents in its approach the demands felt by social scientists and theorists in Los Angeles at that time. In tackling the subject of immigration for example, it rejects any 'straight-line' theory of assimilation in favor of a more nuanced one in which certain groups attach themselves to niches, high-skill or low-skill, while others are more mobile. This view of immigration is more fitting with the dominant idea of economic restructuring among leftist social theorists in Los Angeles and elsewhere. Importantly however, in resistance to Davis' noir tropes, it through more careful analysis showed that immigrants and minorities do not fall inevitably to the bottom. Instead of mismatch theory for example, Ethnic Los Angeles prefers to talk about a more multi-faceted, and

divided, black community. The essays also focus on established ethnic clusters and their relative mobility or immobility: that of Mexican immigrant niches in manufacturing, blacks in the public sector and Koreans in self-employment. Once in place, clusters grow as they signal fellow immigrants, while other groups have difficulty breaking into sectors that are dependent on other groups. Ethnic Los Angeles also includes a more varied picture of an 'underclass' including the working poor, the underemployed, those lacking job security, and the jobless. Here there is a plural city rather than a dual city. From here I turn to the volumes of similar intent but even broader scope, those works of LA School adherents produced over the last decade.

3.1 'The City' of Edward Soja and Allen Scott

The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century (1996), edited by Allen Scott and Edward Soja, was one of the first significant volumes that articulated what the LA school considers to be its empirical and theoretical territory. In the editors' "Introduction to Los Angeles: City and Region", they pose the question of whether Los Angeles, as with the writers of noir, the boosters, and some historians, remains an exceptional case or is actually exemplary of twentieth century trends of urbanization. However, there is a careful avoidance of any notion of the paradigmatic here; the goal is instead to maintain a "multiplicity of positions" and avoid the structuralism of either/or. (Scott and Soja, 2) This is because in every urban place one can find the exemplary or the exceptional, the utopian and dystopian, and with this understanding The City is presented as the bringing together of several different viewpoints into one volume, metaphorically one fragmented lens. John Kaliski, in his 1998 review for Harvard Design Magazine summarized that while the writers' are indebted to many Modernist thinkers, mainly Marxists, the open-endedness of the authors' statements or sometimes their contradiction also hints at a less structuralized mindset. Kaliski says the volume "dares the urbanist to consider that the democratic city is not beholden to traditional forms, but rather must be open to debates." (Kaliski, 87) Having explained the need for openness and debate in their volume, the editors present

their own version of the city's history. They follow in their introduction the rise of the boosters in the 19th century, who delivered an idyllic advertisement and fueled a real estate boom, and after 1900 the turn to industrial development with oil, automobile, airplane, and movie production, and also the significance of tourism. They briefly review the triumph of Progressivism and the open shop, political fragmentation and the political emasculation of minorities, placing the city within a history of industrial capitalism. Exceptionalism, they argue, was mostly the work of novelists such as Raymond Chandler and the role of Hollywood as an image factory. Also aiding the exceptionalist perspective was the city's development through massive internal migration and the notion of the 'enormous village.'¹¹

They follow the postwar growth of Fordist Los Angeles with its military-industrial complex and its continuing political fragmentation productive of valuing suburban isolationism on the one hand and disempowering and de-valuing segregation on the other. In their overview of the contemporary situation they introduce edge cities as the urbanization of suburban landscapes and the economy of flexible accumulation. They note the explosion of Orange County, the San Gabriel Valley, LAX, the Eastern San Fernando Valley, and Ventura County as industrialized frontiers, contrasted with the rejuvenation of downtown through an international spending spree and renewal efforts. Pointing to the contracting middle stratum, the collapse of unions, and the out-migration of blacks, they ask, in opening the book, where a new society of opportunity may be located for the many left behind.

Maintaining the 'multiplicity of visions' from the start, the editors immediately turn to an exceptionalist, Richard Weinstein, associate dean of the UCLA School of Arts and Architecture, who argues that Los Angeles is the 'first American city' in its unprecedented privatism. Los Angeles, he argues, is the first American city of the Jeffersonian mindset or that of Frank Lloyd Wright's 'Extended City'. Sam Bass Warner

¹¹ Louis Adamic, in Laughing in the Jungle (1932), portrayed Los Angeles as distinguished among American cities. He maintained the impression that "Los Angeles was a fantastic human muddle" of religious quacks, oil tycoons, 'false intellectuals' and the like, together composing an amusing agglomeration alike an oversized village in the sense of a disorderly, provincial, and unsophisticated place, or 'the enormous village' as he called one of the book's chapters.

(1968) may argue that Weinstein's essay ignores the prominence of privatism in American cities from before the revolution, and many others, from Fogelson to Soja, may point to the role of government in the stimulation of Angeleno urbanism. Weinstein however argues that "In Los Angeles ... the great cultural themes have found their most complete expression," (Weinstein, 24) meaning individualism and the taming of arcadia; he takes a fairly complacent view towards environmental destruction generally. He argues, as many do, of some general American distrust of urban civilization as public and therefore anti-democratic, however general this concept may be. Not to make this sound entirely like a celebration, he demonstrates the dark side of privatism, saying that racism and violence "was reinforced by private entitlement that gave emphasis to the idea of the other." (Weinstein, 25) Space however is treated in a more neo-conservative fashion, returning here to the trope of individual mobility via the automobile as synonymous with social mobility: "The interchangeability, predictability and ordinariness of this urban landscape also offers comfort and security to a mobile population, anxiety ridden in the pursuit of profit, pleasure, individual self-definition and the control of chance." (Weinstein, 30) He finally admits that, in the present era of restructuring and migration, more collective action is necessary to ensure 'value-oriented behavior'. My read on this however is Americanization, and in the most homogenizing sense: Anglicization. In the most 'American' city, we may assumedly rely on private donations and collective action, brought upon by 'good values', to solve the city's present inequalities and return it to some privatized homogeneous utopia. This collective action is composed of "third sector institutions, voluntary social service, environmental, civic, and cultural institutions" (Weinstein, 43). He commands planners to approach the city with uncertainty, leaving the project of urban maintenance and change entirely to the private sector because "experience has taught that the dreams of urban paradise breed monsters," (Weinstein, 43) as if privatism has never bred its own monsters. Whether Weinstein is a fascist, an anarchist or a libertarian I cannot decipher, but his inclusion in this volume points to Scott and Soja's all-inclusive attitude.

From homogeneity to (supposed) heterogeneity there is Charles Jencks' celebration of an older LA School, that of architecture, "Hetero-Architecture and the LA

School”. Jencks argues that Angelenos are aesthetic heterophiliacs in the heteropolis, thriving on difference in architecture as they thrive on differences amongst each other. He points to the failure of the international style in Los Angeles as Banham had, saying it was too “reductive” for such a heterogeneous city. “The main point of hetero architecture is to accept the different voices that create a city, suppress none of them, and make from their interaction some kind of greater dialogue.” (Jencks, 72) I would have to ask of the LA architects however, why, if nothing is suppressed, is there not an office building imitating sweatshop conditions on Pershing Square or a luxury home presented as a soup kitchen in Malibu? While this question is admittedly unfair, it seems to me that the pastiche of LA school architecture has occurred within a conservative celebratory dialogue of ‘multiculturalism’ that leaves marginalized voices, as usual, out of the picture.

Michael Dear’s essay “In the City, Time Becomes Visible: Intentionality and Urbanism in Los Angeles 1781-1991” attempts to view the heterogeneity of Los Angeles over time in horizontal space. “LA provides a special opportunity to analyze what some regard as the emergence of a post-modern urbanism, in which past traditions and intentionalities have collapsed and previous verities have been suspended,” although it is unclear why Los Angeles is so special. (Dear, “In the City” 77) What is clear is his argument that the intentionality of capitalism becomes visible in the observation of urban forms, understanding postmodernism here as a device privileging space as an interpretive vehicle, revealing layerdness and therein past actions. He understands both private and public action as the intentionality or rationality of capitalist urban space. In the public sector this is visible in the addressing of social and economic needs such as environmental reform, public health, and resource provision but also in the need to “reflect the pathologies of individuals, family, neighborhood and city” in value-generating zoning on the one hand, and public housing on the other. (Dear, “In the City” 79) Through a combination of private and public intentionality, from 1880 until 1932 he says “L.A. transformed itself from a small entrepreneurial growth engine to a state-centered growth regime in which public infrastructure projects ... and influential local bureaucracies shaped the region’s development.” (Dear, “In the City” 89) During this

period, reviewed so extensively by Fogelson and others, there existed Dear says a hegemony of business interests emphasizing growth through public investments in water, harbor and power improvements, fostering real estate speculation on a scale not seen in other American cities until after the war. Highway planning early on superseded railroad and streetcar planning, with traffic engineering presented as a science of metropolis building. By 1925 the city's zoning practices had parceled out enough land to accommodate seven million people. (Dear, "In the City" 92) All of this importantly is visible in space, as Los Angeles grew in correspondence with these actions. Dear quotes Fogelson: "In all essentials, the planners shared the populace's suburban ideals, and the populace agreed with the metropolitan aspirations," giving to a particular form. (Dear, "In the City" 93) This was mainstream planning in the modernist mind, "the state of perpetual becoming" that guided the city along a rational path of accumulation. (Dear, "In the City" 95) This faith, never necessarily a reality, was destroyed even before the recognized end of modernism as the perceived public was "shattered into a multitude of fragments speaking incommensurable private languages" (Dear, "In the City" 81) Dear holds that the transition to postmodernism, as a method of understanding, began within modernism, with the uprisings in 1965 by those left behind and with the shout of Jane Jacobs against the rationality of the freeway. Intentionality had now become fractured and correspondingly so has materiality. Government retreated, followed by the influx of international capital in city-building. Here Dear utters that problematic image of "a glittering First World city sitting atop a polyglot Third World substructure" (Dear, "In the City" 98) Spaces remain intended, but more haphazard than those built by the partnership of a previous era. Where is planning in this most desperate of situations? "It appears that late-twentieth-century land use planning has detached itself from the spirit of the postmodern age. Free floating, it becomes a relict apparatus with only the most tangential relationship with the emergent postmodern city," 'postmodern' here being a materialist concept. (Dear, "In the City" 99) Most planning today continues to witness or foster the present flow in his view, fractured between mainstream and advocacy practices.

In his contribution to The City, Martin Wachs targets one specific story in the history of Los Angeles: the conspiracy theory that the Los Angeles region's rail network,

which fostered rapid growth, was undermined when General Motors recognized Los Angeles as a perfect place for car ownership and bought controlling shares. This, like a Hollywood image he says, is an over-simplification, the sort that has penetrated ‘official’ history making, which remains “difficult to discover beneath the glib platitudes and movieland images; and it is far more complex than any of these popular images.” (Wachs, 107) Automobiles became so popular in Los Angeles, asserts Wachs, because of space for storage on single-family lots, and the already existing horizontal spread of the metropolitan area. Rail ridership sunk as a result of the new product’s popularity. With that, public policy shifted towards automobile accommodation as an idea of the ‘automobile as future’ became popular. The city set out its first proposal for a grade-separated parkway in 1924, though there was also a 1925 proposal for a subway system to solve automobile congestion; the story of retreat from rail is therefore also a nuanced one. The automobile nevertheless won in the end. The 1939 expressway plan called for 612 intra-urban miles of freeway and the city turned to the federal government which then fit that plan into the federal plan for an inter-urban and inter-state network. In the intra-urban network the city tried to ensure the focus on downtown over radial routes in the modernist urban aesthetic, though this did little to focus the city in the end. Ending not on Dear’s note of despair but in the suggestion that more equal opportunities may be achieved through easier access to cheaper public transport, Wachs suggests that “A wider variety of urban forms can respond to appropriate social pricing of the automobile to increase future choices of living environments as well as of travel modes.” (Wachs, 157) For Wachs a solution lies in reshaping land use to accommodate for a variety of modes of transportation.

Mike Davis, bound up with an idea of the LA School here again, seems to answer to Weinstein’s irreverence towards the natural environment with his lamenting of Southern California’s disappearing natural landscapes in “How Eden Lost its Garden: A Political History of the Los Angeles Landscape”, donating this from Ecology of Fear. He writes how even park planning, as proposed Olmsted and Bartholomew’s 1930 report, was defeated by a widespread privatism that saw no threat to the natural environment at that time. Davis speculates that “the speculative real estate market would have been

counterbalanced by a vigorous social democracy of beaches and playgrounds,” and that for just this reason The LA Times and Chamber of Commerce both disapproved. (Davis, “How Eden Lost its Garden” 164) Davis then gives examples of environmental destruction, for example the paving of the Los Angeles River to prevent flooding, triggering erosion and sewage spills. Davis blames the lack of large scale preservation on the regional economy’s dependence on the development industry; environmentalism he says continues to be piecemeal.

In “Bounding and Binding Metropolitan Space: The Ambiguous Politics of Nature in Los Angeles” Margaret FitzSimmons and Robert Gottlieb cite the conflict between economic interests and public concern for the environment but also see Los Angeles as the site of successful innovations, saying that “metropolitan Los Angeles has been a laboratory for institutional strategies of environmental control – and thus for the formation and bounding of ‘natural’ spaces.” (186) Nevertheless they are for the most part critical. They frown upon the division of environmental policies by environmental medium, especially how the isolation of mobile pollutants from industrial ones has discouraged attention to patterns of land use. This fragmentation gives to poor planning in waste disposal, with the additional dimension of disposal center concentration in ‘less desirable’ poorer areas of lesser market value. They follow how the Los Angeles City Energy Recovery Project (LANCER) has sought environmental justice, but they argue that community efforts are often limited to simply keeping certain uses away, and thus often jobs. Once again, regionalization is the answer. “The larger context is not, in the end, the environmental commons ... Instead it is power over land use, over the profits of land development and the exigencies of industrial sting.” (Fitzsimmons and Gottlieb, 202) FitzSimmons and Gottlieb suggest environmental markets instead of technology-based standards, which is criticized as an inefficient command and control system. Environmental markets allow firms to trade emissions reductions within a regional environment. They can bank and sell them to production industries which are more pollutant. “It treats environmental regulation as a new cost,” and benefit I would add, “of doing business, differentially imposed by location and industry.” (Fitzsimmons and Gottlieb, 204) This is also less threatening to small firms. It is additionally upholding of a

notion of the community of water in addition to the commodity of water for example, aiding environmental justice.

In this thesis I have frequently visited the criticism that the many social theorists discussed here tend towards economism in explaining social process. Usually this criticism involves accusations that individual agency is left out, or that culture and politics are under-estimated as social forces. Harvey Molotch, in “L.A. as Design Product: How Art Works in a Regional Economy”, signifies a more unique approach to this problematic, pointing to the role of culture, in this case a global ideology of what Los Angeles is, as driving the region’s production system, at least partially, rather than the other way around. He explores how an ‘LA style’ sells; how producers and marketers have cashed in on this particular place’s power, creating the notion that consumers can buy a piece of it. He points to fast food as a style and product originating in Los Angeles and eventually marketed globally as a signification of ‘modern’ mobile culture. He also points to punk, skater, or gangster street-wear, Hollywood stars, car design, a particular California femininity, architectural styles, and the surfer look. These are all part of a profitable Los Angeles image. He argues that in the postmodern economy, what he calls ‘late modernity’, such a productive image stimulates the necessary diversification of products given the lack of consumer loyalty.

In late modernity, images flow with great speed across social and political borders, causing some to think locality has become irrelevant. But place differences still exist, and just as God is in the details, the success or failure of a cultural form and a commercial product turn on very small differences ... precisely because of the relative homogeneity of world places, audiences read with increasing subtlety and consume using ever-finer distinction ... the production edge goes to those who are where, indeed, it is happening. (Molotch, 265)

In conclusion, the production of space as an alluring product through the exploitation of culture “needs to play a larger role in discussions of what makes up places and their economies.” (Molotch, 266) The culture of a particular place is here made the driving force of production rather than the other way around; the essay at least suggests some sort of post-structuralist notion of superstructure versus economy.

Similarly, an LA school theorist may consider how economic changes work to shape the city, and then how those resulting spaces of a particular economic and cultural

character cause shifts in the local economy rather than some one directional notion of causality. This is in the tradition of Lefebvre and Soja's later socio-spatial dialectic. Allen Scott argues in "High-Technology Industrial Development in the San Fernando Valley and Ventura County: Observations on Economic Growth and the Evolution of Urban Form", that the San Fernando Valley demonstrates how hi-tech development may shape urban form and vice versa. He describes this as a leapfrog pattern of land development. His goal is to describe this in empirical terms, making a contribution to the understanding of the relationship between economic growth and urban form across time and space. In the 1950s, the Valley's industrial center in Burbank was surrounded by low-income residential areas, which not very far to the west gave way to higher-income residential areas. In the 1960s the influx of Latinos initiated the growth of craft industries in the eastern valley, precipitating the spread of a higher income residential areas and a corresponding hi-tech corridor westward to Chatsworth. The 1990s saw the decline of the older defense industries in the Burbank-North Hollywood area and the increasing dependence of that area on the influx of Latinos and low-skill industry, counterbalanced by massive growth in the Chatsworth hi-tech corridor. Urbanization therefore occurs in two ways: there is residential expansion, as demonstrated by the influx of Latinos, which can be imagined here as a constant wave, and the expansion of industry which follows a more episodic pattern given specific opportunities or crises, which in turn correspond to some extent with the nature of the residential areas around them. "Industrial districts typically form in response to the external or agglomeration economies that flow from both densely developed local labor markets and the gathering together of many interlinked producers in on particular locale." (Scott, "High-Technology" 294) Therefore a given area may deindustrialize with the loss of large branch plants and middle class workers, only to reindustrialize with craft industries and the influx of a poorer population, which in the case of the valley carries with it particular racial dynamics. Scott argues that this challenges, or rather adds to three common ideas of urban growth: that land rents will be high at the center of the agglomeration, that wages will tend to decline from the center outwards, and that costs increase away from the center for all industries. Dense agglomerations are sometimes likely to decline due to congestion, labor shortages and

overbuilding, provoking decentralization. The movement to a new center is brief, as it is cost effective, with low-wage workers moving into the employment shed of the older agglomeration, re-centralizing it. This precipitates a leapfrogging pattern that may add to our understanding, or nuance our understanding of urban growth in what Scott and others take to be a post-Fordist economy of flexible production.

Paul Ong and Evelyn Blumenberg, in “Income and Racial Inequality in Los Angeles” explore that particular racial dynamic of income inequality. They first point to income inequality in general as having worsened since 1970 through the much-discussed characteristics of 1970s and 80s restructuring and all that entailed for first world cities. The growth of full-time, full-year low-earning workers has increased in all ethnic groups, though for some the situation is markedly worse. They seek an answer to this in dissecting the manufacturing sector. Los Angeles they say, largely because of the continued importance of the defense industry, de-industrialized more slowly and not precipitously until 1990. The number of workers in manufacturing did not decline at all until the 1980s. (Ong and Blumenberg, 316) They say that while nationally a fifth of inequality in wage distribution was due to major sectoral shifts in the 1980s, in Los Angeles only 5% was. (Ong and Blumenberg, 316) They argue that this was due to immigration and a consequent abundance of cheap labor; therefore the stability of the manufacturing sector implies a particular racial dynamic. With the city’s manufacturing sector remaining stable as a whole due to immigration, but shifting internally due to the outsourcing of stable jobs and the growth of low-skill jobs, and the question of who takes these new jobs, inequality in Los Angeles generally translates into racial inequality. Additionally, for these new low-income workers, economic mobility has diminished because unionizing is not for the most part possible; education or gaining experience outside of low-skill jobs are also difficult to attain. Ong and Blumenberg also show that their findings are not unique, and that mere acknowledgement does not prevent tragedy. They quote a 1989 editorial piece from the Los Angeles Times: “The economic boom of the past decade has obscured an alarming acceleration of income disparity. If it is not arrested, we confront a future in which an affluent, overwhelmingly white minority assumes the privileges and opportunities of a permanent ascendancy while the nonwhite,

non-Anglo mass of working people are relegated to the status of hereditary bondmen.” (qtd. in Ong and Blumenberg, 398) This statement arrived in eerie proximity to the 1992 riots or uprising.

From here Scott and Soja shift the direction of the volume to answer: who were the rioters, or rebels, of 1992? For the most part, as the reader knows, the media presented the events as black frustration against a white establishment in wake of one specific act of justice that many considered unfair, leading to a riot. Susan Anderson, along with many others, look at the events of 1992 as much more than the aftermath of the first Rodney King verdict, looking towards the racial dynamic of economic restructuring. In her contribution, “A City Called Heaven: Black Enchantment and Despair in Los Angeles”, Anderson explores the topic of black disillusionment in Los Angeles. From an early date she says, there were higher rates of homeownership among blacks in Los Angeles than in other cities, as was the case for all. The 1920s were often referred to by black Angelenos as a golden era due to the expansion of industry and the relatively smaller amount of employment discrimination compared to north or south, which was not due to less racism, but to the open shop. In other words, blacks could not be excluded from unions because unions were prevented from developing. Blacks did however live in specific areas as told in Arna Botemps’ 1931 fiction novel of 1930s Watts, God Sends Sunday. The post 1940 suburban boom increased black isolation as whites moved into the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys and then Orange County. Restrictive covenants were replaced in the 1980s by redlining. Inaccessibility to equal housing and job opportunities she says led in 1965 to the Watts riots, and from the 1970s with restructuring blacks faced increasing poverty with the outsourcing of many stable jobs, leading to out-migration. Los Angeles responded to developing systemic poverty with intensified methods of social control through the LAPD, producing the image of south-central as militarized in a perpetual gang-police conflict. This was a situation in which a perceived miscarriage of justice could lead to the most profound clash, as happened in 1992. This story, versus that of mainstream media, leads Anderson to conclude that “this perhaps is LA’s perverse gift: the city as oracle, the prophetic urban place that utters a message no one wants to hear.” (Anderson, 357) In her account, the

1965 events are placed in the national context of housing and job discrimination, and the 1992 events are placed in the global context of job flight compounded with certain administrative attitudes towards the racialized inner city. This represents an intersection of economism and racial factors:

These young black people are the most expendable of a black working class that is becoming obsolete. They could, in Marxist terms, be considered the shock troops of the unemployed reserve army of labor. But the difference between previous classes of unemployed and these post-industrial casualties is that they can no longer expect their fortunes to rise with the next economic tide. ... They face a labor market unable to absorb them, a political system that has abandoned them, and a culture unwilling to embrace them – except as criminals. (Anderson, 360-361)¹²

Here is, in a particular story of the black experience of Los Angeles, evidence of the theory of political economy I explored in the first chapter, albeit with an explicit racial dynamic.

Blending the experience of Black Angelenos with another, that of Latinos, Scott and Soja next present Raymond A Rocco's "Latino Los Angeles: Reframing Boundaries/Borders". Rocco performs what was by this point a typical justification for empirical bias towards Los Angeles: that diversity or the idea of multiple cities within a city is not peculiar to Los Angeles, but that this city makes these characteristics highly visible and it is therefore a good place for observation. He firstly states the need to go beyond the conservative celebrations of coexistence as multiculturalism and "view each 'Los Angeles' as constituting a particular, specific and concrete way of living in and through the city that is both bounded and linked to other sectors by its particular configuration of factors such as race, class, gender, immigrant status, political access and economic resources." (Rocco, 366) Latino community formation should therefore be considered independently but also be situated within this broader multi-dimensional context of culture, politics, race and economy. He says that immigration is in the first place monitored by macro-economic and political processes such as free trade and immigration restrictions. The investment represented by American dollars in developing countries led to displacement of native small agricultural and manufacturing businesses while

¹² Interesting here is her use of the term 'postindustrial,' which I speculate is due to the general refusal of blacks to move into the growing low-wage craft sector.

simultaneously absorbing them into an American monitored web of exchange and information. Free trade and immigration then altered the dynamics of labor in the US, downgrading labor demand and resulting in the growth of low-wage unskilled jobs. There was thus a very distinct and immobilizing market for immigrant labor, discussed here as part of a wider politically, racially and economically fragmented social fabric. Rocco analyzes one sector of south Los Angeles Counties' 'rust belt' where the jobs lost in the 1970s and 1980s were primarily black or white unionized jobs. In one municipality, Vernon, the low-wage sector correspondingly expanded by 20%. A decrease in property values resulted from loss of revenues, but also from ideological factors. Latinos for the most part have moved into older housing and established communities which cause others to move away in their perception of declining value, thus actualizing a decline in property values. Here is an additional dimension to post-Fordist political economy, and perhaps a much older one. A further aspect of the new economic and cultural dynamic is the stabilization of an isolated market consisting of small commercial and retail businesses serving the Latino community. His essay amounts to an argument countering those who claim immigration to be taking away 'American' jobs, saying that globalization and free trade are the real causes. In conclusion, he promotes a concept of community in which "citizenship should be a function of an individual's contribution to the well-being of a community. Thus those who provide the labor and resources ... are through their actions and activity organic members of the community." (Rocco, 387) This is a very ecological solution, an alternative neighborhood of thought on social justice within the LA School.

Turning to another community, but again stressing global economic trends, Jennifer Wolch explores homelessness in "From Global to Local: The Rise of Homelessness in Los Angeles during the 1980s". She shows, as others have, that through restructuring many workers have faced poverty, unemployment and job insecurity, with those most susceptible, minorities, the mentally ill and the disabled, often facing homelessness. Reindustrialization she says did not pick up everyone left behind in the crisis of the 1970s and 1980s as many were not willing to accept non-union low-wage jobs. In 1969 Los Angeles County's poverty rate was 8%, and by 1987 it was 14% due to

a lack of full-time jobs, poorly paying jobs or the lack of employment opportunities. California received a further blow with the downturn in the defense industry in the 1990s. These economic trends were accompanied by a regressive welfare state, responding to fiscal crises and tax revolt, dealing with poverty by restricting relief. Privatization and/or downsizing of health and mental health resources especially hit hard on the homeless. Affordable housing also has become increasingly unavailable due to the drying up of federal investment in the construction sector and widespread restrictive zoning. Units in Los Angeles County became more expensive in real costs with no cheaper housing to replace it, while substandard housing was razed and not replaced. Wolch argues that the attitude towards homelessness has remained ambivalent. With many understanding the homeless as drifters, Wolch points to a general failure to evaluate the root causes of homelessness in the ignorance of more perceptive theories; in the worse case the homeless themselves are approached as the root of the problem.

Soja's concluding essay, "Los Angeles 1965-1992: From Crisis-Generated Restructuring to Restructuring-Generated Crisis", sums up this volume with a review of the causes of restructuring and the problems now facing social scientists, politicians, planners, social workers and activists. He reviews the importance of Los Angeles as an illustration of wider trends, stressing that it has reflected nationwide and later global urbanization trends from 1900. He says the city has experienced two major restructurings in the last century, both times in a unique but symptomatic way, placing the city in that particular narration of industrial capitalism I reviewed in the previous chapters. "Through its telling can be seen a symptomatic history and geography of the contemporary world, a revealing glimpse of what it has meant to be alive over the past three decades not only in Los Angeles but nearly everywhere on earth. Many places provide similarly revealing viewpoints ... but few offer such a vivid and variegated panorama." (Soja, "Los Angeles 1965-1992" 426) This verges on the promotional, superlative tone that others perceive adherents of the LA School to consistently maintain. As such it echoes to a limited extent that which it criticizes, those images that dictated the city's portrayal for most of its history and today via the 'dream factories' and the marketing of the city as a product. It is my opinion however that the rhetoric of Soja shouts a not quite as sensational, but

certainly alternative picture that shocks one into a re-evaluation of the city, a principal task of any LA School adherent.

Soja reviews how an industrial Fordist Los Angeles superseded an open shop Los Angeles from the time of the depression. This Fordist city was divided, culturally and politically, with many left out of the cycle of accumulation. Take for example the experience of blacks, which can hardly be considered a mainstream experience in the Fordist metropolis; by 1965, at the point of the Watts riots, a third were unemployed and 60% lived on welfare. (Soja, "Los Angeles 1965-1992" 430) With the 'Great U-Turn' in politics away from the Keynesian state, Soja says "Los Angeles was 'discovered' by local urbanists for the purpose of explaining what was happening locally and how this may provide insight into the wider picture." (Soja, "Los Angeles 1965-1992" 432) Importantly this 'discovery' has occurred via the spatial turn in critical social theory compounded with a negotiable postmodernism.

Postmodernism Soja says exists as the new epistemological condition for leftists, the new method of approach, stressing "the relative weight given to change versus continuity, to new versus old strategies and structures, in responding to the fundamental question of how we should act on our knowledge of the world we live in." (Soja, "Los Angeles 1965-1992" 451) Here hegemony is questioned and challenged from all angles, and on all scales from the global to the local, but the question of social justice is never put aside in surrender to some post-structuralist relativism. Here Soja provides his six geographies of the metropolis visible in Los Angeles to be expanded upon in Postmetropolis. There is the exopolis, a geography of form, detailing the decentralization of the production system globally accompanied by the strategic recentralization of capital in downtown crucibles and edge cities: the idea of the city turned inside out. Secondly there is the flexcity, visible in the disintegration of the postwar contract of Fordism, flexible production, subcontracting, and the arrival of more flexible service and craft industries geared away from fixed mass-production processes, simultaneously concentrated in high-wage and low-wage jobs locally and globally. There is the Cosmopolis, the effect of turning the city outside in again through glocalization; there is all at once in the cityspace of Los Angeles downtown as corporate citadel and ethni-cities

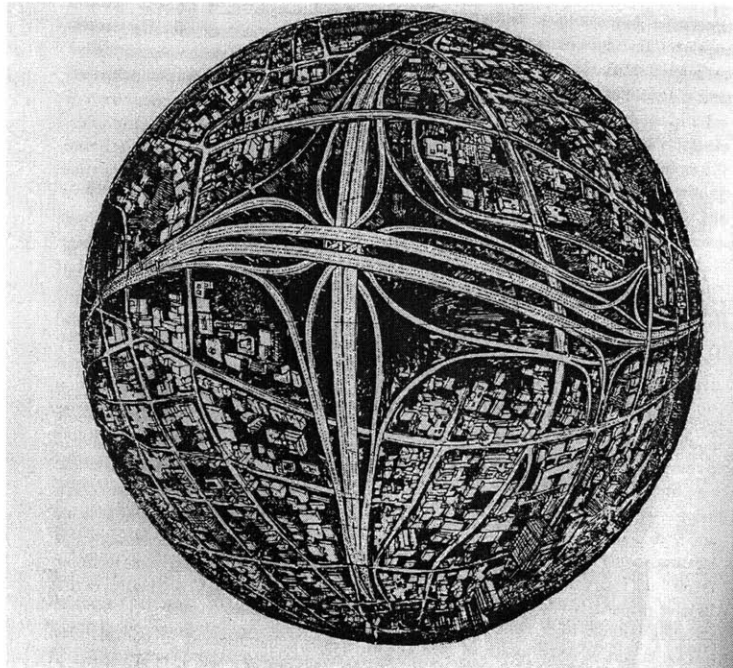
celebrated conservatively as ‘multiculturalism’ or conversely in postcolonial assertions. There is the polarized metropolis: an hourglass figure depicting a contracting middle class accompanied by a fragmentation throughout by political and ethnic identification. No longer willing to wallow in orthodox economist notions of bourgeoisie versus proletariat, there are now a multiplicity of sites from which to effect change. Borrowing principally from the writings of Mike Davis there is the Carceral City, evident in a postmodern control-obsessed police force, rather than a problem solving one, responding to the new systemic poverty of the inner city. Soja also here points to gated communities and suburban separatism. Finally there are Simcities: the simulacra of ‘theme parked’ downtowns, Disney worlds, and most of all the neo-conservative celebrations of a stable postmodern order in marketable multiculturalism.

The ultimate simulacra for Soja of course is the production of “big government” as a hypersimulation of the Fordist-Keynesian state, “reconstituting the meaning of liberal democracy allowing one of the most undertaxed of all industrial nations to rationalize one of the biggest government programs to subsidize the wealthy in recent history. That this could occur during a decade of deepening poverty, devastating deindustrialization, and a gargantuan national debt is testimony to the real power of simulacra.” (Soja, “Los Angeles 1965-1992” 456) Here is the restructuring-generated crisis, with 1992 as his evidence, just as 1965 had demonstrated the shortcomings of American Fordism. Both occurred in Los Angeles at the (end?) of an era.

3.2 ‘Rethinking Los Angeles’ in 1996

In 1996 a second significant volume, Rethinking Los Angeles, edited by Michael Dear, H. Eric Schockman, and Greg Hise, was published. Resulting from the 1995 establishing of the Southern California Studies Center at USC in 1995, all the editors and most of the contributing essayists were at USC at the time. The preface however sets a certain tone that tends towards fantastical tropes, causing one to worry if this is really a ‘rethinking’. While it discounts the “bleak urbanism” of Blade Runner as any accurate portrayal, as readers do have to be reminded I suppose, it then says that “Roman

Polanski's Chinatown captures the reality more accurately; a superficial gloss of striking beauty, glowing light, and pastel hues, which together conspire to conceal a hideous culture of malice, mistrust and mutiny." (Dear et al, Rethinking Los Angeles ix) Thus Los Angeles is not a wolf, but a wolf in sheep's clothing, and this after an initial complaint that Los Angeles is "the least understood, most understudied major city in the United States of America." (Dear et al, Rethinking Los Angeles ix)



"Los Angeles urbanism takes over the world" (Dear et al. 10)

Despite the brief Davis-esque preface, the book does gather together several informative studies conducted in the significant period of reflection after 1992 at USC. A second inspiration for the collection is credited to the evolution of an LA school. Dear personally explained to me his criticism of Scott and Soja's volume as "not really doing what I saw as necessary," as it did not as explicitly promote a Los Angeles school of thought even while it produce a significant diversity of empirical and theoretical examinations. Dear says his volume acted to solidify the LA School as a regional

collaboration of scholars more so than any previous work.¹³ The school is described in the preface as a group of “loosely associated scholars, professionals, and advocates ... self-consciously aware that what was happening in the Los Angeles region was somehow symptomatic of a broader transformation taking place in urban America,” based on their understanding of the city as “a low-density, polycentric urban agglomeration in which development occurred in a patch-work quilt of mixed uses ... requiring alternative theories of urban growth,” the Chicago School of course being implied here. (Dear et al, Rethinking Los Angeles x) The word ‘theories’, importantly, is plural, and herein lies the postmodern approach of the volume’s critical theorists: “the proliferation of diverse ways of understanding is consistent with the project of postmodernism; it is no coincidence that Los Angeles is held by some to be the prototypical postmodern city.” (Dear et al, Rethinking Los Angeles xi) ‘Some’ would also be an important word here. The preface continues:

Adherents of the ‘Los Angeles school’ do not argue that the city is unique or that it is necessarily a harbinger of the future, although both viewpoints are at some level demonstrably true. It is simply that at present, an especially powerful intersection of empirical and theoretical research projects has come together in a particular place at a particular time, that these projects have attracted attention of a critical mass of scholars and practitioners, and that the world is facing the prospect of Pacific century in which Southern California is likely to become a global capital. (Dear et al, Rethinking Los Angeles xi)

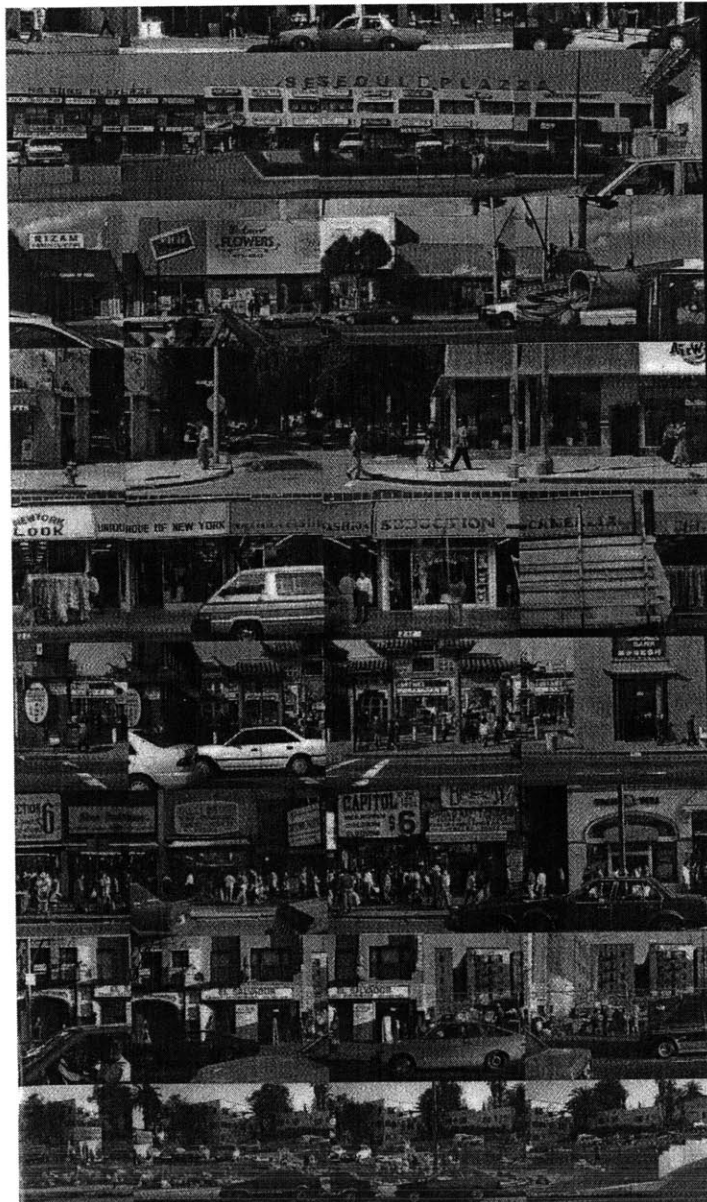
My personal take on this, as I have said elsewhere, is that the LA School is justified as somewhat of a cottage industry of theory: informal, flexible, and outside traditional boundaries. While there are some common interests or feelings among the adherents, namely a feeling of leftist anxiety connected to a perceived restructuring, adherents are equally and vocally concerned with exercising alternate points of view, to reflect a city, which like all cities, is one of diversity.

The first chapter, “Rethinking LA”, written by the editors, acknowledges an epistemological heritage and debate that has roots in both the particular history of Los Angeles and intellectual trends mostly originating in Europe but also Chicago. They here point to their friend at UCLA, Edward Soja, who they say announced this heritage in

¹³ Dear, Michael. E-mail to the author. 17 April. 2004.

Postmodern Geographies as delivering to the LA School a leftist critical postmodern project. “For Edward Soja (1989) Los Angeles is a de-centered, decentralized metropolis powered by the insistent fragmentation of ‘post-Fordism,’ an increasingly flexible, disorganized regime of capitalist accumulation. Accompanying this shift is a postmodern consciousness, a cultural and ideological reconfiguration altering how people experience social being.” (Dear et al, “Rethinking LA” 3) If anything, the postmodern urbanist of Los Angeles, and elsewhere I would add, no longer possesses the “yearning for rationality” so much as the yearning for knowing in the first place. (Dear et al, “Rethinking LA” 4) Importantly however the LA School reaction to postmodernism is not a tendency towards relativism or mere representation but a desire for greater social justice based on more penetrating explanation, albeit often with little demonstration of how justice should be achieved. They acknowledge that everyone can look to Los Angeles and see something different depending on their perspective but avoid any notion of this as compromising their personal ability to more fully explain. The LA school is therefore trying not to exclude different voices by saying every perspective has its own legitimacy, but interestingly they do not necessarily include them; they come away from statements of the multi-faceted character of observation with their own fairly guided approach. The neo-conservative faith in ‘trickle down’ economics will only receive a polite nod in this camp and then be blasted with not a direct attack but an ‘alternative point’, that is if they obey their own rules of etiquette. There is a call here for the individual to look at the city knowing the lens is tinted but steer away from relativism, thus avoiding the “nostalgic, normative, and prescriptive” and I would add the a-political. (Dear et al, “Rethinking LA” 8) The new approach, which they frame as a postmodern one but is certainly distanced from post-structuralist tropes, takes fragmentation and complexity as a given, not mere possibilities, but nor is it completely open-ended. The editors’ postmodernism is therefore much like that of Soja’s Postmodern Geographies, acknowledging the post-structuralist critique but allowing for more solid conclusions. Photographer Robbert Flick for example, in conversation with photographer Michael Dear, says that his street elevations reveal a stark horizontality in Los Angeles and that the city is in this representation ‘finished’. The texture in other words demanded and

achieved representation in this particular “strategy of containment.” (Dear et al, “Rethinking LA” 21) In response Michael Dear speculated: “The scientist in you seems to be searching for order and comprehensiveness. But the artist in you concedes that understanding is continually slipping through your fingers and eluding your attempt to grasp it,” this representing in my mind an interesting analogy to the LA School approach. (Dear et al, “Rethinking LA” 23)



The photo compilations of Robert Flick. (Dear et al, jacket)

“Remaking the Los Angeles Economy: Cyclical Fluctuations and Structural Evolution”, by Stuart A Gabriel, directs the reader from the introductory chapter and conversation to explanatory political economy and criticism. Gabriel argues that while growth was occurring by the mid 1990s after years of recession made especially poignant by the retreat of the defense industry, it “remains selective in both location and economic sector.” (Gabriel, 25) He notes growth in entertainment, telecommunications, international trade, apparel, light manufacturing and international trade, but also that employment in these sectors is divided between high and low wage labor, with little gained in the middle sector. (Gabriel, 25) In response he calls for improvement in the quality of public education, investment in training and human resources, the leveraging of skilled new arrivals into new business sectors and activities to expand economic possibilities, and localized industrial policy involving incentives, private investment, and marketing in sectors of comparative advantage. He also points to quality of life factors such as crime, air quality, and the need to diversify transportation options. He argues that the targeting of specific under-privileged areas is justified as it benefits the entire population. Overall, “the locational advantages and amenities of Los Angeles have eroded through time by the relatively high cost and regulation of production; an ailing and inadequate transportation infrastructure; degradation of air, water, and other environmental resources; low levels of public school funding and educational attainment; and problems of public safety.” (Gabriel, 32) Here is a solid argument that when all groups function better the economy’s potential is maximized.

Also grounding Los Angeles in political economy and leftist critical theory, Gary Dymski and John M. Veitch, in “Financing the Future in Los Angeles: From Depression to 21st Century” write that “the observed city is the legacy of a structure of capital.” (Dymski and Veitch, 36) They call contemporary Los Angeles a paradigm because “it is a fulcrum for three global trends: accelerated immigration, dispersed production and the internationalization of the division of labor.” (Dymski and Veitch, 36) They use the common but hardly dogmatic argument that the city displays phenomena of cities the world over, and that its pattern of growth may be used to predict that of others. For these

authors, the particular area of concern is access to financial services. They follow the uneven distribution of opportunities over restructuring in the consolidation of banking through the closure of branches in 'marginal' areas and other practices. In the landscape of restructured Los Angeles, there are, according to the authors, the super-included, or the upper 20%, the process-included, or the middle 40%, for whom financial services are provided as de-personalized commodities, and finally the process-excluded, or the lowest 40%. The authors argue that in the past many in this disadvantaged sector could have established relationships that helped overcome their lack of credit. They argue with selected statistical evidence that the instability of the banking industry from the 1970s and its concentration in leaner branch networks and centralized loan hubs forced low-income individuals to become more dependent on thrifts. Hope for these authors lays in minority owned banks and the dismissal of discriminatory housing practices, allowing mobility among minorities if they can afford it. Meanwhile the wealthy increasingly prefer the exurban fringe or gated communities.

H. Eric Schockman turns to the question of exclusion in politics in "Is Los Angeles Governable? Rethinking the City Charter". Under progressive politics the fragmentation of power in the municipal government into various agencies rather than parties was performed to prevent corruption, creating a system of checks and balances on machine politics. But this 'direct democracy' did not bring 'honest government'. The informal relations between central authority and boards and commissions carry out important functions largely independent of popular will he says, where "commissioners play the role of loyal feudal knights operating in semi-obscurity and carrying out the commands of the governing urban feudal regime." (Schockman, 65) Non-partisan elections furthermore create a situation in which "public relations, not party discipline would become the key to electoral and ultimately governing success ... politics as 'personalized has been replaced by 'politics of media enhancement'. The flow of political information and the Jeffersonian faith in the common national yeoman is in control of those who can purchase and package it." (Schockman, 60) Thus citizen ownership of government is limited. In this turn to politics the editors provide an additional variable to

the evaluating of social processes in Los Angeles, acknowledging the duty of the LA School to diversify, but maintain, solid explanation.

Harlan Hahn, in “Los Angeles and the Future: Uprisings, Identity and New Institutions”, similarly turns to perceived problems in non-partisan politics. Not only has non-partisan politics been consistently exclusive says Hahn, but this exclusiveness has always had a particular racial dynamic. Before the war, the municipality of Los Angeles often worked to purposefully prevent minority empowerment, incorporating areas like Watts. In postwar years this reversed, with whites seeking political control through incorporation outside of Los Angeles. Under the so-called Lakewood Contract a group of investors could contract with the county for services, control local zoning for the purpose of exclusivity, and shift the taxpayers burden to the entire county meaning that “white homeowners were allowed to seize control of their own territory within cohesive suburbs at relatively few personal costs.” (Hahn, 79) Here is a particularized story related to those theories of suburbanization I presented previously. Minorities in the inner city were meanwhile in this situation left without any “formal method of communicating their grievances to urban elites through elections or representation ... the uprisings of 1965 and 1992 did not occur until after such tactics had failed to achieve major political objectives.” (Hahn, 80) Here Hahn adds a specifically political dimension to the leftist conceptualization of the two riots. This is an interesting flip-side to what I usually see: the explanation that the riots were a product of the uneven distribution of capital over political power. While there is a fairly common argument that Angeleno politics had descended into tribalism by 1992, he avoids answering to why the 1992 riots occurred after years of leadership by a liberal alliance of west-side Jews and south-central Blacks that controlled city hall through Mayor Bradley. I feel that a closer and definitely more nuanced research is needed here. Perhaps his unique approach is due to his perception of many analysts, most likely conservatives, as celebrating political fragmentation. “Most analysts do not approach the study of [minorities] within a comparative framework; instead, they treat them as separate and independent entities. Correspondingly, such studies tend to stress the unique and specific concerns of each of these portions of the population instead of the common objectives that they share,” promoting an even more

entrenched tribalism. (Hahn, 86) In the following composition “Milagros” by Ruben Martinez the author states: “And I’ll return to Los Angeles with this faith: that cultural contraries can create new societies that are greater than the sum of their parts (a process that the United States still refuses to believe).” (Martinez, 150) Between these two pieces the editors present a sort of retort to conservatism and importantly, considering the overall scope of the volume, by opening more doors from which critique is possible.

Edward JW Park, in “Our LA? Korean Americans in Los Angeles after the Civil Unrest”, points out that racial exclusion is not just a story of black and white, detailing the Korean political reaction to the 1992 unrest. Koreans he says, like others, were divided between the ‘Establishment Coalition’, including organizations like Rebuild Los Angeles (RLA) that focused on property restoration, versus the ‘Progressive Coalition’, which targeted the lack of social services and opportunities. The basic point is that understandings of new social movements should not underplay either intra-racial or inter-racial class inequality. The example of Los Angeles has shown to many that cross-identity cooperation is necessary in any politically disempowering situation. Laura Pulido celebrates cross identity cooperation in local environmental issues in “Multiracial Organizing Among Environmental Justice Activists in Los Angeles”. She is frustrated when race, class and location lend difficulty to cohesive organization as this in turn results in control by isolated activists operating in limited terrain. This also leads to a question of who is being represented. Turning to education in the diverse metropolis, Gulbert C Hentschke, in “Radical Reform Versus Professional Reform in American Schools: A View from Southern California” stresses the need for a broad based ‘one size fits all’ educational strategy, alongside a place for community input.

Alida Brill adds to the fray of economic and racial dynamics building up in the volume’s ‘rethinking’ of Los Angeles with her gender-focused analysis of Lakewood. In “Lakewood, California: ‘Tomorrowland’ at 40”, she reacts to a 1993 sex scandal involving a male teenage gang, the Spur Gang. If this gang, in which membership was based on the number of girls with whom sexual intercourse was had, had existed in South Central it likely would not have received so much attention. But that it had happened in Lakewood, the west coast’s Levittown, unleashed the fear that something had gone

horribly wrong in 'Tomorrowland'. Brill argues that what had gone wrong was not necessarily the early 1990s economic downturn. "The spirit of the place has never been 'factory town' ... these outside journalists missed essential elements – which are hometown and home team all the way." (Brill, 100). She explains that the strong economic base of the town from its conception until the 1990s retreat of local defense industries simply served a male machismo, which was now coming out in different ways. Brill thus links the Spur Gang with the need of men to assert masculinity no matter what their situation. She quotes resident Joe Szabo: "This isn't a place for men anymore. Not Lakewood, not now. What is a man supposed to do here now? The shipyard is closed, they are killing the Naval base, there is no work at Douglas, no real military experience available in this country anymore. So, exactly what do you suggest a guy do in order to define himself?" (qtd. in Brill, 101) Meanwhile, the town, politically, remains tied to its initial vision of prosperity, which is a further source of anxiety. "As a critic and a former original kid, I see a warning about preplanned utopian communities of any type." (Brill, 111) In conclusion "The social space available for acting out masculinity was constricting in the context of a generally dim outlook for the economics of Lakewood, indeed all of Southern California." (Brill, 103) Here is an intersection of economism, political vision, and gender.

Todd Boyd explores the role of gender and race in contemporary political economy in "A Small Introduction to the 'G' Funk Era: Gangsta Rap and Black Masculinity in Contemporary Los Angeles". He explains that there exists much praise for men in inner city black culture for being 'hard', a situation in which "one must exist at all times in a state of detached utter defiance, regardless of the situation." (Boyd, 128) This image furthermore sells, and many suggest that this is solely a story of exploitation. "Many suggest that mainstream society has once again exploited Black culture for its own purposes ... Yet this sentiment fails to incorporate the changes that have occurred surrounding the cultural production of 'Blackness' in the post-civil rights era, especially as they relate to the truly disadvantaged position." (Boyd, 131) In a time when capitalist accumulation leaves many behind, the manipulation of capital by blacks in rap music and videos is used to signify empowerment. His approach treats gangsta culture as a method

of understanding “capital commodity and personal possibility” in isolated communities in a more nuanced fashion. (Boyd, 133) Therefore his exploration of black masculinity in gangsta rap is out of concern with political economy rather than more common concerns such as proper role models, but he does not by any means pretend to tell the whole story.

The two following essays, “The Health Care Conundrum”, by Robert E Tranquada, and “Transporting Los Angeles”, by Genevieve Giuliano, investigate the problems of expanding social services in the post-Fordist metropolis. Tranquada stresses the importance of two practices that are already part of the scene in Los Angeles and elsewhere: making health care particularized to the needs of smaller firms, which employ a growing portion of the workforce, and ultimately a push towards universal care. Giuliano suggests that the present investment in rail transit is misguided because the regional population is not organized in dense enough concentrations. Instead she suggests that a variety of mass transportation alternatives should be made available. These continue the leftist critique, setting up for an interesting turn.

The volume ends with Robert Fishman’s “Re-Imagining Los Angeles”, an almost entirely optimistic and romantic imagining of the city. He shares with noirist Davis that the dream phase is over per se; there are ghettos and the garden is gone. So in imagining the city are we to simply to turn to some noir vision? For Fishman, change necessitates confidence, and that lays in the imaginative reconstruction of the past and present in an utterly positive light. His new optimism is a remedy for Davis’ nihilism, but of the most non-critical sort. He says we must simply work to rediscover the modernist within us, re-center downtown, re-discover the railways, and re-imagine like Burnham in Chicago. He likens the present state of Los Angeles to cities of the past which dealt with massive slums and other problems, and built supposedly great places through the work of a coherent elite and an ethic of assimilation. He only considers postmodernism as a divisive force: “A postmodernist politics leads directly to the division of the city into isolate fiefdoms in which the old political machine’s equation of votes-for-services no longer has any meaning.” (Fishman, “Re-Imagining Los Angeles” 260) Possibly, but not necessarily as I have explored in this thesis. If anything, the postmodernism of the LA School is a coming together. Fishman does not deny a postmodern material condition, but denies that

postmodernism may ideologically contain any beneficial method of approach: “As Los Angeles struggles to cope with the crises of a postmodern, postindustrial, posturban world, the city requires a renewed sense of what is valuable in its past ... not out of nostalgia or escapism, but for those models of working democratic institutions and vibrant public spaces that we urgently need to build the future.” (Fishman, “Re-Imagining Los Angeles 258) It is therefore critical, but in a fairly explicit return to modernism. This return, perhaps out of fear of post-structuralist relativism, is a missing voice in most LA school rhetoric, and its placement in this volume is ironic, disorienting, and therein in my interpretation actually part of the volume’s postmodern project.

3.3 The Postmetropolis of Edward Soja

Edward Soja originally submitted a manuscript to Blackwell in the mid-1990s titled “Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places”. Blackwell subsequently split the project; a book with the above title was published in 1996, with the majority of the manuscript, revised and altered, published in 2000 under the title Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions. The first book represents a reiteration of Soja’s plea to expand on ideas of spatiality, but it also responds to the criticism of Hayden and others who accused him of a strict economism and a noirist, sometimes patronizing tendency. It is a piece that immediately grounds itself in a critique of master narratives and totality in a definition of ‘thirdspace’. In Thirdspace, he follows Lefebvre in building a trialectic of spatiality for the observer. There is Firstspace, that cityspace empirically perceived as form and process, the measurable and mappable. There is Secondspace, the mental space of the city, or thoughts about space, and there is Thirdspace, lived space, the way in which Firstspace and Secondspace are lived. To elaborate, thirdspace “is a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances and meanings.” (Soja, Thirdspace 2) He speaks of an “extraordinary openness” where geography “can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be

incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other; where one can be Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time.” (Soja, Thirdspace 5) Here then is a certain postmodern approach, but in the discussion of so many elements as related, a challenge to relativism as well. This is what he calls ‘thirding’, or the end to binary relationships. He finds these in the projects of resistance to a ‘Citadel LA’ detailed by Dolores Hayden, Lefebvre’s ‘counter-spaces’, and the postcolonial journeys of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha.

In Postmetropolis Soja seems less on the defensive, and returns to some extent to his more well-trodden interpretations of political economy. Soja says he draws from the structuralist and Marxist epistemologies which shaped what he calls ‘geopolitical economy’. At the same time his approach “will no doubt disturb those committed to narrower and more focused ways of studying cities and urban life as well as those committed to purer forms of postmodernist interpretation, freed of any vestiges of modernist thinking.” (Soja, Postmetropolis xiii) It is nevertheless an “emancipating project” which when revealed in the spatial realm, may lead to ‘spatial justice’ and ‘regional democracy’. (Soja, Postmetropolis xiii) This emancipation is thus achieved in his use of space, which as I have said is understood here as not narrowing in scope but exactly the opposite, because space can be perceived as layering time at the same time that it is experientially lived. As far as his bias towards Los Angeles is concerned, he says he treats the city merely as a “symptomatic lived space, a representative window” that displays the “rich diversity of forms and expressions ... situated in particular geographical contexts.” (Soja, Postmetropolis xvii)

Here he quotes Jane Jacobs: “every city has a direct economic ancestry, a literal economic parentage, in a still older city or cities,” invoking layering, inheritance, and the subjection of time to space in the urban. (qtd. in Soja, Postmetropolis 3) But lest this be mistaken for ecology, he points to the LA School’s break from the ecological model of the Chicago School in its adaptation of the critical urbanism of 1960s and 1970s European geopolitical economy. Space remains, as with Chicago, the vehicle for

observation of the geopolitical economy, but now it is rendered as not witness to time but facilitator and recorder of change. As in Postmodern Geographies Soja argues that social life was not thought of as intrinsically spatial previous to the 1960s as this was not a modernist concern. The modern mind was instead concerned with evolution, progress, linearity and trajectory, not the multi-faceted terrain of created space. Again he reviews that for the new critical geography space is always intrinsically social and vice versa, whether it is physical or the politically charged contextualization of action. He introduces the concept of 'cityspace' as dynamic, not fixed, as facilitating, as produced and producing. In urban studies this "more comprehensive perspective of spatio-temporal structuration ... makes it possible to link the dynamic production and reproduction of cityspace more directly to other familiar and well-studied configurations of social life such as the family, the cultural community, the structure of social classes, the market economy and governmental state or polity." (Soja, Postmetropolis 9) Space, as Lefebvre put it, is witness and energizer of social process on all levels, allowing the geographer to at once view the city 'from above' and 'from below', allowing again for a conception here of postmodernism as explanatory, not representational or relativist.

Soja argues that this 'cityspace' has always been at the center of civilization, whether as mere gathering places, the generator of politics, or most recently as the primary center of production on top of all previous incarnations. He credits Jane Jacobs' The Economy of Cities (1969) for demonstrating how geographically uneven development results from when cities seek growth in the use of externalized places, which while internalized through trade and territorial relations, are re-externalized as production centers for 'home' markets, not for the enrichment of themselves. Therefore cityspace inevitably extends in all economic, political, and cultural situations well beyond urban boundaries. The concept of globalization would give that cityspace today constitutes the entire world, greatly expanding the explanatory capabilities of this device. Synekism, the stimulus of urban agglomeration in the political, economic and cultural advantage of physical clustering, in turn explains the extension of cityspace's authority from the center to an immediate hinterland, from center to periphery, and between centers over subservient locales creating hierarchy. For Soja urban theory is a matter of

understanding, quite fully, the social structuring of cityspace through its geographical intentionality, something mainstream social theory has frequently lost sight of in the ignorance or avoidance of a revealing socio-spatial dialectic.

Soja says that synekism first occurred 11,000 years ago in Catal Hüyük and Jericho, followed by a second urban revolution 4,000 years ago. This revolution, Soja says, politicized cities as producers of the state with solidified notions of ruling structure, military power, bureaucracy, class, property, patriarchy and territory. With the second revolution there came into being “*civic centers* designed to announce, ceremonialize, administer, acculturate, discipline, and control.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 50) This is where, as Foucault said, space translated power and knowledge into actual relations. Cities now focused on societal reproduction over existence as isolated centers of production, exchange, or cultural practice. Thus for Soja the state, power, and authority can not be talked about without synekism, for only in the agglomeration of cityspace are structured relations realizable. This second revolution has been followed by a third revolution in which cities became the dominant centers of production through industrial capitalism. The third revolution was furthermore characterized by an idea of ‘being modern’, of being in a state of directed, linear movement towards something better through rationality and science. From the eighteenth century there was across the globe profoundly uneven development through the extension of western territorial control and the creation of producers geared not to the creation of their own markets but to the sustenance of ‘the center’. These included internal colonies such as the American South or Ireland. This revolution also included the final assertion of exchange value over use value. Space became commodified by a system of locational rents that were then complicated by costs of transit, density, and use, with “housing choice increasingly shaped by monetary trade-offs between these locational costs and, of course, the ability to pay them,” finally solidified in zoning practice. (Soja, Postmetropolis 81) Within these inter-revolutionary periods there are many smaller restructurings which ensure cityspace’s survival under its current condition. Soja says that we must ‘put cities first,’ remembering synekism and its evolution as producing and managing first culture as “a materialized symbolic zone,” then the state, and finally production. (Soja, Postmetropolis 34) There is however room

for human agency here. Soja quotes Ian Hodder, who in The Domestication of Europe (1990) stated that “Catal Hüyük and I, we bring each other into existence.” (qtd. in Soja, Postmetropolis 46) Here is the phenomenology of cityspace, the socio-spatial dialectic as shaping and shaped force, explaining social process.

Soja maps the understanding of contemporary political economy to Manchester in the split between liberal reformists, who explained problems as ‘natural’ or conversely as the result of intervention in ‘natural’ process, and radical social movements like that of Engels. In Chicago the city was similarly understood as having departed from an earlier capitalist system (organically) into one of greater size, production, and organization, all of these being fairly benign aspects of ‘progress’. The Chicago School instructs us of ‘natural’ waves of ‘invasion’ and ‘segregation’ that sometimes just happen to produce unfortunate side effects. Going beyond Engels they understood urban culture as unique and isolated, observable as its own organism, in form taking the shape of concentric rings or wedges shaped for the most part by self-determinism in an open system. Urban theory thus became a matter of empirically evaluating particular behaviors in a particular environment. While cityspace was thus empowered to some extent, these theorists Soja says failed to fully analyze the capital-labor relations that produced the differentiated spaces of cityspace under capitalism. While the Chicago School took a more nuanced look at the makeup of the city, going beyond Engel’s binary notion of bourgeoisie and proletariat to see a variety of social actors with specific spatial roles “it was also much more opaque and superficial, in the sense of being focused on visible and measurable appearances and behavior” rather than underlying explanations. (Soja, Postmetropolis 88) Soja calls the Chicago School “a confusing diversion away from a more critical understanding of spatiality ... The Chicago School and its followers locked into a myopic view of the geohistory of cities and created a depoliticizing illusion of urban specificity that concentrated interpretation solely on surface appearances and behaviors.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 93) This is what Lefebvre called the “realist illusion” or what Soja calls Firstspace. Firstspace, in both Manchester and Chicago, thus constituted the entirety of geographical inquiry. In such a situation “spatial practices are seen merely as empirical projections of a deeper rational or logical imperative or ... as meaningless complications

of the metanarrativized blueprint of empirical social reality.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 94) Soja says urban theory loses potential in believing that its observations are just incidentally in cities, not shaped by them. Both approaches entirely ignored the role of cityspace as a motivating device in itself, seeing the city “merely as an incidental backdrop to powerful social, psychological, cultural and economic processes that just happened to take place in cityspace.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 89) The city is here what Lefebvre called “the illusion of transparency,” de-emphasized by a politically-motivated and totalizing meta-narrative of wider social process. (qtd. in Soja, Postmetropolis 94)

Soja then maps how in the most recent phase of restructuring there has been a new approach to understanding cities. The restructuring of the latter twentieth century was accompanied by a theoretical breach he says, returning in a time of disorder to the ethics of Marx as he had demonstrated in Postmodern Geographies. The focus for the new political economists became the Fordist-Keynesian metropolis and its structure of production and accumulation. They took an aim, as I showed in the first chapter, at urban planning as subservient to the state, understanding it as a practice setting the structure of production and accumulation into fixed, entrenched patterns via housing, social services, transportation and renewal. The new criticism was thus from the start explicitly spatialized. Soja here cites Castells’ The Urban Question and Harvey’s Social Justice and the City. If the project of the neo-marxists was the Fordist-Keynesian city, we are left to assume that that of the LA school, and others, is what he calls the ‘postmetropolis’, which he seeks to excavate in Los Angeles.

There was however as I have shown in the epistemological crisis of postmodernism the question of how to attain knowledge. In his 1997 essay “Six Discourses on the Postmetropolis”, another revision of his six geographies, he detailed what he saw as a debate over micro and macro approaches. Much postmodern thought undoubtedly encouraged a retreat to the micro, cautious and incremental. He justifies his approach, undoubtedly a macro one, saying:

There is undoubtedly much to be gained from this ground-level view of the city and, indeed, many of those who focus on more macro-spatial perspectives too often overlook the darker corners of everyday life and the less visible oppressions of 'race', gender, class and sexuality. What I am most concerned with however, is the degree to which such micro-level critiques have been unproductively polarizing critical urban studies, romancing agency and the view from below to the point of labeling all macro-level perspectives taboo, off-limits, politically incorrect. (Soja, "Six Discourses" 22)

This is his personal response to that postmodern critique that asserts incrementalism in observation and practice under the assumption that all else tends towards oppressing meta-narrative. Instead, but still accounting for the post-structuralist critique, Soja seeks once again a different postmodern critical theory. This is one that rejects for example the macro versus micro dualism by asserting them both in each act of observation but also, therein, creates a new explanatory postmodernism. In conclusion to the 1997 essay he expresses the urgency "for the Left and all other progressive thinkers and actors ... to create an effective and emancipatory postmodern politics and a conceptual framework for an also explicitly postmodern critical urban studies that is appropriately and effectively attuned to the realities and hyper-realities of the contemporary moment." (Soja, "Six Discourses" 29) The postmetropolis is also importantly one that avoids any dualism of noir versus sunshine. Criticizing Davis, he instructs the reader of his 1997 essay that it would be naïve to "narrow all the discourses on the postmetropolis to his [Davis'] politically appealing radical view. I once described City of Quartz as the best anti-theoretical, anti-postmodernist, historicist, nativist and masculinist book written about a city." (Soja, "Six Discourses" 27) Soja, in his idea of the postmetropolis, denies any totalizing knowledge of the city, criticizing Davis as countering the project of understanding Los Angeles, though he does this as he outlines his own, although assumedly more balanced, route to explanation.

Leading us into the Postmetropolis of post-Fordist Los Angeles he continues to detail his epistemological lineage, quoting David Harvey in "Urban Places in the 'Global Village': Reflections on the Urban Condition in Late 20th Century Capitalism" (1988): "The contemporary city ... forms what we might call a palimpsest, a composite landscape made of different built forms superimposed one upon the other." (qtd. in Soja, Postmetropolis 117) Crediting post-structuralism for the enhancement of leftist urban

theory rather than its demise, he quotes Lawrence Barth's take on Lyotard in "Immemorial Visibilities: Seeing the City's Difference" (1996): "Lyotard has described flattening of visibility in textual space by analogy with the geometry of perspectival representation," and for Soja's purposes we should draw a further analogy with cityspace (qtd. in Soja, Postmetropolis 117). With that he gives us his abbreviated history of Angeleno growth in regimes of accumulation, modes of regulation and restructuring. The first boom decades of 1870-1900 are lumped together as corporate restructuring, with the two decades between 1900 and 1920 constituting the corporate boom. The years between 1920 and 1940 are framed as Fordist restructuring with those between 1940 and 1970 as the Fordist boom. Finally he frames everything from 1970 to the present as Late Capitalist restructuring. This is directly derived from the model he presented in Postmodern Geographies. Insisting that this history is grounded in empirical study, he cautions against "reel histories."

Soja then leads the reader into a more extensive and revised account of his six geographies of contemporary Los Angeles, each one introduced by a significant list of suggestions for further reading. Each provides relatively clear insights into the heritage of theory I have been excavating here. In discussing the Exopolis Soja repudiates any notion of 'voluntary suburbs,' promoting the alternative view of them as shaped by class and race dynamics, the interests of private speculation backed by federal investment and demand creation, and the sponsoring of the construction industry. Edge cities reflect the shifting industrial base into these new areas of residence, which now contain two-thirds of America's office space. (Soja Postmetropolis, 243) Left behind are the economies of the 'working poor'. Here he points to the job-housing imbalance, compounded with problems of accessibility, as a major issue of social justice. Dying suburbs, 'off the edge cities' such as Pomona, and failed edge cities such as Antelope Valley, also pepper the contemporary landscape. Also in the Exopolis is the porous city of communications, where 'elsewhere' is drawn in by TV, telephone, and the theme-ing of downtowns and urban villages. New Urbanism is criticized as a meager hyper-simulation marketed to a middle class beleaguered by decline. Nevertheless "there is room for optimism and pessimism ... and for the amelioration of ethnic, class and gender inequalities. And as a

new form of lived space, it [the Exopolis] is open to a multiplicity of interpretive approaches, challenging all attempts to reduce explanation.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 251) Here he discusses space-based community alliances working for environmental justice, renewed public investment in transport, and local unionization amongst janitors and most famously bus riders in an effort to stop cutbacks on bus service.

Flexcities have come into being with the disintegration of the postwar contract, flexible production, and more flexible service and craft industries that may quickly respond to shifts in consumer preference. Here he cites the work of Allen Scott. The Flexcity is geared away from the fixed mass-production processes of Fordism, which were shipped off to locations of cheaper labor; the Flexcity has consequently experienced union busting and a decline in real wages, as well as a growing number of part-time jobs, contingent workers, and multi-job families. The Flexcity is still focused on production while also breaking down dualisms of production versus consumption, urban versus regional, and social versus spatial to allow for the production system’s easier response to market signals. There does however remain regional clustering for the reduction of costs and subcontracting in craft industries, hi-tech and the FIRE sector. Regions have achieved new importance, according to Michael Storper in The Regional World (1997) through (1) institutions dedicated to the shaping of their surroundings, (2) industrial organization and clustering to minimize costs and (3) technological change and innovation. (cited in Soja, Postmetropolis 177) City governments have remained passive to the reorganization of capital in highly valued clusters, or promoting them while ignoring poverty. “Globalization was reduced in city government to insipid claims of having become ‘world-class’ or to celebrations of ‘diversity’ with little mention of the expanding landscapes of poverty and despair that these accomplishments have helped to generate.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 400) Here he turns to the Cosmopolis.



Downtown's crucible of global capital. (Soja 2000, 252)

The Cosmopolis is focused on globalization as producer of cultural phenomena. In thinking about globalization the key concept is intensification, as internationalization had been happening before. Borrowing from Friedmann and the idea of Global cities, Soja argues that globalization may be differentiated from the previous global order of imperialism in the industrialization of peripheries, selective reindustrialization, globally networked manufacturing, global labor markets, free trade, transnational corporations, global cities as command posts, and new migration dynamics based on labor. But the cosmopolis is correspondingly the process of turning the city outside in again through glocalization. In other words, if the local suddenly became globalized, the local also asserted its ability to negotiate that globalization. This is visible again in downtown Los

Angeles as a carefully manicured citadel of capital, or the ethni cities of minorities. Here he takes both the view from the bottom up and the view from above and points to the inherent problems of binary thinking, which will always leave something out.

In rethinking localization, for example, it is recognized that we always act and think locally, but our actions and thoughts are also simultaneously urban, regional, national, and global in scope, affecting and being affected by, if often only in the smallest way, the entire hierarchy of spatial scales in which our lives are embedded. Similarly, rethinking globalization leads to the recognition that is not a process that operates exclusively at a planetary scale, but is consistently being localized in various ways and with different intensities. (Soja, Postmetropolis 199-200)

Globalization is thus understandable in the trialectic of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces. The question is not whether local or global has theoretical or empirical authority but rather how these windows present process in any given situation, whether it is one of identity, one of political jurisdiction, or one of economy. Soja celebrates an integrated postcoloniality, a thirding, disruptive of any structuralism of global versus local, promoting a consciously disorganized cultural and capital landscape, asserting alternative voices at all levels of the spectrum and from myriad sites. Here he returns to Castells and the space of flows, the human agent empowered by capital, versus the space of places, or the fixed human agent disempowered by lack of capital. Soja says Castell's spaces can benefit from a "critical thirding," present in the "recombinant concept of glocalization." (Soja, Postmetropolis 215) A critical regionalism, with a radical reconsideration of identity politics is on the agenda for the Cosmopolis.

In the Fractal City we see the re-polarized metropolis, the hourglass figure of the population defined by a contracting middle class, a ballooning lower class, and a growing number of wealthy and super wealthy. This is accompanied by a significant fragmentation of what is in the two halves of the hourglass by political and ethnic identification; there is certainly no more holistic notion of 'bourgeoisie' or 'proletariat'. Here Soja presents a number of studies done on the separation of immigrants into employment niches, inequality among immigrants, and overall economic inequality. Soja argues that in the Fractal City the rapid shift or recycling of communities in politics is possible. Hybridity in politics constitutes cross cultural and cross class alliances that debase wealthy special interests and are "aimed not just at reducing inequalities but also

at preserving difference.” (Soja Postmetropolis, 155) In the Fractal City there are new sites from which to affect change. He criticizes the right’s refusal to see the new situation of decreased immigrant opportunity, and the relatively static nature of contemporary labor markets. He also criticizes William Julius Wilson’s The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions (1978) who asserted race to be irrelevant in the new capitalism, presenting minorities holistically as simply left behind in an underclass. Post-Fordism triggers us to think differently through the observation of simultaneous deindustrialization and reindustrialization and various other realities such as the retreat of government services and employment niches, while his postmodern approach requires us not to discard significant racial or gender dynamics.

In his construction of the Carceral City he borrows from Mike Davis but also from a tradition extending to Foucault and ideas of spatialized power. Soja says that Davis took a spatial turn with City of Quartz, examining perceived injustice in space. While alarmist, and never explicitly utilizing critical economic and cultural tools such as globalization or post-Fordism, he provides an introduction to the idea of macro-security in Los Angeles, dissecting a web of representational sites of control. Soja criticizes Davis’ totalizing attitude at the same time he praises Davis’ opening of new views and what Soja considers a fitting response to the history of local boosterism. He borrows from Davis such abstracts as the ‘urban cold war’ to contain the homeless, and the ‘billigerent lawns’ and ‘high-tech castles’ of gated communities. He laments the destruction of public space downtown, and delivers the common criticism of the LAPD as a control-obsessed militarized police force, an institution straight out of the Schumpeterian Workfare State rather than a problem solving service. Soja points out that theorists besides Davis have of course taken a more nuanced approach. For example Steve Herbert in Policing Space has taken to the “microgeopolitics of state power” looking at individual officers’ perceptions of the places they control and how they make and mark their territories in relation to those they see themselves as fighting against. (qtd. in Soja Postmetropolis, 308) In “Thrashing Downtown: Play as Resistance to the Spatial and Representational Regulation of Los Angeles” (2000), Steven Flusty detailed the everyday practices of marginalized subcultures, from the homeless to skate-boarders, under the sheen of downtown Los

Angeles' corporate theme park. For Flusty downtown space remains multi-faceted, indicative of corporate investment and private control on the one hand but the everyday life of excluded people on the other. Others have framed cyberspace as political space, challenging Davis' and Foucault's less negotiable spaces of enclosure (Olalquiaga). Another failure of Davis is his convenient memory-lapse when it comes to resistance on both the individual and community levels. Soja praises movements for environmental justice, organizations such as LAANE (Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy) which has spearheaded the Living Wage Campaign, and the regional politics of Myron Orfield. He ends this discussion on a cautious note: "I must be careful not to exaggerate the empowerment of this new wave of assertive spatial coalitions, for they still exist within a crusty local, state and federal governmental structure ... But neither should these movements be disempowered by an overly rigid and narrowed discourse that excludes them from view." (Soja, Postmetropolis 322)

Soja starts off his final geography of Simcities with an announcement of postmodernism as a new material condition of hyper-realities and cyber-realities, empowering some and their agendas but excluding others. Postmodernism is here a mutation of modernity, as in Postmodern Geographies, a material logic corresponding with a particular mutation of industrial capitalism and a linked ideology that shifts weight from the continuity of time to the simultaneity and multi-layeredness of space. It is an approach which is as said before one of explanation over representation and relativism. Some of the material geographies of this capitalism he cites here are revitalized downtowns, gated communities, entertainment complexes, and neo-conservative celebrations of multiculturalism on western terms. As in Postmodern Geographies he returns to the production of "big government" as a hypersimulation of the Fordist state, justifying government withdrawal and the polarizing of the workforce, again pointing to 1965 and 1992 as rebellions against the simulacra of their respective periods.

In his concluding section Soja moves into 'lived space' in a discussion almost entirely composed of quotations from various individuals in response to the 1992 events. The goal of the section is to reveal how individuals in a moment of crisis achieved "a critical spatial imagination and praxis that sees opportunities in the encompassing

spatiality of human life and in an explicit consciousness of this spatiality to actively struggle against economic exploitation, cultural domination and individual oppression.” (Soja, Postmetropolis 352) He concludes that for a brief moment in 1992, albeit violently, boundaries were disregarded and in that event people became more aware of their everyday geography than ever before.

3.4 The Provisional City and the Reluctant Metropolis

The Los Angeles school is not without more explicit returns to a more orthodox Marxist radicalism, albeit with race and culture incorporated as significant factors in the evolving drama of capitalist accumulation. Dana Cuff, in The Provisional City (2000) rendered a city of constant erasure and rebuilding. She understands the urban landscape, in the tradition of much Marxist critique, to be based on the politics of property values and periods of economic upheaval which correspondingly reconstruct cityspace through manipulation of value. She validates her empirical bias, or complete dedication in fact, to Los Angeles because she says that these phenomena have become most apparent in Los Angeles throughout its maturation as an industrial metropolis, at an early date through the actions of the boosters and various civic departments, under Fordism in suburbanization, and contemporarily in the rapid shift of values based on edge city expansion and corresponding residential enclaves. Therefore she distances her argument from the common trope of ‘the city without history,’ the Los Angeles that constantly erases its own history in careless pursuit of progress, by making her discussion quite explicitly one of historical and spatial materialism and intentionality. She uses five case studies: Rodger Young Village, Elysian Park Heights, Aliso Village, Playa Vista, and Westchester. Without going into these, I will outline her general argument.

Contemporary Los Angeles she says relates a story of discontinuity in space over time in its specific, horizontal geography of uneven development as a result of state-driven capitalism and now post-Fordism. Here is a firm rejection of Chicago’s ecological models, or Fernand Braudel’s phenomenological time of changeless history, the social

time of rhythms, or the individual time of the human agent.¹⁴ “It is an extreme version of unevenness, a violent upheaval in geographic, social and individual times, that concerns me. I argue that these convulsions result from the political economy of property, urban policy and its federal appropriations, and contemporary design ideology.” (Cuff, 43) She calls this urban time, indicating a privileging of space, specifically urban space here, as the window unto a history of continued capitalist restructuring. Planning presently and in the past attempts to mediate between the underlying order’s will and individual concerns, but it is weak. Dana Cuff takes the view that “an underlying premise is that architecture and urbanism are social productions embodying the political economy.” (Cuff, 40) The fundamental problem, which planning does not tackle, is political economy’s use of exchange value over use value to debunk the individual and impose geographies of capital distribution beyond any individual’s control. The ghettos or demolished slums she focuses on are in her mind the consciously de-valued locales of capitalist accumulation. Repudiating the geography of the concentric ring, she says that the ‘distance’ issue is superseded by many externalities, including most prominently race. Therefore “slums, as political constructs, embodied their own demise,” no matter what their use value according to distance and other factors. (Cuff, 44) Cuff thus upholds use value, what some criticize as the phenomenological flaw of Marxism, as the individual investment of the user. Using John Locke’s Two Treatises of Government (1960), she says that the apportionment of land is fair when measured by its direct usefulness to the laborer, this being distorted by the existence of a regime of accumulation.

In the case studies Cuff details small property owners’ resistance efforts against renewal. The result is frequently one in which residents attempt to force local authorities to use funds for renovation, increasing the exchange value of the land, while the authority simultaneously labels it as blighted, banks depreciate it, and use value is ignored. Consequently, the value of one’s home becomes based in relations of outside institutions, not the pre-industrial equation of wealth and land. “Property relations are governed by rules that establish which individuals are entitled to realize certain options at a particular

¹⁴ Dana Cuff cites the French historian’s work The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, originally published in 1949.

point in time in relation to some object ... Ownership.... is defined by sets of property relations, established by social contract, law, common practice and contention.” (Cuff, 90-91) The authority of a property owner is thus essentially limited by the doctrine of exchange value. “If property ownership is a set of relationships among people, then it is little surprise that relations of racial domination and subordination have persisted in urban upheavals. ... In the urban development context, increased state, federal and local regulation have placed greater restrictions on the liberties of individual property owners, even to the extent of legitimized taking of property via eminent domain.” (Cuff, 92-93) Here one may talk about everything from the location of waste facilities, racial discrimination in mortgages, zoning, planning, the vicious cycle of poverty enabled by the doctrine of exchange value, and the denial of services to the location of public housing. Simply put, “Neither the dwelling to be razed, nor the modern communities to be built, nor the cities in which they all were located were of substantial interest to the state. They were instead means to other ends, such as jobs, or federal appropriations, or Americanization.” (Cuff, 116)

Also of note is William Fulton’s The Reluctant Metropolis (1997), which while not explicitly the work of an LA School adherent or even mentioning of any such school, reflects the growing academic revelation of Los Angeles’ extreme inequalities. As a work of journalism in the author’s own words, it relates a critical take on municipal fragmentation from the nineteenth century planning of a string of industrial suburbs, after the work of Greg Hise, to contemporary secession efforts. (Fulton, 8) Fulton tells this story principally for the purpose of indicating an ideological fragmentation within a metropolis that simply, given its environmental instability and inequalities, can not afford to think any way but regionally. For the most part it maintains the exceptionalist gaze, likening the ‘anti-city’ advertisements of early twentieth century boosters to the gated communities of today in a story of a perpetual and collective ideology of utopia-building. (Fulton, 13) Now however this popular ideology is threatened by the very conditions that such massive growth produced. He understands Proposition 13 as a popular rebellion against the further sprawl of the metropolis driven by urban tax-payers who saw themselves to be subsidizing distant ex-urban sprawl for developers’ profit at the

majority's expense. This event among others, principally those of 1965 and 1992, for him signals a popular revelation of inequality-producing structural factors within the growth machine of Los Angeles on the part of inner city dwellers and the wealthy alike; however I find his structuring of pro-growth metropolis versus anti-growth metropolis somewhat less profound than the majority of LA School literature if not overly rigid and fundamentally faulty. There is however the echo of other examinations' lamentations. Isolationist, exceptional, and often ignorant, Fulton's Angelenos fail to grasp their inequalities and environmental perils as a collective problem. Fulton states for example that in the years after 1992, which if anything should have witnessed greater regional cooperation, Angelenos "sense of community shrunk to only their tract." (Fulton, 18) While perhaps leaving out many significant collective efforts praised by others, Fulton's 'reluctant metropolis' is nevertheless a valid case built upon a plea for justice in a current materialist tradition of increasing fragmentation and inequality. For him justice lies in a re-imagining of collective responsibility and regionalism, though he remains doubtful that this could ever occur.

3.5 A New 'School' Unveiled

From Chicago to LA: Making Sense of Urban Theory, edited by Michael J Dear and published in 2002, announced that for the past seventy-five years, since the writing of The City by Park and Burgess, urban theory has been dominated by the ecological, non-critical models of the Chicago School. "For most of the twentieth century, the precepts of the Chicago School guided urban analysts throughout the world. Shrugging off challenges from competing visions, the school has maintained a remarkable longevity that is tribute to its model's beguiling simplicity ..." (Dear, From Chicago to LA viii) Dear describes this simplicity as composed of three main ideas: "an individual-centered understanding of the urban condition ... their personal choices ultimately explaining the overall urban condition, a modernist view of the city as a unified whole ... a coherent regional system in which the center organizes the hinterland, and a linear evolutionist paradigm ... from primitive to advanced ... and so on." (Dear, From Chicago to LA ix) I

take issue with Dear on many aspects of his argument. First of all, as I showed in my analysis of the Chicago school, their model was never so simple and ‘beguiling’ as there never really was a model that was agreed upon. Also, individual choice was, as Castells said, to some extent limited by individuals’ position in larger collectives negotiated in the process of industrialization. Most importantly, by no means have so many urban theorists ‘shrugged off competing visions’; as I showed criticism of the Chicago School occurred from within and without from the earliest days of their distinction, and has continued uninterrupted. That a Los Angeles School has arrived to proverbially rescue us from tired theories is difficult for me to believe; such a mission has been ongoing, that is, if the Chicago School was ever so dominating in the first place.

In the “Resistible Rise of the L.A. School”, the first essay in the volume, Michael Dear and Steven Flusty elaborate on a justification for an LA School, with the debasing of the presumably outdated Chicago school as their principal goal; resist or at least question we should. Firstly they conflate the cities of Chicago and Los Angeles with specific interpretations of them, uncomfortably structuralizing their argument. Chicago therefore was not interpreted by modernists, it was and is in fact a modernist city, determining the economy of the hinterland, in which the contemporary is assumedly no longer visible. Likewise Los Angeles is the postmodern global city, in which the center is determined by the periphery and vice versa in the post-structuralist abstract of glocalization. They quote Derrida: “The state of theory, now and from now on, isn’t it California? And even Southern California?” (Dear and Flusty, “Resistible Rise of the LA School” 5) Thus Southern California is in itself, not in an interpretation, the state of theory, that is, postmodernism. One may ask here whether postmodernism’s material condition does not surface elsewhere, or if postmodern methods of interpretation do not appear elsewhere. The question of an excluding and unfair privileging continues here.

The essay thus begins with the position that one can speak globally from a locality, if the locality makes that possible, Los Angeles proven as such a lens in the

equation of this specific city with the state of theory.¹⁵ Los Angeles, despite this privileging, is then to be thought of as the space in which a breakdown of privilege, e.g. dichotomies of here versus there, may take place, illustrating, confusingly to me, that any announcement of a Los Angeles school is also inherently its very denial. Despite this dilemma, Dear and Flusty set about excavating definitions of schools of thought. After providing those four problematic criteria I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Dear does confide that the use of the term ‘school’ is dangerous because it “has semantic overtones of codification and mastery” (Dear, “Resistible Rise of the LA School” 12). He goes on:

... the fragmented and globally-oriented nature of the Los Angeles School counters such threats ... The avowal of an LA School can become a decolonizing, postcolonial impulse, even as it warns us of new colonialisms marching down the historical path ... The LA School justifies a presentation of LA not as the model of contemporary urbanism, nor as the privileged locale from whence a cabal of theoreticians issue pronouncements about the way things really are, but as one of a number space-time geographical prisms through which current processes of urban (re)formation may be advantageously viewed.” (Dear, “Resistible Rise of the LA School” 14)

The LA School should simply be looked at as “a discursive strategy” (Dear, “Resistible Rise of the LA School” 12) providing here perhaps a new definition of a school, or perhaps Dear feels the need to debase ‘codification and mastery’ in a postmodern intellectual condition but without truly wanting to lest he fall to the side along with the others. And yet this is exactly what he, as a postmodernist, is required to do; as he says it is “less about looking to LA for models of the urban, and more about looking for contemporary expressions of the urban in LA.” (Dear, “Resistible Rise of the LA School” 14) Where then to go with a group of postmodernists, “pathologically anti-leadership” in his words, who may not even acknowledge the authority of a school but are nevertheless implicated within it simply by virtue of their approach? (Dear, “Resistible Rise of the LA School” 13) Keeping this unclear notion of who even is participating in mind, perhaps the postmodern school may justify itself by arguing for membership in a neighborhood of

¹⁵ It is my opinion that this equation should be differentiated from that within Cenzatti’s previously discussed notion of ‘city as text’, as the latter was more general i.e. not speaking particularly of Los Angeles.

approaches.¹⁶ However they complicate such an assembly in their frequent dismissal of alternative urban examples or past understandings. In this essay, there is very little resolution between the knowledge that LA School adherents do generally share a common stance, albeit not a distinct one, and a tendency towards self-promotion that is really quite alien to their stance.

Perhaps a justification for a school lays in its challenge to the existing order through its simple ability to draw attention; those that turn a blind eye may leave existing patterns of understanding undisturbed. What then becomes problematic is Dear's argument that "the genetic imprint of the school lies in some unrecoverable past" pointing to the supposedly un-critical lenses of Fogelson, McWilliams and others, or exceptionalists. (Dear, "Resistible Rise of the LA School" 9) In the 1980s the authors say a group alternatively considered Los Angeles as symptomatic. Edward Soja apparently "achieved the conversion of LA from the exception to the rule – the prototype of late twentieth-century geographies," in his analysis of the city's form and growth within the framework of Fordism and post-Fordism, and in his portrayal of the city as the Aleph, where all things are visible but never at the same time or all together. (Dear, "Resistible Rise of the LA School" 9) But any reader of Postmodern Geographies would find the authors' claim that the school's origins lie buried in mystery highly questionable; Soja was quite explicitly tracking his understanding of Los Angeles through a lineage of critical theorists, be they Marxists, post-Marxists or post-Structuralists. This may simply be irresponsibility on the authors' part; he later quotes Charles Jencks: "The L.A. School of geographers and planners had quite a separate and independent formulation in the 1980s which stemmed from the analysis of the city as a new postmodern urban type. Its themes vary from L.A. as the post-Fordist, postmodern city of many fragments in search of unity to the nightmare city of social inequities," (qtd. in Dear, "Resistible Rise of the LA School" 9) and I would add a combination of approaches. That this was an 'independent formulation' however I can not believe; as I have showed throughout this thesis there is a clear 'genetic imprint'. Dear and Flusty retreat to more defensible

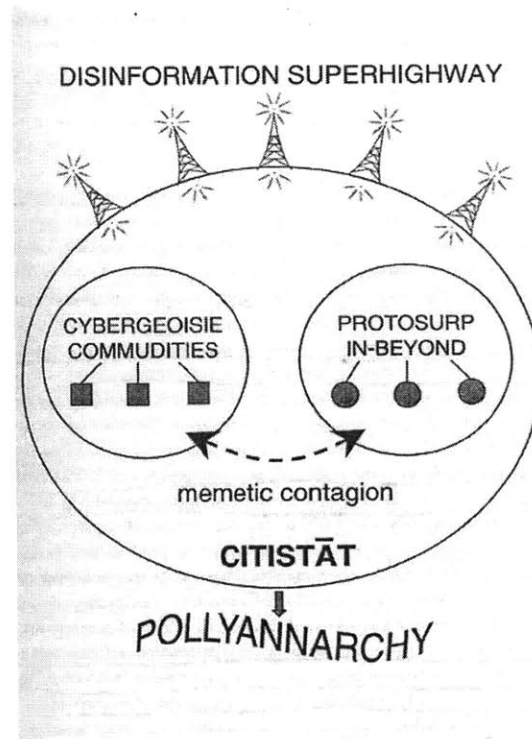
¹⁶ Philip J. Ethington and Martin Meeker, in "Saber y Conocer: The Metropolis of Urban Inquiry", also included in From Chicago to LA and to be discussed later draws the metaphor of such a 'neighborhood'.

territory by the end of his essay, saying Los Angeles may not be prototypical, and even that it is not unique, but that it provides lessons that are valuable.

The second essay, “Demographic Dynamism in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C.”, by Dowell Myers, exercises a calmer tone among the fray of Dear’s disorderly and self-contradictory promotion efforts. “An emerging Los Angeles school of thought has pushed urban scholars to look to the complexity of Los Angeles for hints of a new urban reality. In doing so, these scholars have challenged the Rustbelt/Sunbelt, city/suburb, local/global, industrial/postindustrial, and black/white notions that underlie most urban theory and policy.” (Myers, 22-23) Such a ‘school’ steers the critical theorist away from static categories, which must in turn be re-examined in both the quantitative and qualitative realm. He also emphasizes change as a variable. In this essay, the author demonstrates how Los Angeles, compared with Washington, New York, and Chicago, most extremely illustrates the breakdown of the black versus white dualism when talking about the racial dynamic of American cities. In studying Asian and Latino immigrant groups, he intends to indicate that black and white cannot be taken as the racial dynamic of something like economic inequality, immigration or residential location. He analyzes Asian and Latino immigrant groups in quantitative analysis, thus complicating the picture of inequality and demanding explanation but also implying the complexity of that explanation. His tables show how in certain groups mobility barely happens over time, and that age and gender are also factors in shifting poverty rates; for some the poverty rate remains something like twice the national average over the period of examination. In conclusion, his analysis shows that if urban theorists are going to talk about certain groups being worse off, they have to talk about not only different groups, but different ages, gender, and changes over time. As far as Los Angeles specifically is concerned, the analysis shows that the experience of these groups in Los Angeles is of course different but its understanding is limited here to one highlighting of trends visible in many metropolitan regions.

The third essay, “Los Angeles as Postmodern Urbanism”, also by Michael Dear and Steven Flusty and arguably the most well known and widely criticized in the volume, delivers to the reader a great mass of rhetoric in neologisms and superlatives. Justified by

a post-structuralist critique of rigidity in language, they shout the advent of a new urban type. “Just as the central tenets of modernist thought have been undermined, its core evacuated and replaced by a rush of competing epistemologies, so too have the traditional logics of earlier urbanisms evaporated, and in the absence of a single new imperative, multiple urban (ir)rationalities are competing to fill the void.” (Dear and Flusty, “Los Angeles as Postmodern Urbanism” 61) It is my opinion that this essay is best taken as just one of these (ir)rationalities, not the central dogma of a Los Angeles school as many critics would have it, the literature of which is quite diverse as I have shown. This essay is certainly the most ‘soft’ urbanism of any LA School adherent in my opinion, in the nature of Jonathan Raban’s ‘Soft City’, meaning an individualized interpretation of the ‘hard city’, the actual material fabric in its entirety which can never be fully known by any method. (Dear and Flusty, “Los Angeles as Postmodern Urbanism” 61) Raban says the visitor arrives in the hard city and “the city goes soft; it awaits the imprint of an identity.” (qtd. in Dear and Flusty, “Los Angeles as Postmodern Urbanism” 61) Davis’ work, for the authors, stands as another example of soft urbanism; they point to his extreme privileging of methods of social control. The concept of the soft city recognizes fragmentation and frames one’s observations as valuable and informative but also isolates them as inevitably limited and questionable. Here they represent this imagining in neologisms, making this process of knowing explicit. Not only does the essay intrinsically announce a certain postmodern method then, but it also serves to announce a postmodern city, if only to garner the attention of critics curious why a new city, if so novel in the first place, needs new words.



“Postmodern Urbanism” (Dear and Flusty, “Los Angeles and Postmodern Urbanism” 77)

To begin, they call post-Fordism ‘flexism’, assumedly a derivative of ‘flexible accumulation’ under which the population of the globe is simultaneously involved in ‘holsteinization’, the making of a consumer-minded populace, and ‘praedatorianism’, the resistance to holsteinization through the assertion of ‘other’ identities. The population is then organized into the ‘global latifundia’, better known as the production system, which given present economic trends leads to the ‘bipolar disorder’ of an increasingly wealthy ‘cybergeoisie’ and a quickly expanding, low-income mass of ‘protosurps’, the “sharecroppers of the global latifundia,” easily manipulated labor providers under the command of the cybergeoisie residing in “the big house.” (Dear and Flusty, “Los Angeles as Postmodern Urbanism” 73) Within these two groups it is not human agency, but collective consciousness, ‘memetic contagion’, that binds people together in a sort of class consciousness, but this is nothing empowering; this is simply the rather indifferent ‘cognitive consciousness’ of differences. However there is ‘memetic contagion’ between cybergeoisie ‘communities’, self-contained residential and commercial enclaves and the

protosurp 'in-beyond', the instrumentalized landscape of everywhere else, that produces a tension in the spatial organization of the 'citistat' resulting in 'pollyannarchy', an example of which is the 1992 riots. This model is barely nuanced, but then again it is meant to be explicitly one-sided. Appropriately, the model is managed by the 'disinformation superhighway' which spatially divides and manages the world of flexism into its various organizing landscapes of edge cities, corporate citadels, command and control centers, ethnoburbs, street warfare, or theme parks marketing 'dreamscapes' of alternate realities. Leaving this behind for now, I will return to it later.

Taking a more conventional approach, Greg Hise presents an empirical study of industrialization in Los Angeles in "Industry and the Landscapes of Social Reform". The basic premise, keeping within the general theme of the volume, is a challenge to the Chicago School assumption that urban growth was a 'natural' outcome of industrialization. Hise points to Los Angeles' history of infrastructure building, thus portraying the city's industrialization from the beginning of the 20th century as a guided process and reversing the idea of causality as 'natural'. The experience of Los Angeles therefore simply does not agree with the Chicago school's "idealized coupling of industry and nature." (Hise, 103) Clarence Dykstra, writing at the same time as Park and Burgess, had similarly argued that Southern California reversed the "ordinary process of municipalization," wherein the building of cities was created from the development of a factory. (Hise, 107) "So why were the Chicago sociologists so committed to the notion of their city and all other cities as coherent, diagrammatically comprehensible metropolitan areas? It goes without saying that their project, like all intellectual work, was a product of its time." (Hise, 122) Their ideas, in Hise's mind, had some disastrous consequences.

Although they did not use the term, their zone of transition and zone of workingmen's homes were the sites that reformers and urban planners would soon designate as blighted. Here, in diagrammatic form, we have one of the first representations of the American metropolis as a spatial and social unit with a decayed or decaying core and a robust and expanding periphery. Of course, this leitmotif has served as the rationale for everything from policy to punditry from the 1920s forward and has had an enormous, and unfortunately mostly negative, effect on the lives of urban residents in Chicago, Los Angeles, and elsewhere throughout the twentieth century. It is well past the time to set this model of urbanization aside. (Hise, 124)

In response to this essay I would draw a conclusion about the LA school: the LA School presents a conception of contemporary political economy, albeit also as a product of its time more so than something as unique or revolutionizing as this volume's tone would have it, and perhaps one of less dire consequences if anything.

Steven P. Erie further outlines the deliberateness of Los Angeles in "Los Angeles as a Developmental City State". The 'city state' here is conceived as a strong political entity dedicated to the growth of an urban ideal, driving industrialization rather than allowing the market to drive it, as the Chicago School framed urban development. Chicago left little room for state-directed growth, although as Hise pointed out this is reflective of the times, the pre-Fordist situation of the corporate metropolis. The 'city state' must be central to any understanding of Los Angeles, a logic Erie traces to the Owens Valley tragedy. He delivers five arguments: (1) that Los Angeles demonstrates the role of the state as an economic stimulus very explicitly, (2) that except for the well-told water story, other state projects are under-emphasized, (3) that Southern California's political framework enabled municipal home rule and municipal fiscal capacity, providing us with a more extended history of municipal power than other cities, (4) that in Los Angeles, this was done through bureaucracies freed from machine politics and (5) that the present trend of deregulation threatens the ability of future projects at either the municipal, county or federal level. The new resurgence of regionalism i.e. the need for 'control centers' in global cities means that large infrastructure projects, along with institutional presence and highly educated human capital, are a continued necessity, but they are hard to achieve in a time of deregulation. Unlike New York or Chicago which rely on regional public authorities, Los Angeles continues to rely on its municipal agencies, with water and power, harbor and airport all under municipal authority. This, combined with the withdrawal of defense funds in the 1990s, harms the city's ability to provide that infrastructure which first made it a powerful marketplace. Erie explains the need for corporate partnership in pursuing funds on the model of Houston, where he says the business elite attained federal funds for channel dredging and port expansion. Los Angeles also has done this in the past, when Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler, owners of the Los Angeles Times, spearheaded projects ranging from San Fernando

Valley development to the luring of eastern branch plants. He recalls the LA Chamber of Commerce's "land of sunshine" advertising campaign which by marketing consumption encouraged demand and in turn production. However these historical examples did not amount to local public works, they instead depended on them in the first place. Citing both the dependency of the job market in the five county area on international trade, and Los Angeles' national importance as a port, he estimates that the city needs to double or triple its port and airport facilities by 2020 in order to compete. Here is an interesting turn away from the Chicago School's explanation of urban agglomeration on the one hand, if only for the sake of boosting another location's experience, something perhaps not too foreign to Los Angeles School adherents.

Allen J. Scott also details an alternative mechanism of growth in contemporary Los Angeles in "Industrial Urbanism in Late-Twentieth-Century Southern California". In the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist production he identifies three main actors: hi-tech, craft industries, and what he calls the entertainment/fashion/ideological product industry. He says that Los Angeles is "almost certainly the largest manufacturing center in the world," (Scott, "Industrial Urbanism" 163) if only to sound slightly desperate in his use of Los Angeles to explain post-Fordist production. He is, as in the past, criticizing of the Chicago School's taking the production system for granted, although as said before that was partially perhaps a product of the times given the consistency of industrialization then; he argues that restructuring has brought urbanists' attention back to the production system in its complex and simultaneous stimulation of de-industrialization and re-industrialization. As a consequence industry now develops spatially as "multifaceted congeries of industrial districts" corresponding with "socially differentiated neighborhoods." (Scott, "Industrial Urbanism" 175) There also lay important differences from Fordism in the flexibility of production and the evolution of a deregulated labor force and government. He goes so far as to call Los Angeles paradigmatic of the post-Fordist metropolis, and says furthermore that its social inequalities make crisis continually inevitable. We should then ask why Los Angeles has experienced such different trends simultaneously to such extremes. This question brings us to immigration and its social and economic dynamics in the southwest.

Jerome Straughan and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo in “From Immigrants in the City to Immigrant City” criticize the Chicago school’s understanding of immigrants as socially dislocated collectives in isolated tribal villages, carrying a specific pathology of detachment and defensiveness that creates a certain immigrant personality. This essay intends to produce an alternative vision of immigrant community formation that is if anything more nuanced. To begin with, they point out how new immigrants are often poor but also, in an economy demanding of ever more specialized skill-sets, wealthy professionals, thus experiencing varied sensations of ‘dislocation’. Chicago theory also focused on a linear trajectory from extended family to nuclear family through the separation of home and work. The extended family they say was supplanted by the neighborhood, this constituting the new ‘urban culture’. This has created a lasting structuralizing of immigration in ideas of linear assimilation, pathology and new associations. Today however, when one speaks of ‘immigrant communities’ one increasingly speaks of households and communities that cross national boundaries: “households, political associations and even sports teams now defy the traditional boundaries of geography and nation-state.” (Straughan and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 189) Straughan and Hondagneu-Sotelo maintain an understanding of immigration as a non-individual effort operating in a more complex manner than a simple push-pull choice theory of movement. Immigration today they say is explained by foreign investment, which disrupting economic structures abroad generates the flow of labor in the opposite direction. Previously the dependence of capitalism on migration and vice versa had been ignored. Correspondingly there is a shift in xenophobic attitudes from “immigrants are depressing wages” to “immigrants are draining public resources.” This is described as symptomatic of a post-Fordist situation in which the majority acknowledges that most immigrant jobs are not necessarily what appeal to a workforce accustomed to higher-wage unionized labor.

The authors argue that beginning in the 1980s social theorists began talking about households, positioning them as units sending members elsewhere, necessitating an examination of gender and generational factors. “Inspired by postcolonial, postmodern anthropology, the transnational view explicitly challenges the bipolar model of ‘old

country' and 'new country' ... the circulation of people, goods and ideas creates new transnational cultures that become autonomous social spheres transcending national borders." (Straughan and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 200) The authors reference the defense of Mexican immigrants by the Mexican government and consuls as significant agents while the Chicago school had limited agency to individual pathology and neighborhood. While all of this detracts from the theory of linear assimilation, perhaps some of it too can be forgiven, like Chicago's taking of industrialization for granted, given the state of communications and travel in the early twentieth century.

Madeleine R. Stoner criticizes Chicago theorists' romanticizing of the 'hobo' as a bohemian in "The Globalization of Urban Homelessness". This she says forgets the economic reasons for homelessness and is overly-focused on pathology, generally fitting "the linear model of the Chicago School's configuration of the city as providing differentiated spaces for people differently placed in the social hierarchy." (Stoner, 218) She argues that by the 1930s the idea of skid row had led to New Deal programs recognizing poverty as a structural component of cities, homelessness being the most extreme situation. Poverty understood as structural, we may, given the post-Fordist condition, understand the rise in the number of homeless during the 1980s. This was exacerbated by the passing off of responsibilities to cities from state and federal governments. In Los Angeles this has resulted in low or little funding for anti-poverty or housing programs, and even the criminalization of homeless people through containment. She cites like Davis and others explicitly forbidden areas, the widespread destruction of public space and hi-tech viewing methods. And yet her argument floats precariously when in the section called "Important lessons from Los Angeles" she never mentions Los Angeles, although perhaps a mentioning of Los Angeles is not necessarily something to expect from an adherent of the LA School.

The following essay "Play Groups' No Longer: Urban Street Gangs in the Los Angeles Region", by Cheryl L Maxson and Malcolm W Klein, forgives Robert Park's talk of "boys gangs," as, they say, he could not have foreseen the rise of gangs in light of future trends of de-industrialization. From this point the authors depart, with little explanation, to say that Chicago's gangs have "become so unique as to endanger any

reasonable generalization to gangs elsewhere.” (Maxson and Klein, 239) They seem desperate to rush towards an alternative picture of gang life, and moving to Los Angeles, they give privilege to Los Angeles’ structures of underemployment and cultural imagery over that of other cities. They point to Los Angeles’ crackdown on gangs without providing programs to curb the social conditions that create gangs in the first place. This is different from Chicago, which apparently has more community-based activity, so much so that a paradigm shift is necessitated if we are to understand gang life. Once again the road to Los Angeles seems desperate if not an irresponsible narrowing of scope.

With less presumption, Donald E Miller, in “Religion in Los Angeles: Patterns of Spiritual Practice in a Postmodern City”, argues that Los Angeles resists the prediction of the Chicago School, along with most nineteenth century social theorists, that the city as place of reason would overpower fear-based escapist religion. Chicago theorists imagined a slow decline of religion in the west with continued industrialization he says largely because they did not recognize religion as a possible source of inspiration, support and identity. Miller details the importance of New Age faiths, the role of religious institutions as service institutions given the retreat of the state, community based faith initiatives, and the social capital of the religious space in the postmodern metropolis. Interestingly, not departing from Chicago’s method, he presents religion in community as an ‘ecology’, saying that the presence of immigrants, or even domestic transients, encourages religion in times of loneliness, as does the entertainment industry and the continuous introduction of new faiths or reinforcement of old ones by new arrivals. Correspondingly, traditional Protestant denominations have seen declining membership while evangelism has grown. He calls the postmodern religious scene the “free market of religious choice”, asserting a personal authority in which people may choose to enter, as opposed to being born into religion, or some people may not identify with any traditional or organized religion, but may seek spirituality on an informal basis or from selected sources. As far as the role of faith in community goes, he mentions food and clothing provision, medical assistance, shelter, community and economic development programs, literacy and job training, and outreach efforts concerned with drugs or gangs. Such efforts often include inter-faith cooperation in this free marketplace. Religious institutions in the city have advantages in

serving communities given their possession of facilities, their wide geographical distribution, committed volunteerism, a solid donor base among members, the donations of private corporations and public agencies, leadership, knowledge of local needs, and an unashamed discussion of issues such as morality and responsibility which make goals and strategies easily outlined. In Los Angeles, as elsewhere, the new marketplace of religion is both a personal safety net corresponding with the decline of much traditional religion and a public safety net coming into being as the government retreats.

Alternative community formation may also occur in cyberspace. J. Dallas Dishman, in "Ecologies of Cyberspace: Gay Communities on the Internet" shows how regionalism can matter in a place supposedly as placeless as the internet, both expanding on the possibilities of and re-inforcing place-based community. Dishman shows how electronic culture, in this case gay electronic culture, is "highly motivated by the social, sexual and political conditions of real-world environments," these often for the gay community being urban, isolated places in which the place-defeating space of the internet becomes re-regionalized. (Dishman, 297) The question for Dishman then lies in how real-world communities are enhanced, changed, or formed by cyberspace, and how the lives of community participants are affected. According to Burgess, as I reviewed, degeneracy could originate in a situation in which two people of different communities came together, issuing a breakdown in identity. Dishman suggests that this belief in community dislocation as a cause of pathology is outdated by contemporary urban form, in which people have become more mobile than ever before with the car, telephone, and television as enabling technologies. Community space is further complicated by the arrival of virtual space, but only to an extent. Community may or may not have anything to do with proximity now. Dishman cites William Mitchell's City of Bits, which anticipates the continued collapse of spatial barriers due to cyberspace, but Dishman argues that this is not entirely true. (Dishman, 302) There often remains the need for real world spaces that allow physical contact as an ingredient for relationship and community formation. The space in which gay men find themselves is often hostile, and to escape it they may go online, in which they may even present themselves as a different person, but alternatively they may use the internet for nurturing a variety of real-world situations. It all depends on

individual desires, needs, and therein personal choice. This conclusion criticizes both the Chicago School concepts of community and much LA School literature that tends to devalue individual agency in the 'Information Age'.

From Dishman's essay the volume turns to the debate on how to know what constitutes a city. This is a fundamental issue within LA school literature, having often explicitly announced a postmodern approach, in which the attainment of knowledge is complicated by fragmentation, while needing knowledge as a basis for judgement and political action. This is the leftist dilemma. Darnell Hunt, in "Representing 'Los Angeles': Media, Space and Place", argued that the Chicago school treated the city in five dimensions: the geographical, historical, statistical, economic, and an ideological dimension or the individual knowledge that one is part of the city. The last of these especially indicated the Chicago School's recognition of the complication inherent in looking at a city; they however in a positivist manner insisted on collective knowing, or specific geographical, historical, and statistical definitions of the city that had non-negotiable boundaries. Now, in Los Angeles, "the city is instead conceptualized as an amalgamation of differentiated spaces held together primarily by a structure of thought that works to pattern but offer little closure." (Hunt, 333) Once again this demonstrates an inadequacy present throughout much of the volume, in that this conceptualization did not begin with the LA School; in drawing a stiff structuralism between 'Chicago School' and 'LA School' the history of what is in between may be lost upon the reader. Selectively, Hunt brings out Baudrillard's claim that Los Angeles is, as a fundamentally postmodern space, nothing but an image; Hunt insists that postmodernism should not characterize a one way street from place to placesnessness. It is my opinion that in his selection of this sole example he ignores a history of theory that others and myself have shown to be vital to any understanding of LA School literature. Thus he implies that the grounding of postmodernism in an observable, knowable political economy is unique to some LA school notion of postmodernism. That said, Baudrillard does present a good contrast to this more widely shared notion of postmodernism. If Baudrillard, posed here as a fundamental 'other' to the LA School, missed the picture, it was because in the disorienting space of a postmodernism upholding of simulacra and damning of

authenticity he failed to see that Los Angeles is quite real. “It is not that a real Los Angeles does not exist, it is that real people are engaged in a continuing struggle over what it is and how to represent it,” and this furthermore lends to an intrinsically politicized knowledge of the city e.g. that it is a good place, a bad place, and therefore an idea of what it should be. (Hunt, 323) Hunt then pursues a two-way street in his approach to the ‘real’, resolving the leftist dilemma in postmodernism. He argues that a material context produces social action in expectation of consequences. This produces intertextual memory, the fluid informal individual space of rendered meaning that is not formalized as ‘text’. This produces representation, the notion that something can be reported and understood, and this is then formalized as media texts: the news, labels, murals, census data, landmarks and maps. These in turn re-inform intertextual memory, which is individually or locally de-coded by individual agency. Thus he insists on a real place defined by people who are not passively overcome by image, as Baudrillard may have it; they actively position themselves in relation to text and representations of the city, leading to social action, and producing the material context of the city. According to this model, the city, and anything within it, is possibly knowable by the individual and social theorist. Made attainable, knowledge can be gained in the gathering of evidence by questions as simple as ‘why?’ or ‘who?’.

In “Returning to Ecology: An Ecosystem Approach to Understanding the City”, by Ashwani Vasishth and David C. Sloane, the authors insist on the value of an ecological approach. They argue that in coming to know the city, the layering, overlapping, and nesting of systems promotes an ecological understanding, not necessarily that of Chicago, but one that builds on that tradition. Here the authors present a less interrupted epistemological heritage. They argue that the Chicago School had been aware of the boundedness of knowledge, following from Durkheim and Simmel, and therein the boundedness of individual action. Their urban ecology was, as I discussed before, therefore one of land values, landscape, zoning, circulation, and history, not emerging from human intent but from the naturalized actions of wider forces. Defending the zonal hypothesis the authors say that “many critiques of the zonal hypothesis erred ... in taking the ideogram of four concentric rings to be some literal spatial expression of

reality rather than seeing it, more properly, as an ecological conceptuatization,” simply the expression of an organism’s functioning, interdependent parts. (Vasishth and Sloane, 354) Within such an abstraction, various types of measurement are possible: boundaries to achieve description, scales for measurement, what levels of organization are significant, the level from which one may observe. “There are certain classes of things ... that are fundamentally ecological in their organization and occurrence. Such ecological things are not things in themselves ... they exhibit multiple and pragmatically distinct levels of organization ... and descriptions of patterns and process at one level of organization may tell us little about organization or occurrence at another.” (Vasishth and Sloane, 358) However the idea of a whole organism, the achieving of an ideal through evolution, limits ecological theory. In conclusion, postmodernist critical theorists assumedly stop short of any such assumption. This essay is a valuable re-examination of ecology, underlining the multi-faceted, approach of the LA School here in going beyond a simple dismissal of Chicago theory.

Continuing with this idea of the LA School’s fragmented approach, Dear next delivers a criticism of urban ecology by Jennifer Wolch, Stephanie Pincetl, and Laura Pulido in “Urban Nature and the Nature of Urbanism”. They criticize the way in which “naturalizing the process of urbanization removed human agency from city growth and development and depoliticized process of local decision making.” (Wolch et al, “Urban Nature” 369) They repudiate the imposing of ecology onto human processes, as ‘ecology’ is in the first place a human-created critical construct, and therefore not anything that renders human process understandable. Urban ecology exists they say, but only as the study of ecology in the urban, the environment as acted upon by human process. They do not however leave us with a method for approaching human process, instead making that task seem impossible.

Philip J. Ethington and Martin Meeker, in “Saber y Conocer: The Metropolis of Urban Inquiry”, say that theory is locked in a state of needless argument, “regularly telling us that we have entered new conditions of experience and that our existing knowledge is no longer adequate to understand the problems they present, let alone solve them.” (Ethington and Meeker, 405) Seeking to end this state of “perpetual novelty ... we

suggest viewing preceding, succeeding and contemporaneous alternative interpretive schemas as contiguous neighborhoods in a 'metropolis of inquiry,' approaching theory as we would ideally approach a city, with the goal of getting to know it in all its complexity, understanding that each element has its 'place.'" (Ethington and Meeker, 405) That said there may be two ways of knowing, taken from Spanish. 'Saber' means to know how, or understand. 'Conocer' means to know more specifically. For their purposes, the epistemological concept is signified by 'saber' while 'conocer' "is the intimate knowing of relations within and between selves, others, and places" by one's experience, one's walking the city per se. (Ethington and Meeker, 407) The understood metropolis, like the real metropolis, is a synthesis of visible and contradicting observations. The Chicago School modernists, they argue, created an agenda through which one may observe differences for the purpose of knowing the whole story. Yet within their literature there was already the understanding that there existed a splintering of understandings, for example that among ethnic groups there were equal value systems that each achieved explanation. Jane Jacobs, the authors say, asserted the 'saber' dynamic in her disliking of modernism's apparent self-assurance in urban renewal. Mumford is placed closer to the 'conocer' neighborhood, "an advocate of progress who believed that each era had an aesthetic (form) consistent with its zeitgeist." (Ethington and Meeker, 411) The solution lays in making saber and conocer compatible, which for the authors will occur when urban theorists become dedicated to augmenting rather than continually trashing the work of others. They assert that "the postmodernists, like generations of urbanists before them, claim that the urban condition manifestly disorients the urbanite and scholar alike, in a manner genuinely new to all human history." (Ethington and Meeker, 414) Such a strategy nevertheless "fights with itself: it maps and denies the capacity to map at the same time." (Ethington and Meeker, 414) This is what I argue so many leftists have tried to resolve in the crisis of postmodernism. The authors point to Michael Dear's criticism of Harvey and Soja's tendency towards exclusionary economism "subduing history to a panoptic view whereby a postmodern fate is slowly unveiled." (Ethington and Meeker, 415) While more penetrating explanation may be desirable, it is problematized by any post-structuralist critique framing such explanation as totalizing. The solution lays in the

combination of the micro and macro, where the macro, Lefebvre's 'far order', lends a general vision, and the micro, Lefebvre's 'near order', lends uniqueness. For these authors as for others Lefebvre shows how "an urban place is both a systematic abstraction and a fragmentary, immediate life world of individualized experiences or group dynamics." (Ethington and Meeker, 417) They conclude that the assertion of an LA school is absurd, as it implies the subjugation of other ways of knowing, and they call for a more amicable urbanism.

Michael Dear concludes the volume with a defense of the LA School in "The L.A. School: A Personal Introduction". He says that "there has been a radical break in the material conditions that lead to the production of cities; and second, that there has been a radical break in the ways of knowing the city." (Dear, "The L.A. School" 423) I interpret this to mean that modernism has been supplanted materially, and correspondingly the reign of the meta-narrative has ended in modernism's ideological disruption from the Second World War to the 1970s economic crises. He then presents ten tenets of the LA School, which are more or less summaries of the essays collected in the volume. According to these tenets Los Angeles is prototypical, there is an empirical manifestation of postmodern urbanism in everything from the privatopia to the heteropolis, there are new patterns of industrial growth, there is a new role of the state, there is a shift from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production, community and citizenship are being rethought, homelessness and gangs are now understood as indicators of social problems, there is a marketplace of religion, and community is being rethought in cyberspace. Incorporating Meeker and Ethington he asks "How a deliberate, open-minded juxtaposition of old and new (Chicago vs LA) can lead to the (re)discovery of important and/or forgotten pieces of an intellectual puzzle." (Dear, "The L.A. School" 426). Of course, there is a lot more than Chicago and Los Angeles; as he says "comparative analysis is at the heart of a revitalized urban theory" and so perhaps we have to broaden our views of both 'schools'. (Dear, "The L.A. School" 426)¹⁷

¹⁷ In an email to the author dated 17 April, 2004 Michael Dear again reiterated the importance of comparative analysis, stating: "At this stage, I think [From Chicago to L.A.] sets out the case for LA as template; now I am urging careful comparative analysis."

Also in 2002 Michael Dear's article "Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a Debate" was published in City and Community. Here he again argues that Los Angeles is prototypical and that its observers provide an alternative urban metric that is overdue. He says that Los Angeles is neither a harbinger nor a paradigm; there is simply a new urban condition visible in Los Angeles that demands a new epistemology. Again, Los Angeles' experience still however manages to gain a not well explained privileging here. He then provides that opaque definition of a 'school' that I presented in my introduction. A school must for Dear represent (1) a common project, with broad agreement on research (however defined), (2) be geographically proximate with organizational foci such as journals or meetings (however delimited), (3) be self-consciously collaborative (to whatever extent), and (4) be externally recognized (at whatever threshold). And yet his disclaimers seem to eliminate any definition while he accuses those who deny the existence of a school of being 'conservative'. He then proceeds through that history of the LA School I have presented here, if only very differently, saying once again that the 'genetic imprint' of the school lies in some 'unrecoverable past', reviewing 1987, Mike Davis, and the multiple 1996 publications.

His own volume is presented as the solidification of a journey made from Chicago to Los Angeles, one that as I have shown he understood to be very direct, with little recognition of the input of so many urban theorists elsewhere. He reviews some of his tenets from his essay Postmodern Urbanism, pointing to edge cities, economic restructuring, privatopia, the heteropolis, the city as theme park, the fortified city, neo-conservatism, globalization, the citadel of global capital, and so on. He notes the rise of a new critical geography that delivered all of these revelations, accurate or not. This new critical geography, as a body of literature, presents a discursive strategy demarcating space as a laboratory but it is also assumedly as multi-faceted as the space it observes. Exactly why this critical theory exists however is lost upon the reader of this article, or worse the reader may assume it originated in Los Angeles, which is one of the reasons I have taken to the task of writing this thesis.

3.6 On External Recognition

Ideas of historical materialism, regulationism, spatial materialism, the global city, and others all continue to meet significant challenges in critique of the LA School and elsewhere. Criticism often includes a fear of determinism and breeding a politically unconscious human agent in a strict economism; alternatively, many leftists, as I have explored, criticize that postmodernism which de-emphasizes the production system or worse, fractures old alliances and rendered theory a-political in the erection of an extreme relativism. As with the literature of the LA School, we may see in its criticism a particular, in fact really the same, epistemological heritage. Most criticism also comes from individuals operating within some postmodern discourse, criticizing LA school writings for tending towards economism, condemning the promotion of a privileging 'school', and even accusing LA School adherents of simply re-erecting the Modernist tell-all meta-narrative.¹⁸ Alternatively there is outside support for the idea of an LA School. And most alternatively, there is that literature that criticizes the new Marxist geographers of Los Angeles as unfairly critical of a postmodern culture that should be celebrated. I will turn here first.

Fred Siegel, in The Future Once Happened Here: New York, DC, LA, and the Fate of America's Big Cities (1997) attacks what he perceives as an effort to break down multiculturalism into a landscape of warring identities. His area of most passionate criticism is directed at the portrayal of Los Angeles as divided by irreparable class conflict. He says that via portrayals of an underground economy of mini-malls, thrifts and nail parlors the most many urban critics have achieved is the attraction of failed government intervention efforts such as RLA. While critical of low-wage labor and the lack of educational opportunities for many in the inner city, Siegel finds resolve in the end product, or the 'Capitalist Dynamo' as he calls it. Where Soja and others see an increasing wage dichotomy, Siegel sees "a vindication of economic freedom" in which

¹⁸ Michael Dear, in an email to me dated April 20, 2004, stated "It will not surprise you if I resist the temptation to dissolve the LA School into a single sound-bit/mantra!! i [sic] am certainly distancing myself from modernist thought and practices ... This is of course the principal reason why my work has been (shall we say) poorly received in planning circles."

the lack of welfare bureaucracies and unions has enabled the re-industrialization of the postmodern city. A militarized police force is not so much a problem as a solution: “In Los Angeles the relentless entrepreneurial energy of a Wild West capitalism largely freed from the fetters of institutional constraints ... produced a violently combustible city and a police force to match.” (Siegel, 123) That this city is ‘violently combustible’ in the first place is apparently not a problem, the 1965 and 1992 riots here being blamed solely on episodes of over-zealous policing and not wider structural problems. Citing the fragmentation of Los Angeles’ city government he says “The decentered political structure in Los Angeles, which freed the city from the costs of an overextended government, helped produce the unaccountable police system that made Los Angeles not only the first city to experience a major postwar riot but the only city to experience two major postwar riots.” (Siegel, 131) This if anything is the neo-conservative rebuttal, and something which, as many Los Angeles school adherents point out, merely scrapes at the surface of a ‘Wild West’ aesthetic.

That said, criticism of LA School urbanists has from the left also been unkind for the most part. The greatest exception would have to be D.W. Miller’s “The New Urban Studies: Los Angeles scholars use their region and their ideas to end the dominance of the ‘Chicago School’” published in The Chronicle of Higher Education in August 2000. Miller begins with the assertion that Los Angeles owes little to conventional ideas about urbanism, pointing to the Chicago School’s notion of a unified, organic subject along with contemporary concepts such as the ‘postindustrial’, however selective this may be. He repeats the common argument that Los Angeles is privileged as a laboratory for the observation of the postmodern material condition because economic restructuring, globalization, and political fragmentation appeared early and explicitly on the Angeleno landscape. Importantly, presumably in an attempt to discount the notion of LA School adherents as noisy and alarmist, he distances the Los Angeles School from Mike Davis, saying Davis never embraced any collective ‘LA School’ project. With that he goes after those critics, naming Ethington, who accuse other LA School adherents of being upstart, saying one cannot criticize people for building new approaches, especially in a situation in which creativity is overdue. This leaves me to ask whether alternative or new

approaches were really overdue; again there is a history here that seems to have gaps in it.

Responding directly to Miller's article is Mark Gottdiener's 2002 essay "The 'LA School' and the Understanding of Metropolitan Development". The essay is critical of any body of thought whose premise is that one city is uniquely positioned for observation in a postmodern era. Gottdiener says this era is 'globalized' in material terms and theoretically rejects favoritism. He says that the LA School and its press valorizes one group at the expense of others, even in their own back yard, pointing to the work of others on Southern California not adhering to an LA School project. More troubling for Gottdiener are LA School adherents' frequent claims to originality in fields well developed by others. He says for example that Los Angeles School claims to be replacing the Chicago School are inappropriate considering the declining influence of that school from the 1960s. Furthermore, it is not fair or reasonable to 'replace' a school of thought, as this obscures possible contributions. Gottdiener says that many Los Angeles School adherents, in jumping from Chicago to the present, ignore the heritage that underpins their own thinking, which he summarizes in five pillars: the role of the interventionist state, the role of capital, the role of space, the role of culture, and the new structuralisms relating to uneven development. While I do not think it is necessarily incorrect to limit observation to one city, so long as one understands the limitations involved e.g. the need to use comparative analysis in order to develop a theory of urbanization or whatever else, Gottdiener is correct in saying there is an apparent memory lapse in the writings of many LA School adherents.

Another more well known criticism of the LA School was published in September 2003's issue of City & Community: "City of Superlatives" by Robert A. Beauregard. Beauregard, perhaps involving himself in a broader critique of postmodernism, argues that the Chicago School achieved an objective eye through critical distance, avoided a moral stance, and remained disengaged. They therefore in his mind simply offered the city up as a possible object of criticism and did not presumptuously insist anything of the reader. He then criticizes the present trend to promote one city as particularly worthy of attention, in the claim that one city encapsulates trends to the point that it is paradigmatic.

This generates unfair demands upon the reader and may grossly mislead them. Beauregard says that this is achieved by the use of superlatives e.g. to have the “most” or the “largest.” While I think Beauregard makes superlatives sound more dangerous than they really are because he has here detached them from the context in which they were said, he nevertheless introduces a good point when he seems to ask ‘who cares anyway?’: “For instance, why does it matter, and how does it matter, that a city has more languages spoken there than in other cities? What are the consequences for how the city works and what the city means to its users? A claim has to be more than a label. It has to function theoretically; that is, such assertions must have consequences for the project of urban theory ... to isolate say the number of homicides is to disconnect the crime from the many social processes in which it is embedded and, in a sense, to devalue it theoretically.”(Beauregard, 188) I however would say that when read in context, the use of superlatives can ‘function theoretically’. It is a strategy that denounces ‘old science’ and announces the need for expansion. Dear’s personal response, “Superlative Urbanisms: The Necessity for Rhetoric in Social Theory”, published in the same issue of City & Community states that “without these ‘superlative urbanisms we would still be mired in the old traditions – employing Chicago School precepts as the basis for understanding.” (Dear, “Superlative Urbanisms” 201) However this too has its problems as I have discussed already; exactly how intact are these ‘old traditions’ anyway? Beauregard as a result prefers to fix Dear and others as public figures who act as boosters for their universities by ignoring such traditions and creating an illusion of extreme creativity. Secondly, he argues that within postmodernism the focus has shifted from explanation to representation i.e. the debate over why any observation has meaning in the first place, although I consider the writings of most LA School adherents to be exactly about building an explanatory postmodernism that shuns representation. Finally Beauregard laments the disappearance of objectivity in urban theory with the ethic of the new political-economy, although many including myself welcome such an approach. In a fair conclusion, he insists that writers should explicitly discuss the angle from which they are approaching. That many LA School adherents have only partially done this, at least to

an extent that I consider significant and visible, is as I have said a principal motivation for this thesis.

There are also those criticisms which in my view take an overly partial view of the LA School, seemingly limiting their literature review to one piece, the most popular being Dear and Flusty's "Postmodern Urbanism". In "Postmodern Urbanism and the Ethnographic Void", Peter Jackson points to what he sees as the detached attitude of the LA school, their tendency to treat actual residents as inconsequential and lump them together as 'cybergoisie' or 'protosurps,' irritated it seems like Hayden and others by an apparent nightmare vision of society uncomplicated by the dynamism of individual agents. This he says is exemplary of the self-aggrandizing, sales-pitch attitude of 'schools' and risks undermining their entire argument. Annoyingly, despite the value of this critique, Jackson's understanding of 'postmodern urbanism' seems limited to Dear and Flusty's "Postmodern Urbanism". Not only is this unfair in a discussion of 'postmodern urbanism' in general, but it hinders his ability to understand the essay in the first place. He misses for example the value of the relationship between space and the social in the writings of many LA School urbanists when he criticizes a focus on form as detached from social process. He furthermore seems to have missed the fact that the scholars he criticizes have and continue to be involved in and aware of ethnographic studies of a more empirical nature on a consistent basis. Robert W. Lake embarked on a similar misadventure in "Postmodern Urbanism?" (1999), a critique of the LA School again limited to Dear and Flusty's "Postmodern Urbanism". He criticizes understandably any wholesale repudiation of the Chicago School but with that also an apparent indifference to the ethnographic tradition in what he takes to be postmodernism's tendency towards abstraction and the view from above. In conclusion he says "postmodern urbanism may reveal the failures of postmodernism" (Lake, 395), but I am left to wonder exactly what postmodernism is he talking about. The LA School reveals a more complex idea than anything present in Lake's critique, worthy of lengthier examination or at least not such an abrupt dismissal.

In December of 2000 The American Historical Review presented three articles in response to the volume of literature produced by the LA School, in particular Scott and

Soja's The City. In "At Home in the Heteropolis: Understanding Postmodern L.A." Michael E. Engh argues that the LA School "soberly reminds us that we as a nation ignore the complexities of this most modern American metropolis at our own peril." (Engh, par. 1) However, considering the fragmented nature of the 'new school' he would prefer for one to talk about, as I have here, a "Cottage industry of Los Angeles studies." (Engh, par. 4) He only intends this however as a way of describing the apparent lack of a 'common denominator', the location of LA School adherents at multiple centers and the haphazard organization of LA School literature rather than the capabilities of a new mode of production. Turning to a more critical tone, he laments any idea of 'city as paradigm' in a postmodern era for the reason so many do: that comparative urbanism should in fact be the theoretical paradigm of the globalizing world.

Robert A. Schneider, in "The Postmodern City from an Early Modern Perspective" goes further in the call for comparative studies by attacking the idea that there is significant novelty in the Angeleno experience; for him the city should simply not be understood in isolation. He says that 'global heterotopias' have been on the landscape for a long time, using 17th century Amsterdam as an example. He then compares what he takes to be the dominant methods in studying the two critical constructs of postmodern urbanism and early modern urbanism. "To study Los Angeles is to think about the world beyond it in terms of similitude – largely as a paler reflection of the urban realities that will one day overtake it, too. To study early modern cities, however, is to think about their multiple relationships with the world, both near and far." (Schneider, par. 8) He argues that Scott And Soja's The City "approaches LA as a largely self-contained urban experience, indeed, an all-consuming one: the postmodern world in microcosm. In this sense, the book is strangely provincial." (Schneider, par. 12) The ease with which critics slip into this interpretation does follow from a significant, although complicated aspect of the LA School. While importantly re-asserting regionalism and challenging the local/global dichotomy, they have by focusing exclusively on Los Angeles risked subverting the importance of comparative studies. It perhaps is not enough to say that a certain city may be representative without at the very least saying how.

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, in Is L.A. a model or a mess? admires the re-assertion of ethics by the LA School urbanists. She is like others wary of the lack of comparative urbanism in their approach, a necessity in globalized urbanism she says, but she sympathizes with the LA School writers otherwise, as they chart supposedly irreversible problems. “Are urban planners able to solve wild inequalities in LA urbanism? This would imply a complete ideological and political reversal, probably imaginable in a few European countries that still privilege state interventions.” (Coquery-Vidrovitch, par. 19) Nor is it likely, or useful, to encourage some bottom-up revolution, as so many did in the past, if only for the reason that it cannot work. Their greatest contribution to social understanding and political action then is that they “do not pretend to conclude the case” as others have. (Coquery-Vidrovitch, par. 20)

In ending this chapter, I should turn to Gary Alan Fine, who in 1995 asked if there was a second Chicago School evident on the postwar scene. Intellectual historians, he says, like to label periods, and focus on dominant tendencies rather than variance. This in turn may be used by themselves or others for political ends in writings of history, forever “altering history to the extent that the past consists of the way in which we memorialize it.” (Fine, 5) Yet, the announcement of a ‘school’ in history does recognize the special contributions of those operating outside of a wider body of critique. But that the LA School operates outside of such a wider body is something I have found difficult to see, and therefore we should be very careful about how they are written into history. Excavating an epistemological heritage would be a good starting point, if only to serve justice to both history and a city so consistently subjected to fetishizing eyes.

CONCLUSION

Los Angeles – the enormous village, utopia, dystopia, violent, instantaneous, decadent, ready-made, mobile, low-brow, plug-in, polluting, bizarre, destructive. All, none, or some of these themes appear in the popular imagination of people across the globe when asked to envision life in a particular five-county region home to nearly seventeen million people. But these millions do not occupy a movie set, as Sunset Boulevard, Chinatown, Valley Girl or Escape from L.A. would have us believe. They occupy a dynamic metropolis of economic, political, racial and cultural diversity, as do all other urban dwellers, if only different ones. If in the past the failure of the academic mind has been to box Los Angeles into an obfuscating exceptionalism, it is therefore in the present to call it privileged; many would insist that Los Angeles is the most economically diverse, the most politically fragmented, or the most racially and culturally diverse, and therefore the most American or perhaps given the contemporary situation the most global. Compounding these assertions with ethical judgments, is the academic mind no better than that of Hollywood? No, for the simple reason that academic interpretations, if properly explored, reveal a lens upon Los Angeles potentially as multi-faceted as the metropolis itself, and even when inevitably inaccurate it is probably the best academia can do.

In the last two decades there has appeared on the academic scene a group of scholars calling themselves the ‘Los Angeles School of Urban Studies’. Their mission, which by no means is restricted to them, and is in fact open to every resident or observer of Los Angeles, is to represent what that metropolis is to an outside audience. This particular group does so under the assumption that Los Angeles has been previously under-studied and is continuously misrepresented by Hollywood, popular novels, television shows, and especially after 1992, media coverage. Alternatively they would, collectively at least, tell us that Los Angeles is a place just as multi-faceted as the popular imagination would have it, if only a ‘real’ place. This real place has been revealed via a particular set of tools, and it is this methodology in which I am interested more so than

what exactly these writers have revealed, as what they have revealed is a direct result of their approach.

This approach, what I have framed as a response in the leftist mantra to the particular epistemological crisis of postmodernism, has granted to the listener a fragmented picture of Los Angeles, and intentionally. The Los Angeles School represents a case study into this crisis and the leftist response. In the first chapter I reviewed the evolution of a new critical geography within this crisis, the pre-history if you will of the LA School. I began with my stance that social theory is not inherently possessing of ethical judgments, and also that geography is not inherently social, though both a critical social theory based on a particular normative ethic and a spatial materialism are present in the great majority of LA School literature. This leftist ethic and a spatial materialism are critical constructs for the dissection of observed process, and I take these constructions to be revealing of the leftist response to the crisis of postmodernism. Here I will review why.

The writings of the Los Angeles School certainly reveal these two elements: a theory of space as social, particularly urban space as social, and a leftist criteria for judging this space. By leftist I mean those who, understanding the observed material condition to be of a capitalist character, a condition based on the overall accumulation of capital, to be creative of injustice in the uneven distribution of capital individually or collectively. Exterior to capitalism in theory but often woven into its exercise are other determining aspects such as racial, gender or cultural biases that lend additional dynamics to the distribution of capital and the development of other ideological factors. Those on the left have traditionally however focused on capital as the sole determining variable. In the first chapter I reviewed how over the course of the 1960s and 1970s the determining variable of culture, particularly urban culture, was added to the Marxist vocabulary, generating what some, including Soja, would call post-Marxism. Fundamentally however the focus remained on conflict, and herein change could be achieved. This distanced leftist urban theorists from those of Chicago and elsewhere who, affected by a sort of Simmelian outlook, what some critics of postmodernism have called a proto-postmodernism in its presumed conservatism, maintained critical distance in a distrust of

human capability to truly know the city. The traditional leftist ethic was conversely based on a totalizing imagining of social processes and resulting conflict as determined by the variable of capital, or alternatively several variables. It was complicated however by the advent of a potentially conservative postmodernism. Postmodernism, conflated with the post-structuralist critique of knowledge, authorship, and text, instructed the leftist and others that a totalizing view was no longer possible; alternatively individual knowledge could only be understood as representation rather than explanation. A resulting relativism represented the danger that political action was irresponsible in a setting where agents found themselves denied of truthful knowledge.

A re-examination of methodology was necessitated. While Sartre had achieved a merging of existentialism and Marxism, allowing for the individual's self-consciousness in his own particular moment, it was Lefebvre, Harvey and others who presented an ultimate challenge to linearity and therein the Modernist framing of history as one-dimensional, one-directional, and comprehensible in its entirety as such. In the privileging of the variable of space over time there was the possibility that multiple histories, multiple Modernisms if you will, could be imagined simultaneously. In space, multiple times and therefore multiple experiences could become visible. A critical perspective was therein re-legitimized within the demands of post-structuralism.

Armed with this critical geography, what was the nature of the contemporary material condition? Regulation theorists, beginning in France in the 1960s, framed capitalism as a cycle of accumulation characterized by periodic crises. These crises necessitated new modes of regulation should capitalism survive. Late Capitalism or more popularly post-Fordism were placed as labels upon a current condition of post-1970s economic restructuring entailing the de-legitimizing of the welfare state, the stratification of the production system on a global scale, the policing of a burgeoning under-privileged first world and developing world population, and the rise of global control centers. In the city of the first world this under-privileged population resulted from a simultaneous de-centralization and re-centralization in space, corresponding with simultaneous de-industrialization and re-industrialization. Regulation theory meets challenges of course across time and space, with processes signaling of alternative regimes of accumulation or

modes of production occurring simultaneously and even in the same place. The spatial turn of Lefebvre and others renders this more digestible for the critical theorist, in which different spaces can despite their incongruence be understood as related in wider capitalist and cultural processes.

Thus by the 1980s, Marxism had reached a level of post-historicism, in which not only culture but most importantly space was asserted as a critical window. Postmodernism had been contained as the particular critical logic, to use the language of Jameson, of a materialist situation in which traumatic economic, political and cultural events had shocked the modernist obsession with linearity into a conception of multi-dimensionality. And post-Fordism had arrived as a particular understanding of this materialist condition. Herein lay both a particular spatial materialism and a criteria for its judgment, this representing the epistemological heritage of the contemporary critical theorists calling themselves adherents of an LA School. In 1986 Michael Dear re-announced the need for an activating postmodernism in planning, one that dared to be critical and shied away from the relativist perspective of a rigid post-structuralism at the same time it challenged existing modes of understanding. In 1987 Marco Cenzatti similarly criticized what he called ‘advocacy planning’, that practice which, perhaps limited by an unwillingness to theorize a bigger picture in the postmodern condition and consequent subservience to the dominant mode of regulation simply reverted to supporting the existing pattern of accumulation. In 1988 Allen Scott brought post-Fordism to the supposedly exceptional capitalist dynamo of the West Coast and dared a heavy empirical bias. In 1989 Edward Soja reviewed the evolution of a critical geography and presented his own, albeit problematic, view of Los Angeles as crucible of the new spatial materialism. Mike Davis was even less apologetic, and according to Soja even seemed to turn back the clock in his “anti-theoretical” approach. Marco Cenzatti however declared in 1993 there to be a “lack of a common denominator” and from then on publications of LA School adherents seem to uphold this observation. There is however a problem evident here. The LA School of urban studies, without shared theoretical assumptions, although certainly containing dominant ones, and concerned with a place they at once consider local and global, seemingly denies any conventional definition of

'school' at the same time that increasingly determined advocates such as Michael Dear declare the school to exist. This has become ever more apparent since 1996, as I followed in the third chapter, as text after text revealed a supposed collaboration of theorists to be consistently varied in approach if not sometimes contradicting. Adherents of an LA School certainly have made valuable contributions to the study of Los Angeles, and urban theory in the application of the new critical geography to a particular setting, as others have done elsewhere. But does the school's contradictory nature as an anti-dogma, anti-authoritarian, and even anti-locality collaboration, allowing the possibility that LA school adherents are simply a group of noisy university boosters, compromise its value to urban studies? Or does it pioneer a new postmodern methodology, albeit limited in their case to just one urban agglomeration?

The group of loosely affiliated social theorists operating in Los Angeles may or may not constitute a 'school'. If they do, it is because they bring attention to new methods of understanding which though not either originally developed by them or exclusive to them may have been previously under-emphasized or under-explored. If they do not, it is because the notion of a 'school', with its connotation of shared narrative and method, is erroneous in both failing to describe the multi-faceted nature of the LA School and in contradicting the group's most basic anti-authoritarian mantra. A school may also endanger the importance of comparative studies in a globalizing era by privileging one city, although LA School adherents may contest this. Both of these answers are possible. As I have said, that the term 'school' is valid or not is not my concern so much as what lays behind both the arguments for and against, in that we would assume the assertion of a school to be based on a groups' peculiar creativity, and what epistemological lineage lays behind the literature of the school's adherents itself.

For me, the LA School's most profound lessons lie in their peculiar disorderliness. Whereas a 'school' implies in the words of Marco Cenzatti the use of "a common denominator," Los Angeles School adherents for the most part say they avoid the notion that one social process may be valued over another, one city may be privileged as a laboratory for examination, or one structural reality may be revealed, even as they may tend towards economism, limit descriptions of the globe's future to Los Angeles'

present, or announce the existence of a particular over-arching structural condition. The notion of a 'school' is complicated here by fragmentation in location, method of approach and findings but by adherents' upholding of such fragmentation and I felt compelled to ask why. Even while adherents may uncover particular realities or call for specific actions, revealing their particular method of understanding, structuralisms, and responding ethic, they rarely argue that their approach should be valued over others, although they certainly leave room for that. This is their response to a dominant epistemological phenomenon instructing us that narration is futile and understanding inevitably limited. This phenomenon is, as I have said, a particular strain of postmodernism which in its ascendancy to theoretical prominence threatened those on the left who promoted change by firstly seeing society as driven by a particular and knowable social process, capitalism, and secondly by judging this process as producing injustices. Postmodernism complicated the method of totalizing explanation and rendered many on the left self-limiting in scope and action.

In this thesis I have reviewed several significant discourses and in some cases entire schools or bodies of theory from which adherents of the Los Angeles School draw their conception of political economy in their literature. I have shown that this may be an ecological one but the vast majority of the time it is one derived from criticism of ecology as a-critical. Any discussion of the LA School needs to talk about historical materialism and the introduction of space and culture as variables in Marxist political economy. Within that discussion there is the economism of Regulation Theory, the culture of the global city, but most importantly a conception of postmodernism as firstly an understandable materialist condition and secondly as containing a corresponding method for approaching that condition and explain it.

In the shadow of postmodernism, urban theorists, planners and other social scientists are faced with the choice of conservative acceptance of a postmodern order in celebratory tellings of a postmodern condition, the articulation of previously unheard but now perhaps de-contextualized voices, a wholesale return to a faith in a totalizing underlying order to be collectively understood and overthrown, or the more creative sketch of a postmodern reality avoiding both relativism and totalization through which

action can be understood and performed at all levels of approach. At best, the 'LA School' has produced an enlightening reflection of postmodern political economy and a well-thought method for interpretation. At worst, they are the frustrated myth-builders of monolithic dehumanizing superstructures. In either case, adherents of the 'LA School' have in seemingly intended disorientation built *a* city on the ruins of a previous era's more confident projects. They have done so along with others, out of varied inspiration, and for different purposes. In this city an excavation of epistemology is possible revealing a most profound insight into the troubled and splintered landscape of the leftist response to postmodernism. Should planners and other social actors continue to involve themselves in communities, an understanding of contemporary conceptual dilemmas is necessary. The LA School, as a school of theory over one of practice, at the very least outlines intriguing routes to critical explanation over passive representation; from such explanation practice may more confidently begin. By knowing how to know the city the planner and others may better communicate to those they seek to help understand who planners are and what planners are doing. I hope that this thesis, in approaching the tribulations of one particular group in their struggle to know the city, a group that certainly speaks for a wider group of theorists and practitioners, has performed a small portion of this task.

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