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Contemporary Literature and Emergent Space: Change in the
Spatial-Subjective System

presented by

Gregory Dean Nicholson

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CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND EMERGENT SPACE:
CHANGE IN THE SPATIAL-SUBJECTIVE SYSTEM

By

Gregory Dean Nicholson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

2007

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ABSTRACT

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND EMERGENT SPACE:
CHANGE IN THE SPATIAL-SUBJECTIVE SYSTEM

By:

Gregory Dean Nicholson

Contemporary fiction is engaged in a complex consideration of systemic notions

of subjectivity and the subject's relationship with social systems such as space. The

novels under consideration portray the relationship between space and subjectivity as its

own system, consisting of multiple, complex parts in interaction, with space and subjects

each contributing to the production and reproduction of one another. As in all complex,

open systems, the spatial-subjective system portrayed in these novels can reproduce itself

indefinitely, existing in a steady-state, or it can change through the processes of

emergence.

In Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine, Walter Mosley's Devil in a Blue Dress, and Don

DeLillo's White Noise, examined in the second chapter, the spatial-subjective system

exists in a steady state. For example, Jasmine examines the complex interaction between

subjects, space, race, gender, class, capitalism, and patriarchy, and how these interactions

change over time and space. The result is neither a static subject nor a static space, but a

constantly adapting relationship that nonetheless continues to benefit late capitalism and

patriarchy, reproducing the system in steady-state.

The third and fourth chapters, on the other hand, analyze how novels portray

change occurring in the spatial-subjective system through the processes of emergence. In

Colson Whitehead's The Intuitionist, change is a result of Lila Mae's alterity in the

spatial-subjective system. Lila Mae's position does not reproduce the existing structure

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and cannot be captured by the dominant power system, creating a crisis point in the system, producing emergent space and change. By contrast, in Patrick Chamoiseau's Texaco, emergent space is produced not through the position of the subject in the system but through the activities of a heterogeneous, Creole subject. Marie-Sophie produces a Creole space, which becomes an emergent space that the existing spatial-subjective system cannot determine how to exploit. Jack Kerouac's On the Road chronicles Sal Paradise's attempts to discover spaces that he believes will enable him to control his self-definition independent of others' intervention. His failure to achieve his desire leads to a repetition compulsion, which drives the narrative's content and style and introduces the processes that are necessary to emergent space. The result is the emergence of a new, postmodern space. Stephen Wright's Going Native, the last text considered, demonstrates that the processes that produce emergent space in one context are not likely to be repeated. In Going Native, the space of the road lacks any of the qualities of emergent space present in On the Road because the capitalist system has co-opted the processes of desire.

This study demonstrates that the interaction between subjects and space in certain contemporary novels functions according to systems principles. In addition, the "systemic" concerns of contemporary fiction are often reflected in the style and/or form of novels, which enact the processes under examination in their content. Thus, analyzing the interaction of space and subjectivity as portrayed in contemporary novels produces a better understanding of the spatial-subjective system, the concerns of a certain strain of contemporary literature, and how narrative functions in this literature.

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to make regular progress. I am especially grateful to Christine for continuing our collaboration once we both left Michigan, and for her careful thought on spatial theory.

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CHAPTER

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CHAPTER ONE: CHANGE IN THEORY

The Theoretical Basis for the Spatial-Subjective System and Emergent Space

> *"once two systems have interacted they must from that point on be considered a single*
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> -Lee Smolin, 83

Introduction: The Role of Literature and the Role of Theory

Early in Don DeLillo's novel White Noise, two college professors drive "into the country" to visit a well known local tourist attraction billed as "THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA" (12). After studiously observing the scene, one professor, Murray Jay Siskind, proclaims that none of the tourists see the barn itself. He goes on, "'What was the barn like before it was photographed? ... What did it look like, how was it different from other barns ... We can't answer these questions because we've read the signs, seen the people snapping the pictures. We can't get outside the aura'" (13). In literary criticism, this passage has been so often read and written about that it too has its own aura. Most commonly, the passage is read as the first of many exemplars in the novel of the presence of simulacra in postmodern culture. Such a reading fits well with the rest of the novel and is certainly persuasive.[1]

However, the barn is more than just a simulacrum; it is a part of a complex, socially produced space. The barn is not just a barn; it is the centerpiece of agricultural space. In fact, Jack does not attempt to describe the barn at all, but descriptions of the

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[1] See, for example, John N. Duvall's "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's *White Noise*" or John Frow's "The Last Things Before the Last: Notes on *White Noise*."

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agricultural space that includes the barn abound. "We drove twenty-two miles into the country around Farmington. There were meadows and apple orchards. White fences trailed through the rolling fields. ... We walked along a cowpath ... We stood near a grove of trees" (12). The barn is merely one component of a stereotypical description of "the country." The barn marks the space as agricultural, but it is only one among many agricultural referents, which include "country," the aptly named "Farmington," "apple orchards," "fields," and the "cowpath." The country as a space of agriculture is shaped by social, economic, and cultural forces. In other words, it is produced by the activities of man. Agricultural space is necessary to meet human needs for sustenance and the organization of space into city and country creates a particular agricultural economy to fill those needs. The barn is more than just an object; it is a component part of a socially produced agricultural space.

This particular barn and this particular space are overdetermined, however. This is not simply, or even primarily, an agricultural space because it has become "a tourist attraction." The repetitions in the description of the barn demonstrate its overdetermination. Everything is mentioned twice: there are "meadows" and "fields," "orchards" and "groves," it is "country" and "Farmington." The repetitions emphasize the fact that these spatial components do double duty, serving as important constituent parts of the agricultural space and of the space as tourist attraction. However, if we define the space by the activities that occur there, then it is more of a tourist attraction than a space of agriculture. While there is a "cowpath," it appears that the only animals to be found are the photographers. There are no agricultural workers in evidence either, but there are "forty cars and a tour bus" (12). There is a "spot set aside for viewing and

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photographing" and "a booth [that] sold postcards and slides – pictures of the barn taken from the elevated spot" (12). There is no evidence that the barn functions as a barn, as a storage space in the agricultural network, but there is ample evidence that the space contributes to a tourist economy. Social, economic, and cultural activity have produced the space of and around the barn as both an agricultural and tourist-oriented space.

The passage is also about the process of reading and the effects of reading on the construction of space. Murray argues that once the act of reading about the barn occurs, one's experience of the space of the barn is predetermined. Murray is a professor of American culture, so his view of "the signs" to be read is a broad one, and includes the images of "people snapping the pictures." It is the written word, however, that appears first and that presents the definitive construction of the space. "Soon the signs started appearing. THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA. We counted five signs before we reached the site" (12). There are indeed many photographers and pictures of the barn at the site when Murray and Jack arrive, but really the only way for them to know the barn is the most photographed in America is because the signs tell them so. The "aura" is created by the language that defines their experience of the space; the visual imagery and activity of the people there are only so many supports to the message of the "signs," the referents of the language that came first. Despite the tenuous connection between signifier and signified (is it really the most photographed barn?), there is no other space than the one created by the interaction between the language, the reader, and the barn. "We can't get outside the aura" is usually interpreted as the "reality" of the simulacra of the mediated image, but it is also a spatial term. There is no "outside" of the experience of space created by reading about the barn; there is no other

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space of the barn. Literature has created the aura and the experience of space of those who read.

The space of the barn is produced in part by economic and cultural factors, but the individual subjects that visit the barn also play an important role in the production of the space of the barn. Influenced though they might be by the marketing of the image of the country that seeks to capture nostalgic impulses in the consumer, or by the signs that tout the barn as a tourist attraction, it is the actions of the subjects that perpetuate the barn's allure as a destination. That the barn is "known as the most photographed barn in America" is due to the actions of the tourist subjects who visit and report on the barn as much as it is to sophisticated marketing. Individuals take the photographs and individuals know, or believe they know, that the barn is the most photographed. Murray acknowledges the role of the subject when he notes, "'We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one. ... We've agreed to be part of a collective perception'" (12). The main activity of those who visit the barn is not taking pictures of it but is reinforcing the image of the barn as the most photographed. The image of the barn as the most photographed is as much a part of the definition of the space as any other characteristic; in fact to many it is the most salient aspect of this space. Murray concludes his exegesis on the space of the barn by noting, "'We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura. We're here, we're now'" (13). Again Murray emphasizes that the image or aura that defines the space as a tourist attraction, as a place to visit and photograph, is made by the very individuals who arrive there, who conceive and perceive the space as such. Each individual subject, then, contributes to the production of the space of the barn through his or her thought and action.

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This passage from <u>White Noise</u> is but one example of a portrayal in literature of

space as a complex, multiply determined, social and subjective construction. This

passage illustrates that subjects have a substantial role to play in the construction of

space. The passage also acknowledges that space has a substantial role in the constitution

of subjectivity. Twice in the passage Murray identifies the space of the barn with

subjectivity, noting "Being here is a kind of spiritual surrender" and "We're here, we're

now" (12, 13). Murray suggests that the subjects, "we," are spatial, and that "being" is

spatial, as both are defined by the spatial indicator "here." We, as subjects, are defined

by a spatial designation; we are not just being, we are being here. In fact, being in space

affects body and soul; it is "a spiritual surrender" and it "literally colors our vision" (12).

Space and subjectivity are inextricably interrelated and cannot be considered apart from

one another. Together, space and subjectivity form a mutually constitutive relation.

There is a substantial body of literature in the late twentieth century, including

<u>White Noise</u>, which explores this relation between space and subjectivity. An

examination of this literature finds that it portrays the relationship between space and

subjectivity as reciprocal, each contributing to the production and reproduction of the

other. In fact, the relationship between space and subjectivity is best described as a

system, consisting of multiple, complex parts in interaction. Change in systems occurs

through the processes of emergence, which takes the form of emergent space in the

spatial-subjective system portrayed in the novels under consideration in the following

chapters. The texts under consideration demonstrate the system in steady-steady, in the

beginning stages of producing emergent space, and after the production of emergent

space and change. However, <u>Going Native</u>, the last text considered, also demonstrates

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that the processes that produce emergent space in one context are not likely to be repeated. The spatial-subjective system adapts and learns to co-opt processes of emergence for its own benefit. While one can recognize the processes that produce emergent space, there is no simple formula for change.

The main goal of this study, then, is to demonstrate the existence of the spatial-subjective system and the process of change via emergent space within the spatial-subjective system as portrayed in select texts from late twentieth century fiction. There are several consequences of this argument. First, approaching the spatial-subjective system from the perspective of literature provides insight into contemporary theory. In the past, critics have used spatial theory, psychoanalytic/subject theory, and systems theory to analyze literature, but have paid insufficient attention to how literature might inform these theories and how these theories might inform one another. For example, an examination of contemporary literature uncovers the ways in which spatial theory has underemphasized the role of the subject in the production of space. Similarly, psychoanalytic and poststructural theorists have underestimated the role of space in the constitution of subjectivity. In addition, examining the interrelations of space and subjectivity in literature illustrates not only the mutually constructed nature of subjects and space but that subjects and space are both systemic, constituted of multiple forces in interaction, not structural or constituted of binary oppositions. In fact, many other elements interact with and in the production of space and subjectivity, including race, gender, class, media, law, and nationality, to name but a few that this study takes up, even while maintaining a primary focus on the interrelation between space and subjectivity in contemporary literature. The way in which literature portrays the relationship between

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space and the subject reflects and effects how we understand this interaction in theory and in practice. It informs and is informed by theories of space and theories of subjectivity. Literature, theory, and practice interact and relate to one another systemically. As a result, how we understand the spatial-subjective system in literature is an important component of how we understand, perceive, and create the relation between space and subjectivity.

Second, such an approach to contemporary literature demonstrates that postmodern fiction is not concerned solely with questioning the viability of traditional notions of the subject. Rather, postmodern fiction is engaged in a complex consideration of systemic notions of subjectivity and the subject's relationship with social systems such as space. The "systemic" concerns of contemporary fiction are, more often than not, reflected in the style of postmodern novels, which often enact the processes under examination in their content.[2] Thus, analyzing the spatial-subjective system and processes of emergence in contemporary novels produces a better understanding of the spatial-subjective system, the concerns of a certain strain of contemporary literature, and how narrative functions in this literature.

The Spatial-Subjective System

Definitions and Assumptions: Systems Theory, Subjectivity, and Space

A general systems theory or approach can be distinguished from the approach of classical science. Classical science seeks to understand how things work by isolating components and parts from the whole in order to examine their individual properties. A

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[2] Tom LeClair makes a similar point in suggesting that "systems novels'" use of dialogue "emphasizes reciprocal relationships" (19).

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classical science approach then seeks an explanation of the functioning of the whole in the establishment of "causal chains" between the individual components (von Bertalanffy 18). This is an "analytical and atomistic" (Wolfe, Critical 54) approach that requires that the interaction between the parts be limited and linear or summative (von Bertalanffy 19). Von Bertalanffy finds this classical approach to be insufficient for explaining the way things really work (11), arguing that "these conditions are not fulfilled in the entities called systems, i.e., consisting of parts 'in interaction'" (19). Rather, the interaction of the parts combine together to form a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Thus, the structure formed by the combination of parts is not important to a general systems approach; "systems theory is not a theory of structures but of processes" (deBerg 141). In fact, the focus on the interaction among the parts, instead of on the parts or structures themselves, is integral to the definition of a system (Davidson 26). As Davidson notes, "a system, in Bertalanffy's terminology, is any entity maintained by the mutual interaction of its parts" (25). Relationships and communication, therefore, are of primary concern.

Another important difference between classical and systems approaches to the question of causality is the systems' emphasis on multiple causes. The tendency of the classical approach is to isolate causes. To adapt an example from Gregory Bateson, a classical approach focuses on one cause: "We say that billiard ball B moved in such and such a direction because billiard ball A hit it at such and such an angle" (405). A systems approach, and any skilled billiards player, suggests there is more to the direction of billiard ball B. Other obvious factors include the spin of billiard ball A, the condition of the felt, and the level of the table. From a broader perspective, one might consider the

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intention (and skill) of the player, the rules of the game (billiard ball B moved in the direction of the corner pocket because the object of the game is to sink as many billiard balls as possible), the context of the particular event (a friendly game, a competitive match, etc.), the quality of the cue, the effects of gravity, motion effects (billiard ball B will move in a different direction if the game is being played on a moving train, for example), etc.[3] In other words, the direction of billiard ball B really has multiple causes. Von Bertalanffy notes of such cases that "the classical modes of thinking ... fail in the case of interaction of a large but limited number of elements or processes" (35). Systems theory, on the other hand, accounts for multiple causes and the interdependency of parts in a system (Lilienfeld 14).

There are two important consequences of the idea that systems are composed of multiple parts, and multiple causes, in interaction. First, since a system is "maintained by the mutual interaction of its parts," "the system therefore behaves as a whole, the changes in every element depending on all the others" (von Bertalanffy 66). Even a small change in one component can therefore have a large effect on the system as a whole. Second, while von Bertalanffy originally developed general system theory through an examination of the systems properties of biological organisms (Lilienfeld 17), he felt the approach is broadly applicable. "System theorists agree that the concept of 'system' is not limited to material entities but can be applied to any 'whole' consisting of interconnecting 'components'" (von Bertalanffy 106). Thus, when von Bertalanffy sets

[3] Situating the billiard table on a moving train makes clear the affects of the position of the observer as well. If the train is pulling out from the station when the player strikes the billiard balls in the direction of the station, both the billiards player and an observer on the platform will observe the billiard balls moving away from them even though the two observers are facing one another. If the train is moving fast enough, the motion will also have real effects on the distance covered by the billiard ball relative to each observer (see Einstein, Chapter Ten).

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Von Bertalanffy's belief that systems theory would prove useful in understanding a whole with interconnecting components has been borne out in considerations of the subject. More and more the subject is seen not as a predetermined entity or essence in a Cartesian formulation but a result of multiple causalities, relationships, and interactions among parts both within and without the individual. For example, Anthony Wilden argues "against the Cartesian conception of the subject as an entity" and for "the reality of the subject as a relation" (214). Similarly, Brian Massumi argues against conceptions of the subject that rely on foundational, binary definitions, and argues for a relational, systems approach. For Massumi, the individual and society cannot be separated, but "they might be seen as differential emergences from a shared realm of relationality that is one with becoming and belonging" (Parables 71). As such, there is no subject/object split, the two are mutually constitutive through relation. Massumi and Wilden's refusal to rely on dichotomy follows what Rasch and Wolfe describe as systems theory's promise of "the possibility of a theory of knowledge that can account with greater range and power for the intrication of human beings in ... the 'hybrid networks' of social, informational, and ecological systems" (17). Humans are entangled in social relations, and these social relations are, at least in part, constitutive of subjects.

Retrospectively, one can see that psychological theories of subjectivity also adhere to systems principles. Systems theorists have asserted as much. While studiously attempting to avoid endorsing a Freudian approach, von Bertalanffy nonetheless argues against a behavioral approach to psychology and for a (psycho)dynamic understanding of

the ego (215).[4] F

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the ego (215).[4] Furthermore, he suggests that "psychopathology clearly shows mental dysfunction as a system disturbance rather than as a loss of single functions" (208). Anthony Wilden takes on Freud more directly, suggesting that Freud's early theories are in line with systems thinking (5). While an in-depth analysis of the systems characteristics of psychoanalytic theory is beyond the scope of this project, it is not difficult to see how such an analysis would proceed. Freud's various theories of mind all involve the relation and interaction of multiple components in ways that are far from linear as they are affected by social pressures, relations within the family, and inherent drives/instincts. Similarly, Lacanian theories of subjectivity are highly systemic, relying as they do on (mis)perception, desire of the other, and entry into a Symbolic constituted not by the self but by the systemic structures of language and society. In other words, in psychoanalytic theory (perhaps more aptly described as psychodynamic theory), there is no self without Others. The self/Other split is not a binary or dichotomous, inherent or fundamental, distinction. Rather, it is a complex, multiply determined relation; it is systemic. There is no subject with *out* the other. There is no outside of the self-Other relation because there is no outside (for the subject) of the system of the subject.

Just as psychoanalytic theory incorporates many of the aspects of systems theory, so too do contemporary theories of space benefit from a systems perspective. Perhaps the most influential work on spatial theory in the last half of the twentieth century was Henri Lefebvre's The Production of Space. Lefebvre argues that, rather than an empty container waiting to be filled or a natural backdrop for human activity, "*(social) space is a (social) product*" (26 emphasis in original). Every society, according to Lefebvre,

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[4] For more on the application of systems theory to psychology, see Chapter 9, "General System Theory in Psychology and Psychiatry" in von Bertalanffy.

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produces a space that fits its needs, ultimately as determined by its mode of production (31). Lefebvre explores the various aspects of space and its production, how these aspects have organized space across time, and the possibilities for change in the current organization of space. The nuances and complexities of Lefebvre's argument make summation difficult, but it is fair to say that his approach to space contains both systemic and structural components. At times it seems Lefebvre argues that space is best understood from a systems perspective. For example, Lefebvre notes of his method that "instead of emphasizing the rigorously formal aspect of codes … Codes will be seen as part of a practical relationship, as part of an interaction between 'subjects' and their space and surroundings" (17-18). In other words, his is not a formalist methodology concerned with structures as determining causes but an approach that focuses on relations and interactions, and which is interested in codes only as they play a part in the same. The emphasis Lefebvre places on relations and interaction is often framed as an emphasis on process and not product. "The 'object' of interest must be expected to shift from *things in space* to the actual *production of space*" (Lefebvre 36-37, emphasis his), which he describes as a process (37). It is not parts but process and relation that demand our attention. The shift in emphasis Lefebvre advocates is a result of the nature of space, according to his formulation: "(social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence … and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object" (73). Lefebvre insists that attention be paid to the processes of space because space cannot be comprehended objectally; like all systems, space is to be understood as consisting of the "interrelationships in their coexistence" of its component

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parts. In fact, Lefebvre goes so far as to compare the composition of space to a network. What he refers to as "social space" is really "an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable set of social spaces" that "attain 'real' existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships" (86). In a concerted effort to disabuse his reader of past (mistaken) conceptions of space, Lefebvre emphasizes the complexity of the social relations that constitute space as an ongoing process of production and reproduction. He eschews lineal causality and subject/object distinctions that misapprehend the true nature of space.

Despite the marked systems aspects of Lefebvre's nuanced description of the characteristics of social space, however, his is ultimately a structural (Marxist) project and therefore insufficient for an understanding of the spatial-subjective system. While any given space is complexly characterized and multiply determined, in the final analysis there is, according to Lefebvre, one cause in the production of space, and that is economic. "Capitalism and neocapitalism have produced abstract space, which includes the 'world of commodities,' its 'logic' and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and that of the political state" (Lefebvre 53). Abstract space, according to Lefebvre, is the current organization of space that obscures while reproducing current systems of power. The dominant mode of production is capitalism, and so capitalism is the force behind the production of abstract space. Capitalism has not always been dominant, but the extant mode of production remains the most salient factor in spatial analysis. "Since … each mode of production has its own particular space, the shift from one mode to another must entail the production of a new space" (Lefebvre 46). Ultimately, then, no matter the complexity of space as a social product, it has but one

cause; it is not best understood as a system in Lefebvre's approach because its production is monocausal not multicausal.

The primacy of the economic in Lefebvre's analysis is necessary because Lefebvre relies on a Marxist explanation for the processes of change in space. Lefebvre sees change as a result of a dialectical process that resolves the contradictions inherent in any given organization of space. "[A]bstract space harbours specific contradictions ... which are liable eventually to precipitate the downfall of abstract space ... abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space" (Lefebvre 52). One of the main contradictions inherent in abstract space, according to Lefebvre, is "between the global and the subdivided" which includes a "contradiction between center and periphery" (356). As with all dialectics, then, Lefebvre ultimately falls back on a binary distinction. Abstract space seeks to eliminate the differences inherent within itself, while Lefebvre maintains a new space (which he refers to as differential space) can emerge through an emphasis on the differences inherent in these binaries (Lefebvre 373). Change (or not) will result from the resolution of a dialectic. Abstract space is on the side of the center, differential space is on the side of the periphery (or difference). There are two sides, and only two sides, in what is ultimately a structural approach.

There is another reason that The Production of Space, while providing the seeds for a systems approach to spatial analysis, is not sufficient to an understanding of the spatial-subjective system. Despite his emphasis on the social, Lefebvre underestimates the role of the subject in the production of space. This is not surprising given the pains Lefebvre takes in the first few pages to discredit work that he thinks is based on an analysis of "mental space." Lefebvre argues that the work of the poststructuralists has

resulted in "the re-emergence of the abstract subject, the cogito of the philosophers" (4).[5]

He believes that this has led them to "the basic sophistry whereby the philosophico-epistemological notion of space is fetishized and the mental realm comes to envelop the social and physical ones" (5). Considerations of subjectivity actively prevent an understanding of aspects of space (physical, social, and economic) that are of importance to Lefebvre. Thus, he downplays the role of the subject throughout his analysis, even while turning to explanations that rely on the "body," as if by so doing he was not himself reinstituting the mind/body dualism that gave birth to the very cogito he decries in the beginning. The result is a society lacking in subjects and an incomplete view of how space and subjectivity interact.

Despite the shortcomings of his argument, Lefebvre opens the way for a systemic conception of space, just as psychodynamic theory contributes to a systemic understanding of the subject. Lee Smolin's epigraph points to a systems principle originally identified by Einstein: "once two systems have interacted they must from that point on be considered a single system" (83). If this is the case, then if a systemic subjectivity interacts with a systemic spatiality, they must be considered one system: a spatial-subjective system. Few have conceived the interrelation between space and subjectivity as such. The following section demonstrates, however, that many have considered how space affects the subject or how subjectivity affects space. Taken as a whole, these approaches demonstrate an interaction between space and subjectivity, and as each is its own system, their interaction must also be considered as a system.

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[5] Whether or not Lefebvre's analysis of the role of the subject in poststructuralism is accurate is immaterial here; regardless of its validity, his interpretation of poststructuralism has real effects on the argument developed in The Production of Space.

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One plus One Equals One: The Spatial-Subjective System

In his book <u>The Body and the City</u>, Steve Pile uses the theories of Freud, Lacan, and other psychoanalysts to argue explicitly that notions of space participate in the construction of the subject. He notes, "the topologies of the mind are not just constituted through internal spatial relationships, but are also themselves implicated in intricate and dynamic spatial relationships both with each other and with external worlds (which are also spatial)" (87-8). The reference to internal spatial relationships is a reference to Freud's spatial figures of the organization of psychical processes.[6] Pile extends this figure to include the relationships between the subject and the external, spatial world; a relationship through which the mind/subject is "constituted." In one account, taken from object relations theory, the boundaries that exist in the social/spatial world between objects are internalized in the formation of the subject (Pile 91). "The construction, maintenance and policing of spatial boundaries ... relates to the ways in which people develop boundaries between self and other" (Pile 89). Spatial boundaries become subject/object boundaries. When discussing Lacan, Pile is even more explicit about the role of space in the construction of the subject. "The human subject has no preexistence: it is entirely created through history (and ... spatiality), and that history (spatiality) has to be understood as a series of alienations as we are integrated into the social (and spatial) order" (Pile 139). Here Pile identifies spatiality as contributing to the construction of the subject. He connects the spatial order with the Symbolic, a move not made explicit by Lacan but one which is a logical extension of the idea that the Symbolic consists of social prohibitions because, as Lefebvre and others have shown, space is constructed in part out

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[6] See, for example, <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u>, where Freud notes, "it is therefore possible to assign to the system Pcpt.-Cs *a position in space.* It must lie on the borderline between outside and inside; it must be turned towards the external world and must envelop the other psychical systems" (26, my emphasis).

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of social prohibitions/needs.[7] Pile again makes his point clear when he discusses the

mirror stage and concludes, "the mirror phase ... is inherently spatial: it involves the

child in its specular image, in virtual space, in relationship to a partial body" (Pile 129).

Spatial relationships, then, are one key to the child's understanding of himself (although

Lacan's mirror stage is not in itself productive of subjectivity, which is a process). Pile

acknowledges the incomplete nature of the mirror stage in the development of

subjectivity, but this does not undermine the role of space in the production of the

subject. "The mirror trope helps, but it does not stop other things happening – in

particular it does not stop other social and spatial relationships from constituting

subjects" (143). As the title of his work implies, "bodies and cities 'produce' one

another" (174); spatial systems contribute to the construction of the subject.

Further evidence for the assertion that space contributes to the production of

subjectivity can be adduced from David Harvey's and Frederic Jameson's arguments

about the effect of postmodern space (despite the fact that neither Harvey nor Jameson

presents a systemic view of space or subjectivity). According to David Harvey, for

example, postmodern space produces a subject that is disempowered and fragmented.

For Harvey, the characteristics of postmodern space are fragmentation of space (82),

proliferation of styles of architecture (82), and collapse of spatial distance and barriers

(293). The fragmentation of space and proliferation of styles and signs both result from

the postmodern penchant for meeting the needs and tastes of a diverse group of users

(Harvey 82). However, Harvey notes that this very populism (determined by a reliance

on "market solutions") paradoxically leads to monotony and conformity and leaves the

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[7] Indeed, Lefebvre explicitly ties spatial prohibitions to a discussion of Lacanian psychoanalysis that is ambivalently critical of Lacan's privileging of language while simultaneously recognizing a role for the unconscious in the production of space (34-36).

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individual subject disempowered and unprotected (77), since market solutions are based

on the masses and not the individual. Harvey also argues that the compression of

postmodern time-space fragments the postmodern subject. "The intensity of time-space

compression in Western capitalism since the 1960s, with all of its congruent features of

excessive ephemerality and *fragmentation* in the political and *private* as well as in the

social realm, does seem to indicate an experiential context that makes the condition of

postmodernity somewhat special" (Harvey 306, my emphasis). The time-space

compression of postmodernity results in the fragmentation of the private realm. This

fragmentation through the collapse of space leads to "the search for personal or collective

identity, the search for secure moorings in a shifting world" (Harvey 302). The

fragmented subject (in fragmented space) is in search of a cohesive personal or collective

identity that might help make the subject whole again. The search is "necessary" because

of the sense of the fragmentation of subjectivity in the face of multinational, postmodern

space. Harvey's use of phrases such as "real geography" (87) and his implication that

there was a whole subject at some point in the past (tied to an authentic space) naturalizes

space and subjectivity when in fact space (and, consequently, the subject) has always

been socially produced. What is important here, however, is not the lost "real

geography" but the idea that the postmodern spatial system has real effects on the

individual.

Similarly, Frederic Jameson argues that postmodern space creates a subject that is

fragmented and disoriented. Of course, the fragmented subject is a key aspect of

Jameson's definition of postmodernism, and this fragmentation of the subject is often

connected to space. In a later work that elaborates on the concept of cognitive mapping

first introduced in Postmodernism, Jameson comments that postmodern space "makes itself felt by ... the fragmented and schizophrenic decentering and dispersion of [the subject]" ("Cognitive Mapping" 160). However, for Jameson, the defining characteristic of postmodern space is its production of a disoriented subject. Like Harvey, Jameson also suggests this occurs in part through a collapse in spatial distances. "Briefly, I want to suggest that the new space involves the suppression of distance ... and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty places, to the point at which the postmodern body ... is now exposed to a perceptual barrage of immediacy from which all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed" (Jameson, "Cognitive" 160). The effect of this loss of distance and perceptual barrage is "the peculiar disorientation of the saturated space" (Jameson, "Cognitive" 160). Jameson's most famous formulation of this disorienting space, of course, is his analysis of the Los Angeles Westin Bonaventure Hotel (Postmodernism 39-44). While this description is entirely set in one hotel, it is clear that Jameson sees his own disorientation in this environment as paradigmatic of the experience of postmodern space everywhere (Postmodernism 44).

While Harvey and Jameson suggest space effects subjectivity, they fail to take account of the effect of subjects on space. For example, Harvey sees space as almost exclusively the result of economic causes; "the objective qualities of physical time-space cannot be understood, therefore, independently of the qualities of material processes" (203). Specifically, Harvey argues that production, consumption, and class struggle produce space. For example, Harvey argues that the rationalization of "capitalist production and consumption" lead directly to "a built environment in which the tyranny of the straight line predominates" (204). While such a change might have an effect on

individual subjects (in fact, Harvey notes "we must perforce adjust our daily practices" (204)), little consideration is given to how subjects themselves might contribute to the production of such a space and/or make alterations in the production of spaces of, for, and by capital. Rather, individual interests are subsumed by class interests in Harvey's formulation. "Superior command over space has always been a vital aspect of class (and intra-class) struggle" (Harvey 232). Subjects have no place in Harvey's conception of the construction of space, unless it is as consumer, class partisan, or means of production. "Time and space both get defined through the organization of social practices fundamental to commodity production" (Harvey 239). Everything is returned to the economic realm in Harvey's analysis.

While Harvey and Jameson provide little information on how subjects produce space, other theorists examine this topic. For example, in Warped Spaces, Anthony Vidler argues that the subject, and his/her neuroses, contributes to the construction of space. Vidler's definition of space emphasizes that space is "a product of subjective projection and introjection, as opposed to a stable container of objects and bodies" (1). He eschews the classical definition of space as a "container of objects and bodies" in favor of a definition of space that emphasizes psychological processes. This allows him to argue that the space produced in modernism and postmodernism is a result of the psychological processes of the subject. For example, Vidler argues that the modern avant-garde movement was trying to represent new ideas of space-time as well as "registering the psychic effects of modern life on the individual and mass subject" (6). Others, such as Le Corbusier, saw space as a potential antidote to the mental disturbances of modern life, such as claustrophobia. By using glass and creating transparent, open

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spaces, "the resulting 'space' would be open, infinitely extended, and thereby cleansed of all mental disturbance" (51). Whether reflecting the conditions of modern life or correcting the conditions of modern life, it is clear that the subject here plays an active role in what kind of space is produced.

Steve Pile makes a similar argument in The Body and the City, although the role of the subject in the production of space may not be as conscious as Vidler implies. Pile argues that the production of the subject by space and space by the subject is a reciprocal relationship: "bodies and cities 'produce' one another" (174) so that there exist "shifting relationships between the individual and the social [spatial], where each is constituted as an effect of the other, but where neither is reducible to the other nor understandable solely in terms of the other" (182). Further, the production of space by the subject is not necessarily a conscious act; "a psychoanalysis of space-as-dream can reveal the unconscious processes involved in the production of space" (214). Thus, Pile concludes, "the subject is placed by, places themselves in relation to, and alters simultaneously Real, Imaginary and Symbolic spatialities" (245). Again, the relationship is reciprocal, but it is important to note that space is produced as much as space produces the subject. The subject "alters ... spatialities," according to Pile.

Of course, that space is a production is also a key component of Lefebvre's The Production of Space. Despite his initial dismissal of the subject, Lefebvre cannot avoid ascribing some role to subjectivity in the production of space. "In reality, social space 'incorporates' social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act" (33). Space is not just the container of actions but is the production of "the actions of subjects." "The spatial practice of a

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society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it" (38). Spatial practice is, in part, the space of the body (40), the space of the everyday routine of the individual: "It embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality" (38). Thus, the everyday routine of the individual contributes to the production of space, according to Lefebvre. Spatial practice, the body's production of space, is not the only factor in the production of space, representations of space and representational spaces also contribute: "It is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period" (46). However, it is the spatial practice that comes first and is, ironically, later forgotten or overlooked due to the primacy afforded to conceptualizations of space (34). In any case, the individual subject plays a substantial role in the production of space through spatial practice, representations of space, and spatial representations.

Taken together, these theorists suggest that a reciprocal relationship exists between the subject and space: space contributes to the production of the subject and the subject contributes to the production of space in the spatial-subjective system. In theory, this reciprocal relationship can continue without interruption, perpetuating the system of which the relationship is a part. In the language of system theory, a steady state has been achieved.[8] Despite the fact that Harvey pays little attention to the subject, one can detect

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[8] See the Introduction to Chapter Two for a definition of steady-state systems. The spatial-subjective system is an open system, not a closed system. Closed systems are "systems which are considered to be

an example of the self-perpetuating spatial subjective system in The Condition of

Postmodernity. Harvey argues that the disempowered, disoriented, fragmented subject

that postmodern space creates experiences nostalgia for what it believes to be an older,

more hospitable space that will allow a more "traditional" subject. This desire leads to

the production of a certain kind of space. Postmodern architecture often "samples"

historical styles so that "reconstructed and rehabilitated urban landscapes that echo past

forms" abound (Harvey 86) in what Jameson refers to as "historicism" (Postmodernism

18). These "nostalgic impulses" are part of an "impulse to preserve the past [that] is part

of the impulse to preserve the self" (Hewison qtd. in Harvey 86). Harvey again

recognizes the individual's turn to a more traditional space as a reaction to postmodern

space when he writes of the postmodern "search for personal or collective identity, the

search for secure moorings in a shifting world" (Harvey 302). Harvey's spatial

metaphors mark the link between space and the subject. And again, postmodern space,

the shifting world, leads to a nostalgic search for secure moorings, or the older space of a

world that was more stationary and tied to more traditional forms of travel (via the boat

mooring). Harvey later refers to this as "the progressive angle to postmodernism which

emphasizes community and locality, place and regional resistances" (350). How

progressive this is will be addressed later, but here it is important to note the emphasis on

community and place, two more traditional and older forms of thinking about the subject

in relation to space. Thus, the postmodern subject often turns to older conceptions of

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isolated from their environment" and are the traditional domain of physics (von Bertalanffy 39). Closed
systems operate according to the second law of thermodynamics, increasing in entropy until they reach
equilibrium (von Bertalanffy 39). By contrast, open systems are constantly interacting with their
environment (Lilienfeld 18). One of the consequences of the open system's interaction with its
environment is that open systems can avoid entropy. "Thus, living systems, maintaining themselves in a
steady state, can avoid the increase of entropy and may even develop towards states of increased order and
organization" (von Bertalanffy 41).

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space in hopes that they will provide a place for older conceptions of the subject as well (see Chapter Four for a description of this practice, and its inevitable failure, in <u>On the Road</u>).

However, these desires, or "choices," to turn to an older space and subjectivities to escape postmodern space's construction of the postmodern subject are not really choices because they are contained by and perpetuate postmodern space and the dominant culture. One reaction to postmodern space's effect on the subject is a turn to local, place-based identities. This is often seen as a move of political resistance, establishing "place and regional resistances" to global capital (Harvey 350). Harvey points out, however, that "in clinging, often of necessity, to a place-bound identity, however, such oppositional movements become a part of the very fragmentation which a mobile capitalism and flexible accumulation can feed upon" (303). Thus, oppositional spatial politics are actually contributing to the postmodern spatial condition that fragments subjects. In fact, this fragmentation of subjects is the point of postmodern space; it is this fragmentation that allows the reproduction of the capitalist system.

In Harvey's example, the interrelationship between space and the subject in postmodern spatial systems has achieved a steady state. This is not the only possible state for a system to be in, however. Open systems can self-organize, adapt, and change into higher level organizations. Change in complex systems often occurs through the process of emergence. Steven Johnson defines emergence as "the movement from low-level rules to higher-level sophistication" (18). In other words, new characteristics and behaviors emerge as the system grows more complex (Wilden 373; Waldrop 82). For example, the combination of water molecules results in the property known as liquidity, a

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property the molecules did not have until combined (Waldrop 82). So, through self-organization, "molecules would form cells, neurons would form brains, species would form ecosystems, consumers and corporations would form economies, and so on. At each level, new emergent structures would form and engage in new emergent behaviors" (Waldrop 88). In this way, open systems can adapt to their environment (Wilden 143, 368), creating complex structures with emergent behaviors better suited to an environment, though not all emergence is adaptive.[9] Adaptive or not, self-organization through positive feedback is the primary mechanism for the transformation of open systems.

This can be seen in spatial systems such as cities where positive feedback can change the make-up of a neighborhood. Steven Johnson notes, "the city is complex because ...it has a coherent personality, a personality that self-organizes out of millions of individual decisions, a global order built out of local interactions" (39). This self-organization of the urban spatial system occurs through positive feedback; "The feedback loops of urban life created the great bulk of the world's most dazzling and revered neighborhoods" (S. Johnson 137). These feedback loops consist of the repeated patterns of behavior of individuals within the city.

> A city is a kind of pattern-amplifying machine: its neighborhoods are a
> way of measuring and expressing the repeated behavior of larger
> collectivities – capturing information about group behavior, and sharing
> that information with the group. Because those patterns are fed back to
> the community, small shifts in behavior can quickly escalate into larger
> movements: upscale shops dominate the main boulevards ... bright shop

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[9] See Bateson for a discussion of positive feedback that is non-adaptive.

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windows attract more bright shop windows and drive the impoverished

toward the hidden core. (S. Johnson 40-41)

Individuals are simply going about their everyday business, but through the constant

repetition of the same, their "repeated behavior" forms a feedback loop that can lead to

self-organization and change via emergence. Emergence, therefore, is possible in the

spatial system through the actions of subjects as they reproduce the system.

Emergent Space

In order for the subject to variably practice the reproduction of the system in a

way that in fact changes the system via emergence, there needs to exist an *emergent*

space that allows the production of the subject (or subjects) capable of the variable

practice necessary for change. The characteristics of emergent space include a high

degree of instability/unpredictability, recursivity, an emphasis on movement of the

component parts of the space (including individuals), and an emphasis on lived and

perceived space as opposed to conceived space. In the late 1980s and early 1990s,

Westwood Village, the area of Los Angeles adjacent to the campus of UCLA, was an

emergent space. In the early 1980s, Westwood Village was a popular destination for

college students, residents of the neighborhood, and people from all over Los Angeles. A

little over a decade later, storefronts were empty and college students complained that

there was little to do in Westwood. Many have attributed the relatively sudden change in

character of Westwood to the 1988 death of Karen Toshima, who was visiting Westwood

for a night out when she was killed by a stray bullet, "caught in the crossfire of rival

gangs" (Mathis). Westwood suddenly seemed unsafe, and people stopped visiting.

The change in the spatial organization of an entire city neighborhood is more complicated than this monocausal explanation would have it, however. In fact, Westwood Village had all of the characteristics of emergent space during the period before and after Toshima's death. In the mid 1980s, Westwood Village was a destination location; "There were bars, dance clubs and the streets would be packed with young people out on the town. It was the place to be, a magnet for the tragically hip and boldly beautiful" (Mathis). In fact, so many people were moving from location to location on weekend nights that at times major thoroughfares were "closed to vehicle traffic" to facilitate the pedestrians (Tat). The vibrancy of Westwood attracted not just residents and college students, but visitors from all over the city. "Westwood Village was so cool, in fact, that Los Angeles-area gang members started frequenting the area as well" (Mathis). Accounts of the rise and fall of Westwood suggest that the inevitable result of the gang presence was the death of Karen Toshima in a gang shootout.[10]

While Toshima's murder is often characterized as the tipping point in the change in Westwood's fortunes, in truth fear of gang activity in Westwood was a recurring problem before and after this unfortunate event. "Westwood's influential merchants ... had recently induced the LAPD to enforce curfew ordinances to repel non-white youth from the Village" even before Toshima's murder (Davis 270-271). In 1991, three years later, there was a "riot" at the premiere of the film "New Jack City" that reignited fears of gang violence (Painton). Toshima's murder did grab media attention, however: "Newspapers and television headlined the story for days" (Carlson). This increased awareness of crime in Westwood combined with a sense of increasing violence in pop

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[10] The narrative of Westwood's changing fortunes presented here is drawn from accounts found in Carlson, Davis, Mathis, Schuster, and Tat.

culture and the "gang epidemic" in Los Angeles changed the perception of Westwood Village, which was now seen as another location for the Los Angeles gang problem.[11] Movement in Westwood changed from that characteristic of crowds of revelers to that characteristic of crowds of police, as "Police patrols in Westwood tripled" (Carlson). The feeling of potential associated with the high density of people and entertainment options in Westwood changed to the potential for violence and a confrontation with the authorities. The stores and businesses remained the same but the lived experience of Westwood and the way potential visitors perceived the area were increasingly moving from positive to negative. Westwood was a space that attracted crowds, activity, and excitement, but also the potential for violence, police, and the attention of the media that turned it into a symbol of the space of urban crime.

The result of this concatenation of events and characteristics was an emergent space, a space of change. The change that occurred: "the crowds dwindled" (Tat), "Westwood was virtually deserted" (Mathis), business decreased by 25% (Schuster). As recently as 2003, college students characterized Westwood as lacking in vitality and existing as only a shadow of its former self (Mathis). Accounts of Westwood's demise still cite Toshima's death as the catalyst, but it was only one aspect of a larger, systemic process of change that saw the development of Westwood as an emergent space, characterized by movement, repetition, potential, lived space, and perceived space. This example also demonstrates the indeterminacy of emergent space. At the zenith of its popularity and success, the emergent space of Westwood quickly fell to a nadir. The results of change from the processes of emergence cannot be predicted or controlled;

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[11] For more information on "the gang epidemic" in Los Angeles in the late 1980s, see Chapter Five, "The Hammer and the Rock," in Mike Davis' City of Quartz.

otherwise someone certainly would have acted to prevent Westwood's demise. Nonetheless, emergent space is the locus for change in the spatial-subjective system, and as such it is necessary to examine its characteristics more closely.

All space is dynamic. Previous notions that space is simply background or a given, stable, setting for the action of society and the movement of time are simply no longer credible.[12] Brian Massumi argues "A path is not composed of positions. It is ... a dynamic unity ... The points or positions really appear retrospectively, working backward from the movement's end. ... space itself is a retrospective construct of this kind" (Parables 6). Space is dynamic; it consists of movement. That we think it does not is only because we retrospectively stop the movement in order to construct a stable entity that we call space. "Spatial distinctions like inside and outside and relative size and distance, are derivatives of a greater 'out there' that is not in the first instance defined spatially but rather dynamically, in terms of movement and variation" (Massumi, Parables 150). Massumi draws several implications from this new understanding of the importance of movement to space. For one thing, movement comes first, position "is secondary to movement and derived from it" (Parables 7). Thus, movement is really inherent in space. "Another way of putting it is that positionality is an emergent quality of movement" (Massumi, Parables 8). Here Massumi goes further and introduces the idea that movement is a necessary condition of emergence, which leads to positionality, or a new kind of space (that which comes after the space that is movement itself). Putting it another way, Massumi adds that passage (movement) is "the field of emergence, while positionings are what emerge" (Parables 8). Focusing only on the positioning that is emergent is a mistake. "The point is that the idea that we live in Euclidean space and in

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[12] This, anyway, is Edward Soja's argument in Postmodern Geographies and Thirdspace.

linear time excludes the reality of change" (Massumi, Parables 201). Massumi defines Euclidean space as the space of "static geometric figure ... the determinate form arrived at when the process stops" (Parables 184). In other words, positioning. If we only focus on Euclidean space, we miss the process that allows for change, the fact that we live in topological space, a space that is constantly in movement (Massumi, Parables 205).

Some spaces are more dynamic than others. In theoretical terms, highly territorialized space is less dynamic than deterritorialized space, conceived space is often less dynamic than lived space, etc.[13] Emergent space is highly dynamic, which is to say, it relies heavily on the movement and interaction of its constituent parts. The emphasis on movement within and between structures in systems theory is not simply a corrective to the overly deterministic approach of structuralism. The interaction and movement, systems theory points out, provides for escape from and/or changes the structuring apparatus. This can be seen in Massumi's explication of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming." "Becoming is an equilibrium-seeking system at a crisis point where it suddenly perceives a deterministic constraint, becomes 'sensitive' to it, and is catapulted into a highly unstable supermolecular state enveloping a bifurcating future" (Massumi, Users 95). Here Massumi uses the language of systems theory to describe the interaction of structures and components as an "equilibrium-seeking system." This is a system at the point of emergence, where it seemingly spontaneously self-organizes into a higher level of complexity, changing the system radically. In the language of Deleuze and Guattari, as used here by Massumi, the change is from a molecular/molar system to a "supermolecular state." This emergence is a movement, in this case Massumi refers to it

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[13] See Deleuze and Guattari for territorialized/deterritorialized space, Lefebvre for conceived/lived space. Though pairs, these terms are not binary. Rather, the second term is one-off from the first, or, as Soja would argue (adding perceived space as the binary to conceived space), lived space is both/and-also.

as being "catapulted," implying extreme movement and velocity away from the apparatus that had been constrained/constraining until the very moment of release. Further emphasizing the movement inherent in this point of emergence, Massumi adds, "Becoming is directional rather than intentional" (Users 95); "The most that can or should be done is to enumerate ways in which becoming might be mapped without being immobilized" (Users 103); and, "Becoming is always marginal, a simultaneous coming and going in a borderland zone between modes of action" (Users 106). The emphasis is on "directional," mobile (by way of "immobilized"), "coming and going," all descriptions of movement. Again, this movement can lead to a change in the structures of the system; "Becoming-other orchestrates an encounter between bodies, ... in order to catapult one or all onto a new plane of consistency" (Users 98). A whole new plane, or in Deleuze and Guattari's language, a new plateau, is achieved through this movement, leaving the old structures and system behind. Further, Massumi refers to this moment of becoming-other, or in the language of systems theory, emergence, as a moment of "freedom," although he is quick to point out that it is not a freedom of the subject but a freedom engendered by the movement of the system (Users 98). Thus, the movement and interaction among and within structures that is an inherent aspect of systems is also the aspect of systems that allows system components the opportunity to escape the deterministic bounds of structures.

Michel de Certeau also emphasizes movement in the space of everyday life, which he sees as potentially transformative (or emergent) and which he opposes to the more static, structural, conceived space. In the chapter "Walking in the City," from The Practice of Everyday Life, movement is performed by people walking, who, through their

walking, create new spaces. "The networks of these moving, intersecting writings [his metaphor for walkers creating a 'text' in the city] compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces" (93). De Certeau sees the city as a text, composed by the writing of walking. Movement is thus essential to the production of this space, as is clear in this quote from the emphasis on "moving," "intersecting," and "trajectories." This is an entirely different space from conceived space. Unlike the immobilized city seen from the height of the World Trade Center at the opening of the chapter, movement defines this "indefinitely other" space. "A migrational, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city" (93). This movement is transformative, or potentially emergent. "Urban life increasingly permits the re-emergence of the elements that the urbanistic project excluded" (95). The movements of the masses "make some parts of the city disappear and exaggerate others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order" (102). The urbanistic project is the best laid plans of the architects (and urban planners, geographers, capitalists, etc.) of conceived space. No space is entirely immobile, however, and the introduction of the mobile practices of everyday life, such as walking, introduces movement into space. By its very nature, movement is potentially emergent or transformative. It is an essential aspect of emergent space.

While all space is dynamic and movement is fundamental to emergent space, emergent space requires the presence of a particular kind of movement. At least some of the movement in emergent space must be recursive movement. Movement in emergent space is recursive in that it "uses the results of its own operations as the basis for further operations – that is, what is undertaken is determined in part by what has occurred in

earlier operations. ... such a process uses its own outputs as inputs" (Luhman 139).

Recursive movement in emergent space can seemingly repeat itself forever, but there is

often enough variation in the repetition to ultimately result in change. This variation is

the result of the action of the recursive movement itself through the processes of

recursion, or feedback. Again, Brian Massumi's <u>Parables for the Virtual</u> is instructive, as

it deals with the phenomenon of emergence in a variety of contexts. Massumi argues our

experience is the result of recursive processes producing emergence. He reviews the fact

that we become cognitively aware of a stimulus a full ½ second after it occurs but that the

brain is actively processing the event during this time. Despite the lag, we consciously

believe our awareness to be simultaneous with the stimulus. Massumi argues, "The

conclusion has to be that the elementary unit of thought is already a complex *duration*

before it is a discrete perception or cognition. Further, it is a duration whose end loops

back to its beginning. It is a recursive duration" (<u>Parables</u> 195). Furthermore, the

number of stimuli is infinite, though our cognition of stimuli is limited. Thus, only a few

stimuli emerge from this recursive process into consciousness. The process of recursivity

does not stop there, because "practice becomes perception" (Massumi, <u>Parables</u> 198). "In

other words, compound forms of result feed back to the thought-o-genic level, where they

fuse with more 'elementary' or gnat-like components of experience, toward a new

emergence" (Massumi, <u>Parables</u> 198). What experience does emerge into consciousness

feeds back into the "field of emergence" and effects, recursively, what emerges again in

the future into consciousness. Thus, recursivity works on several levels to lead to

emergence.

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Steven Johnson's <u>Emergence</u> also argues for the importance of feedback in emergent systems. "Self-organizing systems use feedback to bootstrap themselves into a more orderly structure" (S. Johnson 121). Feedback is not something that automatically exists in every system, however. "The likelihood of a feedback loop correlates directly to the general interconnectedness of the system" (S. Johnson 134). Further, the connections need to be made or activated (as in the brain, the example Johnson uses). For space, this means movement has to occur in order for connections to become active and feedback to occur. In his discussion of feedback in spatial systems Johnson makes the point that emergence is not always beneficial. "The feedback loops of urban life created the great bulk of the world's most dazzling and revered neighborhoods – but they also have a hand in the self-perpetuating cycles of inner-city misery. Slums can also be emergent phenomena" (S. Johnson 137). Here Johnson notes that cities can be emergent spaces, with neighborhoods emerging through feedback loops, or recursive movement that activates the interconnected network of urban streets (remember de Certeau's walking on street level as a movement for change). What emerges, however, is not always adaptive (recall the feedback loop that led to the demise of Westwood).

That emergence is not always adaptive is related to another characteristic of emergent space: emergent space is indeterminate. Its indeterminacy, in turn, is closely related to the fact that it is unstable, temporary, and full of potential. Emergent space can lead to a highly adaptive transformation or it can lead to a destructive transformation. It can lead to a transformation that furthers the interests of hierarchical power or one that subverts these interests. It can deterritorialize or reterritorialize. It has the *potential* to

lead to all of these outcomes. However, what the outcome will be cannot be determined in advance.

Potential, according to Massumi in <u>Parables for the Virtual</u>, is a characteristic of the virtual, or states of emergence. He differentiates potential from possibility. Possibility is variation within a normative definition, whereas "Potential is unprescribed. .. Potential is the immanence of a thing to its still indeterminate variation, under way ... Immanence is process" (9). Potential is the ability to become any number of things, the final becoming of which cannot be predetermined. Massumi illustrates this in one of his "parables" about a soccer game. Massumi argues that the codified rules of the game are not foundational. Rather, "the foundational rules follow and apply themselves to forces of variation that are endemic to the game and constitute the real conditions of the game's emergence" (<u>Parables</u> 72). The forces of variation are the "field of potential" (<u>Parables</u> 72) and the "potential movement [of the ball] toward the goal" (<u>Parables</u> 73). In other words, "Potential is the space of play – or would be, were it a space. It is a *modification* of a space. The space is the literal field, the ground between the goals. Any and every movement of a player or the ball in that space modifies the distribution of potential movement over it" (<u>Parables</u> 75, emphasis in original). Massumi's first statement is correct, with modification; potential is the *emergent* space of play. His own disclaimer simply relegates space to the outdated conception of container, which has been clearly refuted by Lefebvre, Soja, et al. The point here, however, is that the field or space of play is full of potential. Massumi summarizes his argument by saying; "change is emergent relation, the becoming sensible in empirical conditions of mixture, of a modulation of potential" (<u>Parables</u> 77). The emergence of the sport of soccer comes out

of the space of potential, emergent space. Potential, then, is an important characteristic of emergent space and the change it enables.

The potential Massumi describes has led many to advocate such spaces that are seemingly "outside" (prior to is a better description, there is no "outside") as spaces of resistance. While resistance may be possible in emergent space, the potential of emergent space is indeterminate and just as likely to reinforce structures of power as subvert them. In fact, Massumi argues that the power of postmodern capital comes from forming a network of and containing the very spaces of potential that it distributes, so that capital is usurping "the very expression of potential" (Parables 88) (see the section on Going Native in Chapter Four for an example). Regardless of the outcome, indeterminacy or uncertainty is a property of emergence and therefore, emergent space. As Steven Johnson notes, "it is both the promise and the peril of swarm logic that the higher-level behavior is almost impossible to predict in advance" (233). In other words, what emerges from lower levels of organization cannot be predetermined. Massumi makes the same point in A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia, arguing that the end of becoming-other (emergence) cannot be described or prescribed in advance (103). He goes on to describe it in spatial terms as a "zone of indeterminacy" (User's 104).

Full of potential, engine of change (uncertain though the outcome may be), emergent space is inherently temporary and unstable. Both are qualities that result from the fact that emergent space is "about to be" something else. This can be seen in Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus when they note that areas are always changing: "Territorialities, then, are shot through with lines of flight testifying to the presence

within them of movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization" (55). Emergent

space is space where this change is happening, where a territory is changing from one

state to another. At that (necessarily temporary) moment the area is neither one nor the

other in its entirety. The unstable bifurcation point (emergent space) cannot be

maintained, the system will seek stability/equilibrium on some level, but the crisis point

itself is highly unstable. This is also referred to as the edge of chaos, a property of

complex systems. Mitchell Waldrop notes "all these complex systems have somehow

acquired the ability to bring order and chaos into a special kind of balance. This balance

point – often called the edge of chaos – is were [sic] the components of a system never

quite lock into place, and yet never quite dissolve into turbulence, either" (12). It is this

property of neither being locked in nor turbulent that is what is meant by being unstable.

In this sense, chaos/disorder can be stable in that it can be the (seemingly) permanent

state of things. Instability comes (temporarily) when a system is on the verge between

the two choices. This is the point of emergence, and a property, therefore, of emergent

space.

So far the focus has been on the "emergent" aspects of emergent space.

Emergence occurs in many types of systems. Since space is itself a complex adaptive

system, it is not surprising that emergence occurs in space.[14] What kind of *space*, then, is

emergent space? Henri Lefebvre's description of space as consisting of perceived space,

conceived space, and lived space will be helpful here. Emergent space is more concerned

with the space of everyday practice, which is perceived space and lived space, than with

the conceived space of urban planners, architects, etc. Lefebvre describes perceived

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[14] See Waldrop on complex adaptive systems. See S. Johnson on emergence in spatial systems, particularly urban spatial systems.

space as the space of spatial practice, "which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance" (33). He elaborates on this concept by adding that spatial practice "embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure" (38). In other words, it is the space of everyday life, or as Edward Soja puts it, the space of "the real material world" (Thirdspace 6). Soja adds, "This materialized, socially produced, empirical space is described as perceived space, directly sensible and open, within limits, to accurate measurement and description. It is the traditional focus of attention in all the spatial disciplines" (Thirdspace 66). In other words, there is a material existence to perceived space, it is a space where things can and do happen, it is real. The same must be said of emergent space, for everyday practice is a condition of change.

Just as important to emergent space is Lefebvre's concept of lived space because it recognizes the role of the subjects' interaction with space in the production of space. According to Lefebvre, lived space, or representational spaces, are spaces "embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational space)" (33). Like conceived space, lived space is less material than perceived space. It consists of "symbolisms" and "art" as opposed to "particular locations" and "routes" in "reality." Like perceived space,

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lived space is more the space of the everyday user than the "expert" of conceived space. Lefebvre makes this point more directly when he elaborates on lived space as:

> Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs. (39 emphasis in original)

As both the space of 'users' and the space of 'signs,' lived space combines characteristics of perceived and conceived space. As Soja would say, it is both-and also, because it also contains properties that are unique to it alone, including its "partial unknowability, ... mystery and secretiveness" (Thirdspace 67) and its "spaces of resistance" (Thirdspace 68).

Emergent space contains all three aspects of space that Lefebvre identifies. Perceived space and lived space are privileged in emergent space, however, because these are the spatialities that enable emergence. Change can occur through changes in conceived space, but not emergence because change in conceived space is *planned* change, it is top-down, hierarchical change that rarely alters the parameters of the system (at least intentionally). Change in conceived space, therefore, is not self-organized, bottom-up change that leads to an entirely new organization of the system and lacks

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predictability. Emergence can occur in perceived space through the movements and variations of everyday practice. This, of course, is the argument of Michel de Certeau in The Practice of Everyday Life, where he very explicitly contrasts the movement of spatial practice (perceived space) with the immobility of conceived space. Thus, the movement that is a necessary property of emergent space derives, in part, from the movement of spatial practice/perceived space, the movement of everyday life.

Lived space (or what Soja refers to more broadly as Thirdspace) also contributes to the possibility of emergence. In part this is because of its incorporation of some of the properties of perceived space, including the "everydayness" of users. However, users in perceived space and users in lived space are using space differently. Users in perceived space use space in its intended manner, making changes through their combined and selective use. In other words, they walk on streets, as spatial planners intended, but by walking on some streets and not others they ultimately change the space of both. Used streets become vibrant, attract businesses, are safer, etc. Streets not in use may become dangerous, despite planners attempts to regulate and encourage use. On the other hand, in lived space, users may be in dominated space, but it is a space "which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (Lefebvre 39). This kind of use is possible in lived space because of the presence of both perceived space and conceived space and also the imaginative processes of the users. According to Soja, the dominated position of the user is also necessary: "Combining the real and the imagined, things and thought on equal terms, or at least not privileging one over the other a priori, these lived spaces of representation are thus the terrain for the generation of 'counterspaces,' spaces of resistance to the dominant order

arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (Thirdspace 68). Emergent space is not always a space of resistance, but lived space is a space of potential, a space where the perceived and conceived come together and are used in a (potentially) transformative way.

Soja describes this as Thirdspace. One of the primary differences between Thirdspace and emergent space is not spatial but temporal (though the separation of the two terms space and time is artificial). Emergent space, as mentioned above, is temporary, whereas Soja sees Thirdspace as everywhere all of the time (if only we would choose to see it). In this way, Thirdspace becomes so large and all encompassing as to lose much of its specificity. Soja takes Lefebvre's way of looking at space (one that is inclusive of all three spatialities) and turns it into a particular space that is somehow resistant to the spaces that constitute it. Emergent space, by contrast, is much narrower in its scope. While it can be anywhere at any time, it is not everywhere at every time. Another important difference between Soja's conception of Thirdspace and emergent space is the emphasis on dynamism/movement in emergent space. Soja does not exclude movement, but he insists that there is not a privileging of movement or any other aspect of Firstspace or Secondspace (except politically). In other words, stability is just as important as movement to Soja. However, movement is essential to emergence and does take priority over stability in defining emergent space (stability still exists in emergent space, but movement is ontologically prior and privileged).

The emphasis on the processes of emergence (such as movement, interaction, and relationships) is necessary in a systems understanding of change, and helps to avoid the

structuralist flaws of some theories of change, to which Soja makes an appeal.[15]

Massumi criticizes structuralist approaches: "Concepts of mixture, margin, and parody retain a necessary reference to the pure, the central, and the strait-laced and straight-faced, without which they vaporize into logical indeterminacy. Erase the progenitors and the hybrid vanishes: no terms have been provided with which to understand it in its own right" (Parables 69). The structuralist approach is inadequate to an understanding of change because it relies on, and ultimately reinforces, the predetermined categories. It provides, as Massumi suggests, no concepts for understanding how change occurs in complex systems. In fact, structuralist approaches to change often reinforce the status quo through their reliance on binary concepts and categories, such as male/female, white/black, etc. (see Chapter Three for a more detailed critique).

A systems approach, on the other hand, provides "an engagement with change as such, with the unfounded and unmediated in-between of becoming" (Massumi, Parables 70-71). Individual and society cannot be separated, but "they might be seen as differential emergences from a shared realm of relationality that is one with becoming and belonging" (Massumi, Parables 71). This "shared realm of relationality" is emergent space. Massumi places the emphasis on relationality, and elsewhere on movement, in order to bring a systems theory understanding to the processes of change/emergence. The concept of emergent space differs from Soja's concept of Thirdspace in just this way; it too introduces a systems theory understanding of emergence into the spatial thinking that Soja advocates. Following Soja's exhortation to spatialize, this dissertation introduces a more overtly spatial dynamic into Massumi's project. Following Massumi's exhortation

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[15] For example, in chapter four of Soja's Thirdspace he describes the "postmodern ... cultural critics of spatiality" and the practice of "choosing marginality" (117, 118).

to "virtualize", this study introduces a more overtly "systems" dynamic into Soja's project. Emergent space, then, is exactly what it sounds like: the space of emergence.

Mapping the Space of Literature

There is a growing realization that literature participates in the production of space. This concept is not necessarily new, but, as with all things spatial, it has only recently been widely acknowledged.[16] Gaston Bachelard, in The Poetics of Space, makes clear that literature can transform space. "Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination" (Bachelard xxxvi). This description immediately calls to mind Lefebvre's description of lived space, which he too distinguishes from the conceived space of the "surveyor." Indeed, Lefebvre specifically identifies lived space with "its associated images and symbols" and refers to it as the space of "a few writers and philosophers" (Lefebvre 39). Lived space is the "space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (Lefebvre 39). Clearly, then, literature participates in the social production of social space, particularly lived space, which itself is an important aspect of emergent space.

Changes in spatial practice also have an effect on the literature that is produced at a given time and place. For example, Carlo Rotella's October Cities argues that "the material conditions of city life in a particular time and place ... exerted shaping pressures on their work" (2). He goes on to trace how the mid-20th century transformations in

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[16] See Soja's Postmodern Geographies for a brief history of the re-emergence of critical spatial theory in the late twentieth century.

urban life are reflected in and create similar transformations in urban literature of the time. Given the interrelation between literature, the production of space, and spatial practice, an examination of postmodern space and emergent space in literature stands to deepen our understanding of both. More specifically, such an examination brings to light emergent space and a strain of literature concerned with spatial issues and/or emergent space. In Parables for the Virtual Massumi writes of emergence; "embarrassingly for the humanities, the handiest concepts in this connection are almost without exception products of mathematics or the sciences" (8). An examination of the literature of (emergent) spaces demonstrates that this is not true. Not only have the humanities long considered processes of emergence, it is in the humanities/literature that the relationship of these processes to the spatial subject has been most profitably considered.

Chapter Summaries

The second chapter demonstrates the spatial-subjective system in a steady-state as it is portrayed in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine, Walter Mosley's Devil in a Blue Dress, and Don DeLillo's White Noise. Each novel focuses on different aspects of the spatial-subjective system while simultaneously demonstrating that the processes by which spatial organizations effect subjectivity and vice versa are largely similar regardless of the differences in individual circumstances. The variety within similarity illustrates the complexity of the spatial-subjective system in interaction with other aspects of society, as well as the validity of the theory across differing situations. In Jasmine, for example, Jasmine is defined in part through the interaction of space and gender norms, which vary throughout the novel as they interact simultaneously with racial, ethnic, and class

systems. Despite the constant shifting of space and concomitant gender expectations, Jasmine continuously reproduces the appropriate gender norms, which ultimately serve to reinforce a patriarchal power structure. A similar process can be traced in the novel in regards to the spaces of globalization, which contribute to Jasmine's construction as a fragmented, hybrid subject, which ultimately provides benefits to global capital. Similarly, in Devil in a Blue Dress, examining the spatial-subjective system illuminates how the dominant white society constructs the racialized other through urban space and through the law, defining the other as illegal and within a certain urban space. The protagonist, Easy Rawlins, is able to cross both boundaries, and his ability to engage in border crossing empowers him to use characteristics of both sides of the border to his advantage. However, Easy's attempt to assert a subjectivity outside of the definition of the dominant white society through border crossing ultimately does not change Easy's status as other or the structure on either side of the border. Instead, Easy reproduces and upholds the border, reinforcing the division between African Americans and whites delineated in the novel. Finally, Don DeLillo's White Noise illustrates the extent to which late capitalist society has perfected the exploitation of the always already socially constructed subject through the strategic deployment of postmodern (consumer) spaces and spatial divisions based on class. In other words, the spatial-subjective system in White Noise is in a steady-state that results in the constant reproduction of the consumer subject. The prototypical postmodern spaces of the suburbs, the commercial strip, the mall, and the supermarket, alienate subjects through homogenization, inspiring attempts to differentiate through consumption. The creation of the perfect consumer reinforces the

spatial organizations of postmodernity, leaving the spatial-subjective system in steady-state.

The next two chapters explore emergent space and how change is produced in the spatial-subjective system. The third chapter explicates the role of the subject in producing and interacting with emergent space to create the conditions necessary for change in Colson Whitehead's The Intuitionist and Patrick Chamoiseau's Texaco. In The Intuitionist emergent space is produced through alterity, through a subject "being otherwise" in the system. Lila Mae is otherwise than she should be because she is multiply determined as a black subject who knows in white space, a subject position that is other than the one she is supposed to occupy in the spatial-subjective system of the novel. While all subjects are systemic, the second chapter demonstrates that spatial-subjective systems tend to produce systemic subjects that contribute to the reproduction of the steady-state, which not surprisingly accrues benefits to certain power structures. In contrast, Lila Mae's alterity in the system is such that it does not contribute to the reproduction of the extant spatial-subjective system. Rather, it creates a crisis point, which prevents the spatial-subjective system from reproducing itself as it has in the past. The reproduction of the system in steady-state is figured in the novel through the character of Fulton, who achieves a similar position to that occupied by Lila Mae but does so in such a way that reinforces the existing hierarchization of the system rather than disrupting it. Lila Mae's alterity, then, demonstrates how change can be generated from the functioning of the spatial-subjective system. Lila Mae's position in the system allows her to create the beginnings of an emergent space that promises to bring change to the spatial-subjective system.

Both The Intuitionist and Texaco feature a character who contributes to the reproduction of the spatial-subjective system (Fulton and Esternome, respectively). Esternome reproduces the hierarchal division of subjects based on race, just as Fulton does, only in Texaco the benefit of this division accrues to the postcolonial spatial-subjective system in place in Martinique. As is the case with Lila Mae, Marie Sophie is also a systemic subject produced in such a way by the spatial-subjective system that she does not contribute to the reproduction of the steady-state. In this case, however, it is not because of the position she occupies in the system, but because hers is a heterogeneous, Creole subjectivity that the postcolonial spatial-subjective system is unable to exploit in order to perpetuate itself. The Creole subject, then, produces a dynamic, emergent space that the existing spatial-subjective system is unable to co-opt, exploit, or eradicate. This emergent space begins to bring about change in the spatial-subjective system, at least on a local scale. Chapter Three contrasts the representations of subjects that are effective agents of change with subjects that fail to achieve change, but the two novels illustrate different mechanisms for the production of emergent space. In addition, they present emergent space at different levels; The Intuitionist presents incipient emergent space and Texaco presents an emergent space that has effects at a local level.

Chapter Four explores yet another role for the subject in the production of emergent space, and this time the emergent space results in the wholesale change of an entire spatial-subjective system. The fourth chapter shows that emergent space exists in the space of the road in Jack Kerouac's On the Road but the space of the road is not an emergent space in Stephen Wright's Going Native. Unlike the production of emergent space in the novels of Chapter Three, however, emergent space is produced in direct

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contradiction to the desires of the protagonists. Sal is not in pursuit of postmodern space;

rather, he is in pursuit of imaginary spaces and imaginary subjects (such as the cowboy of

the American West) that he believes will allow him to escape the contemporary

conformist culture he despises. His desire, however, contributes to the production of

emergent space. Sal is unable to fulfill his desire for self-control, setting in motion a

repetition compulsion. The characteristics of Sal's repetition compulsion are reflected in

the novel stylistically and in Sal's interaction with space. In fact, the processes of desire

in On the Road are the very processes of emergent space, and Sal's interaction with the

spaces of his desire leads, via emergent space, to the time-space compression,

homogeneity, and nostalgic spaces of the postmodern. In Going Native, postmodern

space is the precondition for the journey of the protagonist, and the interaction between

the protagonist and the space of the road lacks any of the characteristic processes of

emergent space. This is because the processes of desire have been co-opted by capital.

Thus, the potential for change that the interaction of the individual's desire and space in

On the Road produced has been foreclosed in Going Native. As a result, there is no

change in the spatial-subjective system and the novel ends in the same postmodern space

in which it began. The space of the road, then, is not what is important to the production

of emergent space. Identifying the emergent space of the road in On the Road does not

enable one to replicate emergent space in order to achieve change in any spatial-

subjective system. Change comes from the *production* of emergent space; process is of

primary importance.

The literature portrays space and subjectivity reciprocally interacting in the

production of one another (space contributes to the production of subjectivity and

subjects contribute to the production of space). This reciprocal interaction can have two outcomes, the reproduction of the extant spatial-subjective system (which is the most common outcome), or change in the spatial-subjective system through the mechanisms of emergence and emergent space. A systems theory approach is necessary because it provides a better understanding of the complex processes that constitute space, subjectivity, their interaction, and the mechanisms of change via emergence. What follows in the next three chapters is a systems approach to the analysis of the literature of spatial-subjective systems. As such, it represents a beginning. Just as this conclusion is also a commencement, there is always more to (be)come(ing).

CHAPTER TWO: THE SPATIAL-SUBJECTIVE SYSTEM IN STEADY-STATE

(Re)Producing Space and the Subject: Gender, Race, Class

Introduction: Open Systems

The spatial-subjective system is an open system, even while in a steady-state. An open system in steady-state "remains constant as a whole" even while "there is a continuous flow of component materials," including the importation of materials, force, or energy from outside of the system (von Bertalanffy 125). Gordon Matta-Clark's drawing *Untitled (Arrows)* can be seen as a representation of an open system in steady-state. Each individual arrow in his drawing is linear and directional, though the arrows vary greatly in size and composition. Some of the arrows appear to be fading from the representation, either because they are shortened or because they are lightly drawn to the point of disappearance. Other arrows seem to have just arrived given their intensity as indicated by their width, length, or saturation. Taken as a whole the arrows form a circle. The addition or subtraction of an individual arrow does not destroy the circle (up to a point). The system remains (w)hole as long as the arrows continue to flow into and out of the drawing.

Steady-states are circular, but they are not simple circles; they are circles like Gordon Matta-Clark's drawing. Like *Untitled (Arrows)* the spatial-subjective system is a complex open system, consisting of many interlocking forces entering and exiting the system, but which when taken as a whole present a steady-state. This chapter moves

beyond the rhetorical tautology of the argument that space produces subjects that (re)produce space to demonstrate the complex, multiple determinants of the spatial-subjective system in three novels: Jasmine, Devil in a Blue Dress, and White Noise. In Jasmine, the steady-state of the postmodern spatial-subjective system consists of interlocking subjective and spatial systems of gender, class, race, and nationality, and the power interests of patriarchy and capitalism. Not only do multiple systems of power contribute to the spatial-subjective system in Jasmine, but the interaction between spaces and subjects within those systems of power vary across time and space. Gender roles and spatial divisions look different in Hasnapur, Jullundhar, New York, and Iowa, yet they all contribute to the production of a patriarchal system that is a component of the spatial-subjective system. Similarly, in Devil in a Blue Dress, the spatial-subjective system is complicit with the construction of race and racial discrimination, and interacts with a legal-juridical power that also has an interest in racial spatial distinctions. Finally, in White Noise, space and subjectivity compound the effects of the ever present media in the construction of a consumer culture that benefits capital and perpetuates the spatial-subjective system often described as postmodern.

While critics of all three novels have taken note of the social construction of subjects, a systems approach is needed because cultural studies approaches that emphasize the multiple determination of the subject do not adequately account for the interaction, reciprocal relation, and processes between multiple social factors (such as space) and subjects. Brian Massumi notes in Parables for the Virtual that cultural studies approaches focus on the "external mechanisms" that are said to construct subjects (2). While attention to the role of social factors in the production of subjectivity is welcome,

"Ideas about cultural or social construction have dead-ended because they have insisted on bracketing the *nature* of the process" (Massumi, Parables 12, emphasis in original). The focus should be on the reciprocal relations of subject and social systems, the processes of production. Focusing on only one aspect of construction, the effect of social mechanisms on the subject, ultimately leads to a focus on the end product, what is produced. Cultural studies thus emphasizes "positions," or as Massumi suggests, "an oppositional framework of culturally constructed significations: male versus female, black versus white, gay versus straight" (Parables 2). This leads to the belief that occupying a different position will lead to change, overestimating the role of subjects in achieving change through attaining another position on the grid and underestimating the ability of a system in steady-state to adapt and contain different combinations. Thus, critics of Jasmine, for example, celebrate her combination of cultural positions as a subversive act when in reality she only reproduces the spaces of globalized capital that have exploited her and others like her. As Massumi points out, changing positions on the grid does not change the nature of the grid, and so such an approach to understanding change is ultimately insufficient (Parables 3). This chapter demonstrates the spatial-subjective system in a steady-state. While much attention is paid to the role of social structures in producing subjects, ultimately it is the *relation* between subjects, space, and other social constructs that creates the system in steady-state. It is this same understanding of the importance of the systemic processes of production that will provide a way to understand how change occurs in the spatial-subjective system, which is an understanding of change that is unavailable through a cultural studies approach because of its emphasis on stasis (position) at the expense of an understanding of transformation.

Jasmine: Gender, Capital, (Race) and the Subject of Global Space

"Gender then as how we do space, in addition to, rather than instead of, how space does us"

- Rosa Ainley, xvi

In Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine, one can see the spatial-subjective system in a steady-state. In its simplest terms, that is to say space produces a subject that ultimately (re)produces space, all for the benefit of system(s) of power. Jasmine, however, demonstrates the complexity of a spatial-subjective system in steady-state, for there are multiple spaces, multiple subjects, and multiple systems of power interacting. For example, spatial divisions based on gender contribute to the construction of Jasmine's subjectivity throughout the novel. Jasmine's access to certain spaces as well as how she can or must move through space is determined by and determines gender. As Jasmine moves through differing spaces in India and the United States one can trace how these spatialized gender norms change, and more importantly how they stay the same. Ultimately, Jasmine reproduces the very spatialized gender norms that have defined her, contributing to the reproduction of the spatial-subjective system that benefits patriarchy in both India and the United States. Meanwhile, the postmodern, globalized space of late capital produces Jasmine as a fragmented subject who, in turn, produces postmodern spaces that benefit capital. At times the spatial-subjective systems of patriarchy and capital reinforce one another while at other times they appear to interfere with one another. What is often seen as Jasmine's agency usually manifests when the two systems are in conflict and Jasmine is forced to choose between them. Rarely, then does her "choice" rise to the level of free will, for it is always systemically determined.

On one level, Jasmine is the story of an immigrant achieving the American

Dream. Jasmine actually goes by many names throughout the novel, taking on a new

name with each change in her location/identity. She begins life as Jyoti in the small

Indian village of Hasnapur. Married at 15, her husband Prakash takes her to the Indian

city of Jullundhar and names her Jasmine. After his death in a terrorist bombing, she

immigrates to the United States, living briefly in Florida (where she is known as Jazzy),

then Queens, before gaining employment as a nanny for a wealthy couple in Manhattan.

Ultimately, she and the husband, Taylor, who calls her Jase, fall in love. Jase flees New

York, however, when she thinks she sees Prakash's murderer in Central Park. She makes

her way to Iowa, where she moves in with a local farm banker, Bud Ripplemeyer, who

calls her Jane. With each move (beginning in India), Jasmine becomes more assimilated

to the West as she moves ever westward. The more American she becomes, the more

secure she seemingly becomes in her independence.

The novel's invocations of the archetypal narratives of immigration, westward

progress, and the American Dream have divided literary critics.[17] Some celebrate her

assimilation, success, and growing independence, some argue that she is a hybrid subject

who creates change in the United States even while she herself changes, and some decry

what they see as the novel's tendency to essentialize India as an exotic Other in contrast

with the privileged West.[18] While the focus of my argument is on the spatial-subjective

system, the production of the subject and space, and how it is mediated by and through

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[17] For more on narratives of immigration, and how they have changed over time, see Katherine Payant and Toby Rose's The Immigrant Experience in North American Literature: Carving out a Niche.
[18] For a summary of the critical reception of Jasmine, see Anthony Alessandrini's "Reading Bharati Mukherjee, Reading Globalization." A representative sample of critical essays can be found in Emmanuel Nelson's Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspectives. Lavina Dhingra Shankar summarizes the novel's popular, primarily positive and celebratory reception. Examples of critics who see Jasmine as a hybrid agent of change include Sherry Morton-Mollo and Carmen Wickramagamage. Those who criticize the novel's essentialism include Inderpal Grewal, Shankar, and Susan Koshy.

gender and class, I also argue against all three of the major critical approaches to the novel. First, the spaces of patriarchy and late capitalism severely limit Jasmine's independent agency. Second, while the fragmentation of her subjectivity may include some aspects of hybridity in that she combines elements of "Indian culture" with elements of "American culture," this hybridity is ultimately in service of the cultural logic of late capitalism and thus is unlikely to serve as an agent of change. Third, neither the India nor the America of the novel are static, essentialized spaces. Rather, the novel represents both as complex spaces struggling through the contradictions of globalization and having correspondingly complex relations with the subjects that inhabit and traverse them. For simplicity's sake, my analysis focuses first on gendered space and then on the space of globalization, but this division cannot be maintained throughout as it is necessary to discuss the two simultaneously in order to explore their interaction in the production of Jasmine's subjectivity.

Despite their later disjuncture, the story and discourse both begin in the beginning, with Jasmine as a young girl in a small village in India. The novel's first sentence reads: "Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears – his satellite dish to the stars – and foretold my widowhood and exile" (3). While widowhood might indicate either a man or a woman, one soon learns Jasmine is female. Retrospectively, the novel begins by setting the terms of Jasmine's definition, which rely primarily on time ("lifetimes ago"), space (Hasnapur, "exile"), and gender ("widowhood," i.e. her marital status). Space and gender are of primary importance, for while the time marker comes first, it is ambiguous. Space, on the other hand, is marked twice in the first sentence: "in the village of Hasnapur" and

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"my ... exile." The personal possessive pronoun "my" is the first marker of characteristics we can definitively ascribe to Jasmine, which deal with gender relations and space, respectively. Despite the seven-year-old Jasmine's resistance to the astrologer's pronouncement, the verb "foretold" suggests that his prediction will come true, as indeed it does. A male defines Jasmine from the very beginning, and her resistance, which some critics read as a sign of her incipient feminism, ultimately comes to naught. Most important, however, is the way in which space and gender are tightly linked through the syntax. The conjunction "and" binds widowhood and exile, and the use of only one personal possessive pronoun further emphasizes that the two are not to be separated, as an alternative phrasing, "my widowhood and my exile," might have suggested. The loss of a husband and the loss of a home, the sentence seems to suggest, cannot be considered separately. Space and gender go together, and together they are the primary determinants of Jasmine's subjectivity, not just here but throughout the novel.

As the close association of widowhood and exile in the first sentence suggests, Jasmine is defined as female (in part) through the spatial divisions of gender. Such an assertion rests on several assumptions: first, that gender is not a natural or inherent quality but is socially constructed or defined; second, that space is similarly socially constructed and is thus more than just a background or container for action; and, third, that space and gender interact with one another and are to some extent mutually constitutive. The geographer Doreen Massey has argued eloquently in support of all three of these assertions in her book Space, Place, and Gender. She begins her work by tracing the view of the social construction of space, or, as she puts it, "the attempt to formulate concepts of space and place in terms of social relations" (Massey 2). One of

56

the social relations she wishes to draw particular attention to, of course, is gender. One way that we know that gender and gender relations are constructed and not inherent is that "gender relations vary over space," which Massey demonstrates through an analysis of gender roles and attitudes in different regions of England across time (178; see Massey's chapter nine). Thus, she concludes that:

> From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood. (179)

The most common way that space reflects and affects gender is through the spatial division of gender into public and private realms. "Not surprisingly, the spaces allocated to women were and are still generally the private spaces of the home and family" (Roberson 7). Such a division is prevalent throughout Jasmine, and while the spaces allocated to women change throughout the novel (as Massey suggests, "gender relations vary over space"), the persistence of spatial divisions based on and producing gender remains.

The spatial division of gender in Hasnapur is at once the most marked and also the most illustrative of how differing social systems can contribute to the construction of gender. In Hasnapur, the space of women and men is strictly segregated. Jasmine's brothers go to a larger town for advanced schooling while Jasmine has to fight to stay in school for more than three years (which is all that was allowed to her sisters). Women tend the homes, do the shopping together in the village markets, and bathe together.

When faced with the question of further schooling for his daughter, Jasmine's father, who claims to be a modern man, exclaims "'The thing is that bright ladies are bearing bright sons, that is nature's design'" (51). A woman's place is in the home, simultaneously defining the home space as female and women as domestic, with all that such a definition entails. In Hasnapur, this division is supposed to be permanent. When Jasmine's father dies, her mother "shaved her head with a razor, wrapped her body in coarse cloth, and sat all day in a corner" (61). The sphere of activity for a widow is reduced to less than the domestic; all that is left for her is a corner of the home, reflecting the diminished status of a woman who no longer has the ability to "make a home" now that the husband is gone. "Our highest mission, said a swami, is to create new life. How many children do you have? When I bowed my head, he offered prayer" (97). When Prakash, Jasmine's first husband, is murdered, she moves back to live with her mother. The two are shunned by married women and only associate with other widows. The consensus was "My mother and I should stay together, two widows shopping and cooking for each other, keeping the shrines of their husbands alive" (97-8). Unable to keep house for a man, they are only fit to keep house as widows for widows.

This depiction of a strict patriarchal division of gender roles reflected and affected by spatial gender divisions has drawn criticism as creating an essentialist version of the Indian Other against which a more "enlightened" version of gender is presented in the United States.[19] Leaving aside the question of whether or not representational accuracy is required of the novel, and, for the moment, the fact that Jasmine is more domestic in the

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[19] For example, Susan Koshy writes, "In a strange alliance of liberal feminism, capitalism, and neocolonialism, Mukherjee's critique of the patriarchal practices of indigenous and diasporic Indian culture gets narrativized, in *Jasmine*, as the emancipatory journey from Third to First World" (71). See also Inderpal Grewal, pages 58-65 and Shankar, page 64.

United States than she is in India, the presentation of gender in India is more complex than those critics allow. While Jasmine's grandmother and the villagers believe that a woman's place is in the home and that Jasmine should marry a widower when the opportunity arises (thereby demonstrating the differential treatment of male and female, widower and widow: women are to remain celibate while men are supposed to remarry), this is not what happens. Jasmine's mother and teacher argue that she should be allowed to continue her schooling beyond the point normally allowed for girls in the village, instead of being married off at 13. Her teacher, Masterji, argues "'that modern ladies go for secondary-school education and find themselves positions. They are not shackling themselves to wifehood and maternity first chance. ... many bright ladies are finding positions'" (50). Masterji's argument appears to be about time; in the modern, contemporary world that India is a part of, women have more freedom than in the more "traditional" village world. The emphasis on the differing times of the Indian village and Indian town/city is reinforced by Prakash's constant railing against the "feudal" organization of Hasnapur. However, Masterji's argument is also spatial. In modern India, he claims, women are no longer confined, or shackled, to the space of the domestic. In fact, they find "positions," by which he means employment, but the spatial colloquialism should not be overlooked. A position is outside of the home and therefore in opposition to the space of the private realm previously allocated to women. Thus, Masterji's argument is really one about space; in the current space of India, women are no longer to be spatially defined as homemakers, but are free to find positions in the space of the public realm. This spatial freedom is to be achieved through continued access to the only previously available public space, school. While he initially protests,

59

Jasmine's father acquiesces to Jasmine's wishes and she continues her education in the hopes that she can one day become a doctor. While Jasmine's father still decides her fate, and the terms of the debate continue to binarize space and denigrate the female, divisions based on gender are beginning to show flexibility and complexity in the novel's portrayal of India.

Never again in the novel are the spatial divisions of gender as strict as they seem to be in Hasnapur, and yet, even as Jasmine gains increasing access to space throughout the novel, she never ceases to be defined by spatialized gender divisions. An examination of Jasmine's ability and necessity of movement through space demonstrates the extent to which gender divisions remain. In her study of Asian American literature, Sau-ling Cynthia Wong notes the relation between mobility and power. Wong argues that America has defined itself, in part, as a land of increased mobility, defined by "the opportunity to go where one wants, do what one wants, shape life anew" (118). Wong argues that this opportunity exists only for those, primarily white, Americans accepted into the dominant culture, and thus has historically not been available to Asian Americans (123). Wong draws on this fact in her examination of the literature of Asian American mobility, which paradoxically, is really a literature of immobility (123). She thus defines the differences between Anglo American and Asian American mobility as the difference between "Extravagance" and "Necessity" (121).

> In the former, horizontal movement across the North American continent regularly connotes independence, freedom, and opportunity for individual actualization and/or societal renewal – in short, Extravagance. In the latter, however, it is usually associated with subjugation, coercion,

impossibility of fulfillment for self or community – in short, Necessity.

(121)

Clearly, then, one's mobility is related to one's position in systems of power/subjugation. Wong is primarily concerned with the power and subjugation in the United States based on "race;" the distinction made in the US between Anglo and Asian Americans. However, mobility can be used as a measure of positioning on a continuum of power/subjugation in other terms, especially in terms of gender.

While Jasmine gains access to more space in moving from Hasnapur to Jullundhar, her movement in space is still under the control of men, and it continues to be throughout the novel. As an educated, male Indian in India, Prakash may have access to a mobility of Extravagance but Jasmine is forced to travel primarily out of Necessity. Prakash's "independence, freedom, and opportunity for individual actualization" are signified through his movement in space. After their marriage, "instead of moving in with his uncle's family, as the uncle had expected us to … he rented a two-room apartment in a three-story building across the street from the technical college" (76). His aunt and uncle both voice complaints about the violation of tradition, but Prakash "was a modern man, a city man" who characterized such complaints as feudal. Attending classes at the technical college, Prakash breaks free from the spatial constraints of traditional Indian society in order to advance his own self-actualization, hallmarks of his mobility of Extravagance. As his wife, Jasmine also violates tradition by not moving in with her in-laws, but she seems to have no agency in this assertion of control over their mobility; "instead of moving in with his uncle's family, as the uncle had expected us to … he rented a two-room apartment" (76). Jasmine and Prakash move into the apartment,

61

but the only reference in the sentence to Jasmine is in the collective pronoun "us," which is buried in the middle of the sentence and, as the object of the uncle's expectations, connotes no agency. Control of the movement is specifically ascribed to Prakash; "he rented" the apartment. Apparently, Jasmine had nothing to do with it.

Jasmine's lack of independence in the marriage is confirmed in the pages that follow; she wants to follow some of the more traditional roles of a married couple but Prakash insists that they not.[20] She must call him by name and they will not have children, despite Jasmine's desire to do so and feelings of failure for not having children after marriage. Their conflict is constantly represented spatially as the difference between village India and city India, modern India and feudal India, etc. In reference to the decision not to move in with relatives, Jasmine notes: "For the uncle, love was control. Respect was obedience. For Prakash, love was letting go. Independence, self-reliance: I learned the litany by heart. But I felt suspended between worlds" (76). Prakash breaks free from control and obedience of familial traditions, but Jasmine does not. She learns the litany, denoting her supplication, and her abandonment of tradition is paradoxically the only way she can cling to tradition, through respect and obedience to her husband. Again the conflict is represented spatially; she is "suspended between worlds." Significantly, her movement to this new position is a movement of Necessity; she must subjugate herself to her husband somehow. She notes, "There was no winning these arguments. … he was twenty-four and I was fifteen, a village fifteen, ready to be led" (78). Every marker of power is in Prakash's favor; he is male, he is older; she is

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[20] Kristin Carter-Sanborn similarly argues that we must read Prakash's desire to "remake [Jasmine] in the shape of [his] own fantasies" and his ability to do so as a sign that Jasmine lacks the agency many have ascribed to her (579).

female, younger, from the village, and therefore "ready to be led." In her movement she can only follow.

Jasmine's movement remains a movement of Necessity throughout the novel, and her gender, while not the only factor in mediating her movement, remains significant. She returns home to Hasnapur upon Prakash's death because a widow is not allowed to go anywhere else. Her next move is to America, and while her breaking free of the house of widowhood to move to America might seem to be a move of freedom and independence, again the situation is far more complex than it may appear at first. Sociologists explain that a combination of push-pull factors motivates immigration: a set of reasons pushes immigrants from their home and another set of reasons pulls immigrants to their destination. In Jasmine's case, the push-pull factors both relate to gender. The strict enforcement of gender roles for widows pushes her from Hasnapur. Her means of escape, the pull factor, is not simply one of freedom and independence or self-actualization, however. The novel suggests that the only route out of the space of the widow is sati, or widow self-immolation (a practice Jasmine's mother attempts also). Jasmine's "choice," therefore, is death through stasis or death through fire. She chooses the latter, and decides that in order to heighten the significance of the act she will first fulfill her husband's wish of taking her to America, where she will perform the ritual on the campus of the university he was to attend.[21] "Prakash had taken Jyoti and created Jasmine, and Jasmine would complete the mission of Prakash. ...A matter of duty and honor" (97). Thus, Jasmine's migration from India to the United States is not that of Extravagance, of the "transnational class" traveling out of economic opportunity and not

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[21] Shankar notes that Jasmine "merely aspires to be a good wife. In fact, like Sita, Jyoti accepts exile to a foreign land for her husband's sake" (74). Sita, Shankar explains in a footnote, is an Indian goddess known for "her loyalty to her husband" (81).

necessity (Miyoshi 742). Nor does she travel for the economic reasons motivating the

rest of the "immense semiskilled and unskilled surplus labor, ... feeding into the mass

underclass in every industrialized region" (Miyoshi 742), though she is a member of their

ranks. Rather, Jasmine travels as a doubly dutiful widow, fulfilling her husband's desires

and then sacrificing herself on a symbolic funeral pyre.

Once in America, race, class, and gender mediate Jasmine's travels. Several

critics have noted that Jasmine faces relatively little in the way of racism in the United

States, even arguing that the lack of racism is necessary in order to promote the narrative

of assimilation and immigrant progress.[22] It is true that Jasmine's transitions in America

seem largely unhindered by race, though racism is never completely nonexistent.

However, the United States is strongly marked by racism for Jasmine because entry into

the space of the United States requires a confrontation with racism and sexism so brutal

that Jasmine's survival is not guaranteed.[23] Immediately upon landing on U.S. shores,

Jasmine is gendered by spatial division. She begins to walk into Florida on her own

when Half-Face, the captain of the boat that smuggled in the immigrants, warns her she

should not be traveling alone, saying "'There's some bad fellows up yonder'" (108). The

implication is that this space is not safe for women, though with a man she should be

protected. Of course, Half-Face is the bad fellow about whom Jasmine needs to be most

concerned. To Half-Face Jasmine is less than human on the grounds of her race and her

gender. Half-Face tells her, "'In the nigger-shipping bizness we don't bother with last

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[22] See, for example, Susan Koshy, who argues that "By resisting the inscription of ethnic difference as racial difference, Mukherjee is able to circumvent the intransigence of race in the elaboration of a fiction of American possibility" (76).
[23] Class is also very much at issue in Jasmine's illegal and dangerous border crossing at night on a shrimp boat, which is the only method of entry available to "a coarse, common girl, a peasant" such as Jasmine (105).

names'" (111). To Half-Face, all non-whites can be categorized under the same epithet, regardless of their origin. The racial epithet is designed to deny the individual's humanity, a fact that is reinforced in Half-Face's belief that his business is one of shipping, as if he were simply transporting cargo, not human beings. Similarly, Half-Face does not believe Jasmine has seen a television, let alone has a husband who can repair them, because, as he says, "'I been to Asia and it's the armpit of the universe'" (112). Just as with his racial epithet, Half-Face is not interested in distinctions as broad as the difference between Vietnam (where he has "been") and India, or the idea that anyone in any of these places might have knowledge and access to the things of the West. Jasmine and others like her are simply commodities for his use and abuse.

For Half-Face's purposes, Jasmine's gender is just as relevant, and just as dehumanizing. Aware of the impending rape and trying to dissuade it by appealing to his sympathy, Jasmine explains that she is a widow on a mission for her husband. Half-Face responds, "'Okay, I'll buy that. You're a grieving widow. But you're also one prime little piece, and where I come from, that cancels out'" (115). Jasmine's attractiveness is essential in almost all of her travels, each of which is facilitated by men who are sexually attracted to her. Half-Face is the only one of them who points out the transaction in its basest terms, offering to transport her to Tampa for access to her body. Of course, Half-Face does not require her to accept the "offer." To Half-Face, her consent is not necessary because she is simply a "piece," an object for his taking. All of this transpires immediately upon Jasmine's entrance into America. "My first night in America was spent in a motel with plywood over its windows, its pool bottomed with garbage sacks, and grass growing in its parking lot" (109). Jasmine's class, race, and gender lead her to

this space, where racism, sexism, and violence accompany the space of the motel where "the only lights that worked blazed a big red NO in front of VACANCY" (110). Jasmine is not welcome in this space, there is no room for her except as a commodity in the spaces where "no tourist would ever stay" (110).

Carmen Wickramagamage argues persuasively that Jasmine's one moment of agency comes when she emulates Kali and murders Half-Face in vengeance for her rape (186). However, Jasmine's agency is short lived. Having escaped the space of danger in the motel, Jasmine quickly returns to the gendered spaces of America and to subordinating herself to the desire of others. She notes of her various transformations, "We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams" (29). Apparently she has completely missed what (temporarily) set her free; she murdered Half-Face and his racial, spatial, gendered definition of her, not herself. In fact, what Jasmine learns from Half-Face is that the gender roles she learned in India will not protect her in the United States.[24] Jasmine seeks protection from Half-Face by explaining that she is there to fulfill her duty as a widow. Half-Face tells her, "'If you hadn't been carrying this bag, you wouldn't be in the deep shit now, you know that?'" and advises her to travel light (114). The bag contained her husband's suit and her widow sari. She planned to wear the sari and burn herself on the suit. Gender roles in the United States are different, however, and her attempt to carry her gender roles from India only causes difficulty. Leaving the motel after the murder, she notes "With the first streaks of dawn, my first full American day, I walked out the front drive of the motel to the highway and began my journey, traveling light" (121). She has learned her lesson from Half-Face,

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[24] See Wickramagamage for a reading of the rape-murder as the moment when Jasmine makes the "successful transcultural migration," albeit not without enormous cost (186).

gender comes with a different baggage requirement in the new space. She has not,

however, learned how not to conform to gender roles.

Despite the differences in gender roles and expectations between the two

countries, the spatial division of gender in the United States is not radically different than

in India. The space of women is still primarily the private space of the home while men

participate in the public realm of work. In fact, when Jasmine moves to New York City,

her first space, Professorji's home in an Indian ghetto, resembles India more than it

resembles what she thinks should be the space of the United States. This is just one

reflection in the novel of the transnational migration prevalent in the late twentieth-

century. Professorji has come to America for its economic opportunity and recruits his

former students to do the same. The result of these push-pull factors is that "Flushing

was a neighborhood in Jullundhar" (148). Accordingly, the Vadheras force Jasmine to

resume the role of the dutiful widow in exchange for room and board; she "cooked,

shopped, and cleaned, tended the old folks" (148). Once again her gender role is

characterized spatially; as a widow in a somewhat traditional Indian family, her space is

that of the home while Professorji works in the public realm. Having learned from Half-

Face that the role of the Indian widow is not viable in America, Jasmine is extremely

unhappy with her situation in Queens, noting "I was spiraling into depression behind the

fortress of Punjabiness. ... In Flushing I felt immured. An imaginary brick wall topped

with barbed wire cut me off ... I was a prisoner doing unreal time" (148). Jasmine sees

her role spatially, figuring herself as behind fortress walls and a prisoner cut off from the

world by brick walls and barbed wire. She is spatially confined to the home and the

gender role of the dutiful widow. Her sense of confinement is compounded by her status

as an illegal immigrant. "Without a green card ... I didn't feel safe going outdoors" (148-49). Jasmine's gender and her illegal status confine her to the space of the Vadheras' home, and the spatial division between the public and private in turn contributes to her definition as a female illegal immigrant, "a prisoner doing unreal time." Space in America is not automatically less confining than the space Jasmine left behind.

Jasmine escapes to what seems to her to be a different world when she moves from the Vadhera's to Taylor and Wylie's apartment in upper Manhattan, and yet the distance from Queens to Manhattan is not that great. In fact, Jasmine is still defined spatially. She notes, "I became an American in an apartment on Claremont Avenue across the street from a Barnard college dormitory" (165). As in the opening of the novel, Jasmine uses spatial markers in defining herself. While the designation American might signify any number of things, it is most literally a nationality and thus determined by spatial borders. The rest of the sentence reinforces the spatiality of the description, locating Jasmine in an apartment, on a particular street, near to a (woman's) college.[25] Despite being "transformed" from an Indian to an American, the spatial division of labor continues to define Jasmine. She becomes American *inside* the apartment where her role is as a "day mummy." While day mummy is a term defined by time and role, Jasmine is Duff's caregiver during the day when Wylie is not home, it is also defined spatially.[26] "Day mummy takes her to the Y, to the park, to the market" (177). Jasmine lives with Wylie, Taylor, and Duff, and leaves the house primarily to do the shopping and childcare. Even in America as an "American," Jasmine's space is that of the traditional female

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[25] The presence here of a reference to a woman's college may indicate that education as a public good remains segregated by gender in America, again collapsing the difference between America and India in the novel.
[26] The spatial politics of this role are also related to the transnational class: "There were other day mummies in the building ... Letitia from Trinidad, and Jamaica from Barbados" (178).

gender role. While Jasmine feels she has come a long way from Queens, her gender role has not changed much from what it was in Hasnapur.

Jasmine's movement in America, from Queens to Manhattan and Manhattan to Iowa for example, remains a movement of Necessity mediated by gender. For example, Jasmine believes that if she remains in the place of the widow at the Vadheras she "would have died" (142). On the one hand this might be seen as hyperbole, as there was no imminent physical threat to her life. However, it was only just recently that Jasmine nearly died in the motel room in Florida for aspiring to the role of the Indian widow in America. Thus her movement from Queens to Manhattan is not one of self-advancement but one of self-preservation, more necessity than extravagance. Gender mediates her need and ability to make this move as well. She feels threatened by the expectations of the Vadheras and so she wants to leave. She cannot leave, however, without Professorji's assistance and consent, for he has the funds and the connections to procure her forged papers. Jasmine cannot simply decide to leave (especially since she "didn't feel safe going outdoors" without documents), she must have Professorji's permission. Finally, Jasmine cannot go anywhere she pleases; she can only move from one domestic role to another. At this point, Jasmine's movement is almost entirely determined by her gender. Similarly, Jasmine's move from New York to Iowa is a movement of Necessity based on gender. Jasmine flees New York immediately after Sukhwinder, who had murdered her husband in an attack she believes was meant for her, spots her. Jasmine believes that, knowing she is in New York, Sukhwinder will continue to be a threat to her. In Jullundhar, when setting off the bomb, Sukhwinder screamed "'Prostitutes! Whores!'" and Jasmine believes that his murderous rage is a result of her violation of his view of

gender norms (93). Thus, Jasmine's movement from New York to Iowa is under coercion, she again moves because of a threat to her life predicated on gender.

Jasmine does not simply allow herself to be defined by the spatialized norms of gender division; she actively participates in their reproduction to the benefit of the patriarchal system, thereby perpetuating the spatial-subjective system in steady state. This is most clearly demonstrated in Iowa where her adherence to gender roles begins to appear to be more of a matter of choice. It is in Iowa that Jasmine finally has a job outside of the home, working at Bud Ripplemeyer's bank. This fact is only mentioned once, however, and most of the narrative of her time in Iowa describes her role as wife, mother to her adopted son Du, and caretaker for Bud after he is paralyzed. Of course, Jasmine did not choose for Bud to be shot and to become his caretaker, but she had long since chosen to take on the role of housewife in Iowa, only refusing to actually marry so as not to become a widow yet again.[27] It is ultimately impossible to fully sort out causality, for while spatial gender divisions contribute to Jasmine assuming certain gender roles, her actions in the various households she enters continue to reproduce the spatial divisions and gender roles. While many critics argue that Jasmine's ability to change her identity as she moves from place to place indicates her agency and increasing control over her life, the fact is that she is almost never responsible for the changing of her name.[28] Someone else almost always bestows upon her her "new" identity: Prakash changes her name from Jyoti to Jasmine, Lillian Gordon changes her name from Jasmine to Jazzy, Taylor changes her name to Jase, and Bud changes it to Jane. Jasmine

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[27] I have suggested that Jasmine's fear of widowhood stems from her realization that Indian gender roles are not always appropriate to American gender expectations. Wickramagamage takes a slightly different view, suggesting that Jasmine's fear of widowhood stems from her inability to fully shed Indian norms that see "widowhood as the worst of all possible misfortunes" (187).
[28] For an example, see Carmen Wickramagamage's "Relocation as Positive Act."

acknowledges the imbrication of her identity and her gender role when she notes "I have

had a husband for each of the women I have been" (197). This sentence conveys the

ambiguity of the situation I am attempting to describe.[29] The use of the personal pronoun

"I" in the subject position and the possessive "have had" denotes Jasmine's agency. And

yet, what she has had is a husband and the phrase "each of the women I have been"

reminds us that in each manifestation of her identity Jasmine has been defined primarily

as a wife. In fact, each time she has a new identity it is almost always the same: wife,

homemaker, caretaker, whether in India or America. Jasmine's role does not really

change, only the role of her husband is played by different players.

That Jasmine is complicit (though she has had little choice) in reproducing the

spatial divisions that define her can be seen as she gradually decides to leave Bud and

Iowa to head West with Taylor and Duff. The wheels of this last movement are set in

motion when Jasmine receives a postcard from Taylor announcing that he is on the way

to Iowa and that she should wait for him. Shortly thereafter, Du leaves for California,

and Jasmine considers the situation:

> Had things worked out differently ... Du would have had the father of any
>
> boy's dream, a funny, generous, impulsive father, an American father
>
> from the heartland like the American lover I had for only a year. I would
>
> have had a husband, a place to call home. This, I realize, is not it. (224)

The movement in the passage from what Du has lost through Bud's paralysis to what

Jasmine has lost indicates that she is displacing her feelings onto Du. It is her dream of

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[29] Deepika Bahri also discusses the ambiguity of Jasmine's movement from man to man. On the one hand, Bahri suggests that Jasmine capitalizes on her "value" in the "libidinal economy," using it to her advantage. On the other hand, "the same libidinal economy that gives her valence as an attractive gendered subject exposes her, as woman, to the danger of being silenced, fixed, and subjugated" (149).

an American father that has been lost. Bud was the ideal father and husband and lover in Jasmine's mind; she finally achieved the goal of being the wife and mother she had wanted to be for Prakash, but all was lost when Bud was shot. Interestingly, "a place to call home" represents the pinnacle of Jasmine's desire. The entire list of lost desire culminates in a home and she the homemaker. Ultimately she realizes that Bud cannot be the man she needs him to be to construct the home space she desires. From this point, her departure seems almost inevitable. Yet, as always, Jasmine cannot simply leave; her movement is never entirely one of extravagance for she is ever unable to move of her own volition. Jasmine can only leave Bud and Iowa on the wings of another man (and child). When Taylor and Duff arrive, Jasmine can leave because she knows she can occupy the position of wife and mother she has been pursuing over the course of the entire novel.

Reading the end of the novel in light of Jasmine's meditations on her broken home and the novel's emphasis on the spatial constructions throughout India and America clarifies what choice Jasmine is actually making. When Taylor and Duff arrive, Taylor makes his offer to Jasmine by saying, "'We'll be an unorthodox family, Jase'" (238). Contemplating this offer and her options, Jasmine notes, "I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness" (240). On one level, Jasmine's choice *is* between men. She seems unable to move without some impetus from a man, and she has not contemplated leaving Bud and Iowa until Taylor's postcard suggests it. On the other hand, Jasmine describes the choice as a spatial one; it is a choice between America and the "old-world," which in this case is

Iowa.[30] What distinguishes these spaces is Jasmine's anticipated role. Taylor represents

America, where Jasmine can be a part of a family as a mother and wife, however

unorthodox. Bud represents old-world dutifulness, where Jasmine must be a caretaker.

Du has left and Bud is no longer able to occupy the patriarchal role, leaving Jasmine

effectively a widow without family in Iowa. Her sense of the loss of familial ties to Iowa

is underscored when she tells Taylor, "'I have family in California'" (239). Critics often

read Jasmine's decision to leave Iowa at the end of the novel as confirmation that she has

finally come in to her own as an independent agent, able to move of her own will. One

might argue that she finally accesses a mobility of Extravagance characterized by

"independence, freedom, and opportunity for individual actualization" (Wong 121).

However, the last paragraph of the novel begins, "Then there is nothing I can do" (241).

Jasmine's "choice" to leave is not characterized as her choice but as inevitable. She

remains under the thrall of the men in her life; her only choice is one between what kind

of spatial division of gender roles she will succumb to, the widow/caregiver or the

wife/homemaker.[31]

No matter what decisions Jasmine makes throughout the novel she is almost

always choosing a space that will prove beneficial to patriarchy, no matter how that

might change within and between India and America. Doreen Massey notes that "spatial

form is an important element in the constitution of power itself" (22). As I have

demonstrated, spatial form in Jasmine is almost always that of a division of space

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[30] There are several references in the novel to the farming spaces of America, in Florida and in Iowa, being akin to rural communities in India. Paying close attention to the construction of space in the novel undermines the argument of critics that suggest America and India are described as polar opposites.
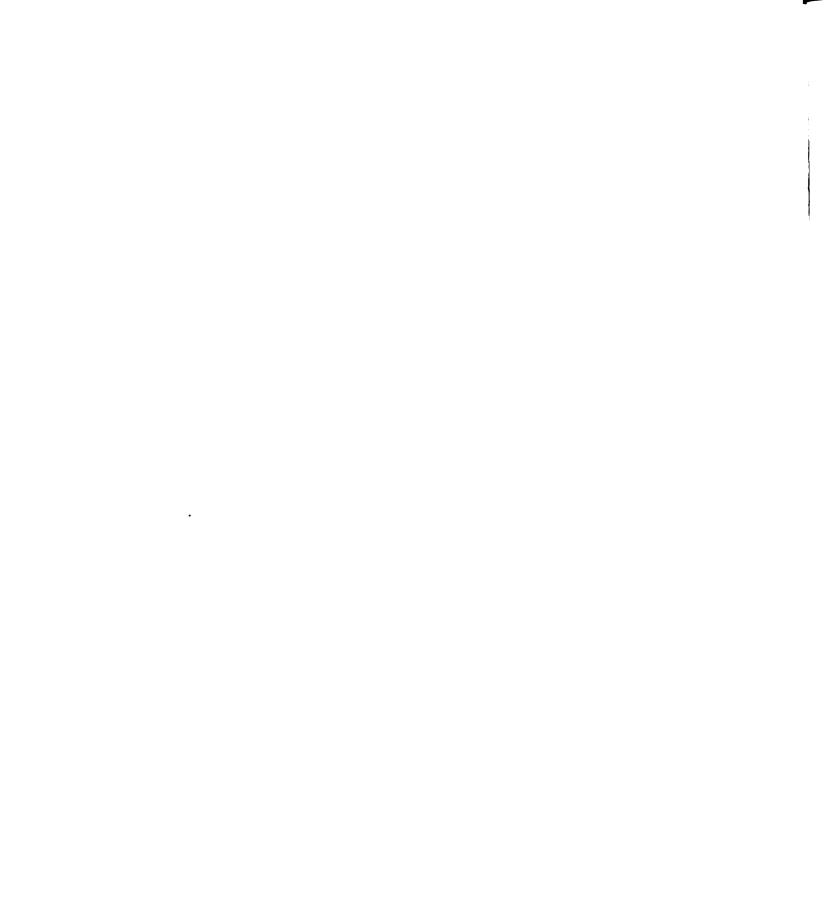[31] In the context of a discussion about Jasmine making herself appear exotic to Americans, Susan Koshy makes a similar point, noting "the possibilities for self-making are determined by the terms of the dominant culture" (78).

between the private (female) and the public (male). Jasmine's labor in the home allows

Prakash to attend school in Jullundhar and imagine immigrating to America. Her labor

enables both Taylor and Wylie to work outside of the home, and her labor provides for

Bud after his paralysis. One can speculate that it is not a coincidence that, having lost his

wife, Taylor picks up Jasmine in Iowa before embarking on his new career in California.

After all, someone has to look after Duff while Taylor works. In fact, the postcard Taylor

sends Jasmine focuses mostly on Duff. It begins, "DUFF AND I'RE HEADING YOUR

WAY. SHE STILL DOESN'T KNOW AND I'M HOPING YOU'LL HELP" (208).

The implication is that Duff doesn't know they are going to pick up Jasmine, but the

meaning is somewhat ambiguous, especially in regards to what Taylor wants help with.

One can assume that he wants help with caring for Duff, since he has never been

portrayed as much of a caregiver and Jasmine has already occupied the position of Duff's

"mummy." No matter what changes occur in the spaces Jasmine traverses, the spatial-

subjective system remains in a steady state. Space and the subject reproduce one another,

albeit with variations, such that the spatial division of gender roles continuously benefits

patriarchy by subordinating and devaluing the work of women.

     In Jasmine, patriarchy is never alone in determining the constitution of space and

subjectivity in the novel. An analysis of the spatial-subjective system and its benefits to

systems of power in the novel also illuminates the workings of capitalism often described

as late capital or globalization. In global capitalism, postmodern space produces

postmodern subjects and the two reproduce one another in a steady-state, all to the

benefit of globalized capital. That the spaces of the novel constitute postmodern space is

evident in the time-space compression of the space of the novel as well as the

increasingly "global" nature of the space of the novel. Both of these aspects of the novel's space can be seen in the dismantling of the story line. The discourse order of the novel is not chronological. The novel jumps from Hasnapur to Iowa to Jullundhar to New York without regard to the order in which things happened. The result is that one loses the sense of the distance in time and space between the events from Jasmine's childhood and the events in the United States. Distance is often a marker of difference in spatial terms. The collapse of spatial distance, then, leads to a loss of difference between spaces. The novel strengthens this impression by suggesting that the spaces of America and India are not that different after all. "Iowa's dull and it's flat, he said. So is Punjab, I said" (6); "The farmers around here are like the farmers I grew up with" (11); [of Florida farms] "It was as though I'd never left India" (128); "Flushing was a neighborhood in Jullundhar" (148). Whether urban or rural, the differences between India and America are not as great as Jasmine expects.

The compression of time and space is perhaps a result of the increasing "globalization" of the late twentieth century. Globalization is characterized by an increasingly interconnected world of goods, services, and labor such that former impediments of distance and/or national boundary seem to be traversed with relative ease (though Jasmine makes clear that it is not as easy as it might at first seem). Thus, Anthony Alessandrini notes that when Sukhwinder turns up in Manhattan, "the traveling au pair and the traveling 'terrorist' meeting in Manhattan – suggests the kinds of conjunctions created by global flows of labor" (276). Indeed, both kinds of transnational labor Miyoshi describes, those of the "exclusive and privileged class" as well as "semiskilled and unskilled surplus labor" (742) are found throughout the novel. From the

day mommies to the migrant farm workers, from Professorji to the Asian doctors Jasmine

seeks out in Iowa, the international flow of labor makes America seem a globalized

marketplace. In fact, in the globalized marketplace, distance is so immaterial that an

Indian can labor in America without leaving India at all.

> A hair from some peasant's head in Hasnapur could travel across oceans
>
> and save an American meteorologist's reputation. Nothing was rooted
>
> anymore. Everything was in motion. (152)

The hair is no longer rooted to the head or to the body's location. In a globalized world,

there are no boundaries to prevent movement or motion from India to the United States.[32]

The Indian hair performs the labor for the American meteorologist, transnational

migration of labor occurs, without the body ever leaving place. Global village.

The compression of time-space and the globalization of postmodern space results

in the production of an increasingly fragmented subject. As space becomes more

interconnected and the differences usually associated with distance are obviated, small

differences of locality can become heightened (Harvey 295-296). Furthermore, the

ability of the transnational, postmodern subject to travel with (relative) ease across so

many spaces similarly leads to pressures to adapt to each new space the subject inhabits.

Jasmine notes this effect of her travels and believes that, in another age, she never would

have left Hasnapur. Globalization has made her travels possible however, and their effect

is to make more apparent the fragmentation of Jasmine's subjectivity. She has a new

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[32] Deepika Bahri notes that movement in the novel in general is characteristic of a globalized, transnational world (153).

identity for each locale.[33] "Jyoti of Hasnapur was not Jasmine, Duff's day mummy and Taylor and Wylie's *au pair* in Manhattan; *that* Jasmine isn't *this* Jane Ripplemeyer having lunch with Mary Webb at the University Club today" (127, emphasis in original). The mutability of the subject is a common characteristic of postmodern descriptions of subjectivity. What is noteworthy in the case of <u>Jasmine</u> is the connection that is drawn between this prototypically postmodern paradigm and the production of the spatial-subjective system. In other words, <u>Jasmine</u> suggests that the mutability of the subject is not simply a symptom of the postmodern; it is directly related to the globalization characteristic of postmodern space. The differences in Jasmine's subjectivity are marked spatially as Jyoti of Hasnapur, Jasmine in Manhattan, and Jane at the University Club (in Iowa).

As much as Jasmine learns to embrace the painful process of remaking her subjectivity to suit each new space, her much celebrated flexibility and mutability do not entirely erase previous incarnations of herself. She often carries aspects of her previous identities with her into each new situation, telling Du stories from Indian folklore, subverting the taste buds of Elsa County with her Indian cooking, etc. This has led to several critics celebrating her "hybridity" and suggesting that it has the power to transform each new space that she enters.[34] It should also be recognized, however, that her celebrated hybridity is the result of her inhabiting globalized space and cannot be entirely separated from the potentially negative consequences such space might bring to

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[33] Wickramagamage notes "Human identity, when it comes to Jasmine, assumes an amoeba-like consistency that can continuously reshape itself as befits its particular location" (189). Suzanne Kehde also notes the seeming contingency of Jasmine's identity (72).

[34] The usage of the term hybridity here seems to mean being composed of different cultural components. How different this is from all subjectivity is open to question. However, I will maintain the usage of the term while exploring the validity of the claims made for its subversive power.

bear. Her movement through time and space, from Hasnapur to Iowa, is what allows her

to collect identities and characteristics of each locale that she can then bring to the next.

Furthermore, the critics who celebrate the transformative potential of Jasmine's

hybridity tend to assume that the change wrought by her presence in the United States

will be beneficial.[35] A closer examination of Jasmine's effect on the spatial-subjective

system, however, reveals that she tends to reproduce the postmodern space of late capital,

which benefits capital but is highly detrimental to more traditional spaces, and that her

hybridity also tends to participate in her own alienation. Jasmine's presence in Iowa is a

symptom of globalization. While her route is highly individualized, she is a symbol of

the transnational class. As such, she contributes to the increasing globalization of Iowa,

but she is not the only sign of its presence.

> In the brave new world of Elsa County, Karin Ripplemeyer runs a suicide
>
> hot line. Bud Ripplemeyer has adopted a Vietnamese and is shacked up
>
> with a Punjabi girl. There's a Vietnamese network. There are Hmong,
>
> with a church of their own, turning out quilts for Lutheran relief. (229)

Jasmine suggests that the presence of the world in Elsa county means that "a way of life

[is] coming to an end" (229). Vietnamese, Hmong, Punjabi; no longer is Elsa County,

Iowa a white farming community isolated from the world.[36] This globalization of Iowa

may bring many benefits in terms of cultural enrichment, but it also has negative effects.

The transnational flow of labor is accompanied by the transnational flow of goods. Elsa

County participates in this aspect of globalization as well. For example, Bud has been on

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[35] See, for example, Sherry Morton-Mollo's "Cultural Collisions: Dislocation, Reinvention, and Resolution in Bharati Mukherjee."

[36] Of course, the "white" farmers had already been divided between Germans, Scandinavians, etc. Iowa was always already global. Jasmine suggests the scope and speed of this phenomenon has increased, making it a part of the postmodern globalization of late capital.

a bankers' trip to China where they are seeking new soybean markets. The opening of world markets and the consequent globalization of Iowa is directly responsible for the economic hardships faced by the traditional family farm reflected in the novel by the suicide of Darrel and the suicide and murder attempt of Harlan, farmers who saw no future for their way of life. Similar economic effects are occurring simultaneously to the small farmers of Hasnapur (again, attention to spatial detail indicates that the novel's portrayal of India is not as essentialist as some critics charge). Jasmine does not produce these economic effects of globalization, but her hybridity is both a symptom and a cause of the processes of globalization in Elsa County and cannot, therefore, be considered as universally positive.

Nor can her hybridity be seen as universally positive in terms of her own subjectivity. While Jasmine is able to assimilate to the culture of rural Iowa, she remains a hybrid subject, possessing characteristics from Iowa and India. Far from being universally subversive, her Indian characteristics are often all the more pronounced in the context of Iowa and simply serve to reaffirm the perceived differences between Jasmine and others. At a fundraiser for Ethiopia where blond haired dolls and other "all-American" items are sold, Jasmine notes, "Every quilt auctioned, every jar of apple butter licked clean had helped somebody like me ... I felt too exotic, too alien" (202). While a member of the community in Iowa, Jasmine remains alien, and feels objectified as such. "Bud courts me because I am alien. I am darkness, mystery, inscrutability" (200). Even those who are closest to her in Iowa see her as an other, alien and stereotypically Oriental (dark, mysterious, and inscrutable). Her neighbor Darrel also feels the pull toward the exotic; "he wants to fly away to Tahiti, to Mars, to the moon, he wants to make love to an

Indian princess" (217). The series Tahiti, Mars, the moon, ... Indian princess indicates

the degree to which Jasmine is not of this world. She remains an unassimilable other,

unable to be seen as a human. There is often a violent edge to this perception of her as

other. In a bar outside of town, Jasmine elicits the following comment; "'I don't know

nothing about horsepower, but I know *whore*power when I see it!' His next words were

in something foreign, but probably Japanese or Thai or Filipino, something bar girls

responded to in places where he'd spent his rifle-toting youth" (201, emphasis in

original). The bar patron cannot distinguish between India and the Far East, all of Asia is

the same to him, and all Asian women are whores.[37] Jasmine's hybridity, therefore,

cannot prevent Iowans seeing her as alien.[38] Whether this manifests in her

characterization as a princess or a whore, the responses are two sides of the same

objectifying coin. In neither case is Jasmine seen as human. As Bahri noted in the

context of her libidinal value, Jasmine's ability to trade on her exchange value as an

exotic object may have some benefit to her, but it cannot be accomplished without the

accompanying subjugation.

The space of late capital makes evident the production of Jasmine as a

fragmented, hybrid subject who participates in the reproduction of globalized space. The

benefits of this process to Jasmine are ambiguous. The benefits to the system of capital,

however, are clear. Just as the unskilled labor segment of the transnational class supports

patriarchy by providing cheap childcare through immigrant labor, such a system is also of

benefit to capital. Jasmine's role as Duff's day mummy allows both Taylor and Wylie to

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[37] His knowledge of a foreign language, like the Vietnamese Du's teacher speaks, is another sign of globalization, and its negative effects on those without power in the globalized world.

[38] Wickaramagamage also notes that those in Iowa tend to emphasize Jasmine as exotic, but she maintains that hybridity will ultimately undo such distinctions (190-191). Mita Banerjee, on the other hand, agrees that hybridity fails in its task of "dehierarchization" (148).

work outside of the home, enabling the two wage-earner household that is increasingly common. Immigrant labor keeps the cost of childcare artificially low, suppressing wages for those working outside of the home while relieving businesses of the cost of childcare benefits. Similarly, the novel is replete with migrant farm laborers from the transnational class who keep the cost of agricultural labor suppressed as well. The savings from these labor costs accrue to capital. The skilled segment of the transnational labor class is also an integral component of the system of late capital. Almost in passing Jasmine makes note of the preponderance of Asian doctors in Iowa. Labor shortages among knowledge workers are as debilitating as labor shortages elsewhere, and are avoided through the importation of labor such as the medical doctors from India who work in Iowa.

New immigrants also create new markets and new consumers for capital to exploit. Jasmine's inauguration into consumer culture marks her transformation into an "American." She begins ordering merchandise from television until she reaches the point where she "was turning over my entire paycheck for things I couldn't use and didn't know how to stop" (186). The postmodern subject is a consumer subject (as we will see in DeLillo's White Noise), and Jasmine's transformations in the spatial-subjective system make her ever more suited to the space of late capital that she occupies (in Hasnapur, Jasmine earns nothing and contributes nothing to the economy; with each transformation in her identity, her earning power and consumption increases). Finally, as Gerry Smyth suggests, hybridity may also be reincorporated into the ideology of late capitalism (50). Hybridity may act to reinforce the borders that delineate between self and other (Smyth 51). This strengthening of difference and the postmodern proliferation of difference and fragmentation can be capitalized (in fact, Harvey and Jameson suggest it is created by

capital precisely in order to be capitalized). Difference becomes a product that can be bought and sold, just as Darrel buys an "'Oriental herb garden'" and cooks an Indian meal in a bumbling effort to woo Jasmine from Bud.[39] The postmodern spatial-subjective system in steady-state, therefore, produces and reproduces subjects and spaces that benefit capitalism.

Devil in a Blue Dress: _Race, Law, and the Subject of Border Crossing_

Devil in a Blue Dress shares many characteristics with Jasmine. In both novels, spatial divisions are used to reinforce hierarchies of race and gender and the protagonists, while nominally increasing their own power throughout the novel, ultimately reinforce the spatial hierarchies and reproduce the spatial-subjective system. I include Devil in a Blue Dress because, while similar to Jasmine in many ways, its differences illustrate the spatial-subjective system at work in different spaces and with different subjects. While my focus in Jasmine was on the spatial division of gender roles, in Devil in a Blue Dress the primary focus is on hierarchies based on (socially constructed) racial identity. Perhaps more importantly, Jasmine's movement across India and across the United States demonstrates that the more things change the more they stay the same; despite the appearance of gigantic spatial differences throughout the novel, Jasmine adheres to spatialized gender roles in each space no matter where it is. Thus, her movement is not empowering or transformative to the degree many have claimed. In Devil in a Blue Dress, on the other hand, Easy's ability to move across the border that divides race spatially and in the eyes of the law is empowering to a certain extent. Nonetheless, even

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[39] Mita Banerjee also suggests that postmodern difference is created for consumption in her article "Pork Chops and _alu gobi_: The (Un)Translatability of Culture in Mukherjee's _Jasmine_."

with Easy's ability to transcend racial hierarchies for a time, his border crossing ultimately reinforces the spatial racial division that defines him as a racialized other. The spatial-subjective system remains in a steady-state even with Easy's movement for change.

Introduction: Critical Approaches to the Novel

"I was surprised to see a white man walk into Joppy's bar" (1). From the blue of the title to the white of the first line of the book, it is clear that Devil in a Blue Dress will be concerned with issues of color. The novel's opening line, however, immediately announces one of the other central concerns of the text, the relation between race and space. Easy is not surprised to see a white man per se, he later points out that he was "used to white people by 1948" after his time in the Army (1), rather he is surprised by the location of this white man. Joppy's bar is a space for African Americans, "His only usual customers were the Negro butchers" (3), and Easy immediately notices the incongruity of a white man crossing the color line in 1948 Los Angeles.

Crossing the color line becomes increasingly common as Easy develops as a detective throughout the novel. Easy is an accidental detective in that he does not start out with the intention of solving crimes for hire. However, once he is laid off from his job at Champion Aircraft, he needs to earn income in a hurry to make the mortgage payment on his house. Reluctantly, Easy accepts working for DeWitt Albright, who was hired by one of the wealthiest men in the city, Todd Carter, to find Todd's girlfriend, Daphne Monet. Daphne is a mulatto passing as white who frequents African American bars and neighborhoods. The task becomes infinitely more complicated, however, as the

police blame three murders surrounding Daphne on Easy, and it becomes increasingly

clear that his own life is in danger from the police, from DeWitt Albright who wants

Daphne's money, and from Frank Green, Daphne's half-brother who wants to protect her.

To clear his name and extricate himself from danger, Easy decides that he needs to find

Daphne, solve the murders, and unravel the complicated relationship between Daphne,

Todd, and an ex-mayoral candidate named Matthew Teran who is also interested in

finding Daphne. The novel follows Easy as he moves between the underworld of

gangsters like Frank Green and the even more corrupt world of Todd Carter and Matthew

Teran, attempting all along to negotiate the racial tensions of pre-Civil Rights era Los

Angeles.

Most critics focus on the effects of Easy's race in the novel (Lock 78; R. Willett

29), but several critics have also noted the importance of space in the novel and/or the

film adaptation of the same name.[40] For example, Liam Kennedy argues that throughout

the Easy Rawlins novels: "While [Easy's] role as a detective broadens possibilities for

transgressing established racialised and spatial limits, race nonetheless moulds the

boundaries of social identity and mobility" (138). Kennedy acknowledges the interaction

between race and space and how "racial perceptions are ... invariably infused with issues

of power and control." While Kennedy's work provides important attention to space in

the novel, the prioritization remains on how "race ... moulds ... boundaries." Cultural

studies approaches, such as Kennedy's, focus on categories and determination. In such

an approach, any mixing looks like change instead of the natural interaction and

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[40] Justus Nieland provides an excellent analysis of space in Carl Franklin's film adaptation of the novel. Michael Shapiro examines space, the law, and identity, as will this section, but his focus is also on the film. Significant differences exist between the film and the novel in both the medium and the plot, justifying further analysis of the use of space and the law in the novel.

variability of a system, even one in steady-state. In other words, critical approaches to the novel have largely examined the effects of Easy's race in 1948 Los Angeles and have not examined the complexity of the interaction between race, space, the law, and subjectivity. In Devil in a Blue Dress, Easy's racial identity as other is the effect of the interaction of spatial and legal systems, and Easy's subjectivity contributes to the (re)production of this spatial-subjective system.

In Devil in a Blue Dress, spatial divisions contribute to the construction of Easy Rawlins as a racialized other. By racialized other I mean primarily that category marked by hegemonic power as outside of power based on the binary classification of race in order to support the continuation of the existing power regime.[41] The novel explores how the spatial-subjective system constructs the racialized other through spatial divisions of race and the uneven and unequal enforcement of the law. Boundaries between the other and the dominant race are maintained through violence.[42] Easy is able to cross boundaries, however, and his ability to do so empowers him to use characteristics of both sides of the racial spatial division to his advantage. This interpretation is clearly indebted to theories of border crossing, such as José David Saldívar's theory developed in Border Matters. Saldívar argues that the ability of the subject on the border to access both sides, to utilize the cultural codes of both cultures, enables him/her to create "new 'migrant'

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[41] See Edward Soja's discussion in Chapter Three of Thirdspace. See also Nicole King's article for a discussion of the construction of race, where she writes, "The construction of race as a definitive means of differentiating amongst groups ... has served as a means through which to exact diverse and multiple means of oppression against 'non-white' people" (215-216). Finally, see Gates' "Race," Writing and Difference for a collection of essays that discusses the social construction of race.

[42] While acknowledging the deleterious effects of racial divisions, Andrew Pepper argues that Easy's identity is multiply determined and should not be seen solely in the terms of a black/white divide. I agree that Easy's identity should not be seen as consisting solely of a "homogenous, unitary" "blackness" (248) and with Pepper's enumeration of the dangers inherent in "The tendency to see the world in simplistic black/white terms" (250). My argument is an attempt to illuminate how the spatial-subjective system constructs and maintains this societal tendency in spite of the fact that it is an inadequate understanding of difference.

cultures" that undermine the dominant cultural codes (19). While there is not a literal

border in <u>Devil in a Blue Dress</u>, there is a fluid and invisible border dividing white and

African American space in the novel. The unequal enforcement of the law also

contributes to a figurative border dividing white subjects from African American

subjects. Therefore, I continue to use the language of border theory to emphasize the

severity of the racial spatial division of 1948 Los Angeles as portrayed in the novel. As

Easy increasingly crosses the spatial divisions and operates on both sides of the law, he

gains power, but his is a movement sanctioned and exploited by those in power. In fact,

Easy's use of border crossing ultimately does not change Easy's status as other or the

structure on either side of the border, but reproduces and upholds the border, reinforcing

the spatial and legal division between African Americans and whites delineated in the

novel. <u>Devil in a Blue Dress</u> illustrates how society uses space to construct an other, how

the boundaries between dominant and other can be manipulated, and how such

manipulation is ultimately insufficient to bring about a change in the spatial-subjective

system.

Defining Borders: Identity Construction through Space and the Law

One way in which the dominant white society has defined African Americans as

other is through the segregation of African Americans in space.[43] <u>Devil in A Blue Dress</u>

is set in the highly segregated Los Angeles of 1948, and the characters are very aware of

the geographic boundaries that confine them. Easy is always aware of the division when

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[43] In Los Angeles this meant that African American identity was both racially and geographically
determined as separate from the dominant white society (R. Willett 20). As African Americans migrated to
Los Angeles in large numbers after World War II, they were forced to settle in communities such as Watts
(Glasgow viii).

he is forced to cross the geographic boundaries that separate the races in Los Angeles. When Easy first goes to meet Albright, for example, he remarks; "It was a downtown address; a long drive from Watts" (6). This is the first of many times that Easy will point out the distance between the African American community of Watts and the white communities, such as downtown, of people like Albright.[44] He is clearly aware of the separation of the two spaces, both in terms of distance and racial composition. Upon arriving at Albright's downtown office, Easy has difficulty convincing the night watchman that he belongs in a white neighborhood. "That little white man had convinced me that I was in the wrong place. I was ready to go back home" (14). The white security guard does not believe that an African American belongs in a white neighborhood, and he convinces Easy that this is the case.[45] At this point, Easy simply wants to return home, to the racially segregated community of Watts, where both he and the white world believe he belongs.

Later in the novel, Easy remains wary of crossing geographic borders. He notes "I was unhappy about going to meet Mr. Albright because I wasn't used to going into white communities, like Santa Monica" (51). This unhappiness arises out of more than just a feeling of being out of place, however; Easy knows that the geographic racial boundaries are maintained by violent force, and to cross the border is to put oneself in danger. The simple act of entering Santa Monica nearly ends Easy's life. Arriving at the Santa Monica pier, as far into the heart of white Los Angeles as it is possible to go, Easy

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[44] Andrew Pepper notes of the novel, "one is made acutely aware of the fact that just as whites or Anglos rarely venture into Watts, blacks or African Americans hardly ever venture out of Watts, other than for work" (248).

[45] Liam Kennedy produces a similar reading of this passage, noting that Easy's "knowledge of racism and segregation in Los Angeles determines his cognitive map of the city as a racialised landscape of invisible boundaries and prohibitions" (141).

tries to maintain spatial separation from the white world. "I went across the pier to the railing that looked down onto the beach. I figured that Mr. Albright would see me there as well as any place and that I was far enough away from the white kids that I could avoid any ugliness" (52). Easy knows that he has committed a transgression by crossing the boundary into the white city, so he attempts to keep the separation between himself and "the white kids" so as to avoid trouble. His separation is not enough, however, as the white teenagers circle Easy and threaten him with violence, noting "We don't need ya talking to our women" (53). To the white teenagers, the separation between African Americans ("ya") and whites ("our") must be maintained at all costs. The price for crossing the geographic boundary that separates the whites from African Americans is steep and more than once Easy fears for his life when he makes the trip into the white city.

Another way in which the dominant white society defines the racialized other is through the unequal application of the law. Charles W. Mills explains this as the practice, which he calls the Racial Contract, of excluding nonwhites from the polity established through the social contract. The result is that the "black Other" has "a subordinate civil standing ... and the moral and juridical rules normally regulating the behavior of whites ... either do not apply at all in dealings with nonwhites or apply only in a qualified form" (Mills 59; 11). More specifically, African Americans and other minorities are defined, through the application of the law, as both "inherently" unlawful and as not deserving the protection of law enforcement. The other is thereby separate from the law-abiding and law-enforcing white majority. This separation by/of law is enmeshed in spatial practice because law enforcement polices the dividing line through

the use of spatial tactics. Generally speaking, whites fear the "inner cities" as homes of "crime and violence" (R. Willett 20; see also Mills 50-51). Robert Crooks writes of the urban ghetto, "it now constitutes in mainstream European-American ideologies pockets of racial intrusion, hence corruption and social disease to be policed and contained – insofar as the 'others' threaten to cross the line" (71). According to Crooks, in European-American ideology, the criminal corruption of the racialized other must be contained within a certain space. The function of the police is to enforce the spatial separation of those who deserve the protection of the law from those who are thought to be unlawful.

Not only are African Americans seen as unlawful, however, they are also outside of the protection of law enforcement. Mills notes of nonwhite space, "In entering these (dark) spaces, one is entering a region normatively discontinuous with white political space, where the rules are different in ways ranging from differential funding ... to the absence of police protection" (51). Thus, when an African American commits a crime against an African American, the police are much less concerned with upholding the law (Crooks 71). Easy notes that "The police didn't care about crime among Negroes" and worries that they will frame him for Coretta's or Howard Green's death just to close the books (160). Easy holds out hope that the police will treat him fairly, not because he is innocent but because white men were murdered also. "To kill a white man was a real crime. My only hope was that these cops were interested in finding the real criminal" (161). According to this logic, murder among African Americans is not a real crime and so it would not matter who the police arrest (especially since all African Americans are defined as criminal anyway). Under the racial contract, innocent African Americans deserve neither the protection of the police from the murderer nor protection from the

brutalities of the police. Easy might be treated differently only when white victims are involved because the white polity deserves protection and justice, which will only be achieved when the actual killer is caught.

In Devil in a Blue Dress the dominant society defines African Americans as both unlawful and outside of the protection of law enforcement. For example, DeWitt Albright acknowledges the exclusionary purpose of the law early in the novel; "'The law,' he continued, 'is made by the rich people so that the poor people can't get ahead. You don't want to get mixed up with the law and neither do I'" (20). Albright sees the law in terms of class, but it is readily apparent to Easy that race can replace class in this formulation. Either way, those in power have designed the law to prevent the other from "getting ahead." Easy's position as inherently unlawful is soon made more explicit, as he is arrested on suspicion of a murder he did not commit. While still waiting for his interrogation during this arrest, Easy comments, "I had played the game of 'cops and nigger' before" (69). Easy's play on the phrase "cops and robbers" is instructive. The phrase is divided into two categories: the law, or the cops, and the unlawful, or the robbers. Easy replaces robbers with African Americans, acknowledging the metonymic logic that enables the police's unequal treatment of African Americans.

The police use spatial tactics to produce and enforce the distinction between the dominant white powers and the African American other. The police officers Mason and Miller pick Easy up from his home and take him to the police station because they believe he is responsible for Coretta's murder. Mason and Miller put Easy in an interrogation room: "There was only one window. It didn't have glass but only a crisscross of two two-inch bars down and two bars across" (69). While not technically a

jail cell, the bars on the window signal to Easy that the police see him as a criminal, and he begins to act accordingly. The police return, and Easy notes, "I was angry at myself because I hadn't tried to see if the door was locked. Those cops had me where they wanted me" (70). Not having been charged, formally detained, or even informed of why he is at the police station, Easy nonetheless takes his cues from the jail like room and assumes that he is locked in. The space the cops have Easy, the "where" he refers to, is a literal and figurative cell. Later in the novel Easy notes "I was nervous being so close to the police station" (136). Easy is nervous not because he is guilty but because he knows that the police station is the space of white power and that his proximity to this space is dangerous since the only place afforded to him in the station is as a criminal in a cell. This spatial division of white from black, legal power from illegal is reinforced when the police again confront Easy about the proliferating string of murders of which they suspect him. This second interrogation lacks the physical violence of the first, but it takes place in Easy's home. The police assert their power by transforming Easy's house into an interrogation room. Easy's house is literally the home of the suspect and the police can enter it at will. Easy is outside of the protection of the law that would normally prohibit unwarranted police entry. As an illegal other, therefore, Easy is always in jail and as one outside of the protection of the law, his space is always under the control of the police.

The police use violence to maintain the boundary between African Americans and whites. During his many police interrogations, Easy is repeatedly beaten and threatened, such as when one of the officers tells him, "Means we can take your black ass out behind the station and put a bullet in your head" (72). The violent maintenance of the boundary is not restricted to the police, however. Any member of the dominant white majority is

authorized to use violence against African Americans.[46] Hence, the white teenagers in

Santa Monica have no fear of the law when they threaten Easy for violating white space.

Likewise, DeWitt Albright constantly uses violence to intimidate and manipulate Easy,

and like the police, DeWitt emphasizes his power through a violation of Easy's space.

Easy returns home one morning to find DeWitt and his goons fixing coffee in his house.

Easy tries to assert his right to his space; "'You got no excuse to be breakin' into my

house, Mr. Albright. What would you do if I broke into your place?' 'I'd tear your nigger

head out by its root'" (100). Easy's space is outside of the protection of the law, so

DeWitt faces no consequences for his breaking and entering. On the other hand, both

know that Easy could not do the same in return for he is not given access to white space

and DeWitt would not be held accountable for enforcing his spatial rights against an

African American. Both know that Easy, as an African American, has no recourse to the

law, and therefore cannot call on it to protect him from white violence.

Border Crossing: The Power of Detection

The dominant white majority uses violence to maintain the spatial boundaries that

define Easy as distinct from the positions the white majority occupies. According to

border theory, the very presence of boundaries may create the possibility of resistance

and change for those who are able move between the two worlds, participating in both.

In many ways, Easy Rawlins can be said to be gaining power through multiple border

crossings as the novel proceeds. However, the spatial (legal) racial division is not a rigid

binary structure. Rather, it is a flexible system that allows trespass when to do so is in the

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[46] Mills explains that because nonwhites are seen as savages, "individual whites may be regarded as endowed with the authority to enforce the Racial Contract themselves" (87).

interest of the dominant power. Easy's violation of the spatial divisions is sanctioned. It is of benefit to Easy but also to Todd Carter.

As he grows more familiar with the power of white space, it becomes increasingly clear to Easy that he needs access to white territory if he is going to extricate himself from the danger of his position. He decides, therefore, to go above Albright's head and speak directly to Todd Carter at his office. "I was dressed in my best suit and ready to ride by 10A.M. I thought that it was time to gather my own information. ... so I drove across town again to a small office building just below Melrose, on La Cienega" (108). Preparing for another border crossing, Easy puts on his best suit because he knows that he will need every aid he can find to gain access to the white world. Easy acknowledges that he is crossing the border between the African American territory and the white territory by detailing how he has to drive across town to La Cienega Boulevard, an address located squarely within white Los Angeles. This is where he must go "to gather [his] own information." Once Easy crosses the spatial division he is able to gain power through information available only to those with access to the right (white) spaces.

While Easy gains power through his access to Todd Carter, the power to grant access to Easy remains squarely in Carter's control. Even with his best suit Easy still faces difficulties when attempting to meet with Carter. He has to pass two secretaries and a Vice President, Maxim Baxter, who are determined to deny him access to Todd Carter's office, to maintain the separation of white space from African American space. The secretaries try to confine Easy to a waiting room and deny him access to Baxter's office, Baxter tries to confine Easy to his office and deny him access to Todd Carter: "'I don't know who you think you are, Rawlins. Important men don't even barge in on Mr. Carter.

You're lucky that I took the time to see you'" (113). Maxim Baxter is the gatekeeper policing the spatial division between Todd Carter and all of those who are beneath him, including important men, not to mention Easy. However, Carter's interest in finding Daphne motivates him to grant Easy access to his office. The difference between Carter's spacious office and the rest of the building is notable; Easy comments, "I remember thinking that it was a long way from vice-president to the top" (114). Easy is referring to the figurative distance in power and prestige indicated by the difference between Baxter's office, which "was modest and small" and "looked out onto a parking lot" (112), and Carter's office, which was "wide," with a desk "the color and size of a grand piano" and "a view of the mountains behind Sunset Boulevard" (114). Easy is also referring to the distance he has to travel between the two spaces. While literally not a "long way," for an African American not normally permitted in the building, let alone the vice president's office, it is figuratively a very long distance to travel. The information Easy possesses provides Easy with entrée into white space, but ultimately Carter and his minions control the passage and permit Easy to pass because of the value of his information to the maintenance of Carter's self-interest.

Easy's power, however, comes not just from being able to cross the territorial border into white Los Angeles, but from his ability to move back and forth across that border, gaining knowledge on the Westside (still known today as the "Whiteside") and in Watts. Increasingly knowledgeable of the codes of both territories, Easy is able to manipulate stereotypes to his advantage in both worlds (Lock 82). For example, Easy notes that Todd Carter's racism means that Carter will not hesitate to share sensitive information with him because he does not view Easy as a threat (119). Easy uses this to

his advantage to gain information about Todd's intimate relationship with Daphne, information that would not otherwise have been available to him (R. Willett 29). In addition, many critics have pointed out that Easy uses linguistic masking to his advantage, alternating between "standard" English and African American vernacular to suit his purposes and meet the expectations of his listener (Young 145; Mason 180; R. Willett 29; Muller 294).[47] This is yet another tactic that allows Easy to move between the two worlds.

Of course, Easy's ability to operate in Watts and gain access to locations precluded for whites is not only to his benefit. In fact, it is the very reason Albright hires him in the first place (Fine 144). Albright notes, "'Daphne has a predilection for the company of Negroes ... But, you see, I can't go in those places looking for her because I'm not the right persuasion'" (19). Albright recognizes the way spatial divisions contribute to the construction of race by conflating "Negroes" with "those places;" in his mind they are inseparable. He also recognizes that the division works both ways; while he can actually go to Watts, he would not be able to get the same information from African American space as Easy. As Easy begins his search for Daphne in earnest, he notes, "The first place I went was Ricardo's Pool Room on Slauson. Ricardo's was just a hole-in-the-wall with no windows and only one door. There was no name out front because either you knew where Ricardo's was or you didn't belong there at all" (122). As always, Easy is sure to give a street name to identify his location. If the street is not sufficient to mark Ricardo's as being in African American territory, Easy goes on to point out "you knew where Ricardo's was or you didn't belong there at all." Easy knows

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[47] John Cullen Gruesser situates this linguistic and social manipulation within the tradition of "signifying," noting that "Easy is a trickster who employs signifying methods common in African American folk tradition" (241).

where Ricardo's is, those who do not know Slauson, (by definition, though not exclusively, those who are white), do not belong. Easy gains knowledge in both white and African American locations, knowledge (power) that results from his ability to operate effectively across borders.

Easy's access to both sides of the border gives him access to legal power as well. This is most evident in the penultimate chapter, when Easy asks Todd Carter to help him clear his name with the police. Once again, Easy's access to spaces and places usually reserved for whites is made available only with the sanction of Todd Carter. In fact, Easy has to ask Carter to get him access to City Hall; Carter acquiesces because it is to his benefit to keep the whole affair out of the papers. Easy and Todd meet with the assistant chief of police and the deputy mayor, as well as the police officers who have been harassing Easy throughout the novel. "We were all sitting in Mr. Wrightsmith's [the deputy mayor's] office. He was behind his desk and the deputy police chief stood behind him. Carter and I sat before the desk and Carter's lawyer was behind us. Mason and Miller sat off to the side, on a couch" (208). Easy is aligned with Carter and is backed by Carter's lawyer. Mason and Miller, the police officers who have violently enforced the legal border throughout the novel, are now in the marginal position, off to the side and on the couch. As Easy tells his story about the murders for which he is the main suspect, Carter corroborates his innocence. Each time Mason or Miller interrupts Easy's story, Mr. Wrightsmith interrupts them, silencing Mason and Miller and allowing Easy to continue. The police officers know Easy's story is not true, yet Easy is allowed to go free. Easy's previous meetings with Mason and Miller have all been in spaces the police control, but this time Easy has Mason and Miller in a room that Todd Carter controls.

Easy's immunity is a result of Carter's presence and the space of power Carter commands.

Carter provides Easy access to his power because the knowledge Easy collects moving between the two spaces is for Carter's benefit. While both Albright and Carter pay Easy for the information he collects, Easy remains under their control. Albright makes the terms of the transaction clear: "'You take my money and you belong to me. ... We all owe out something, Easy. When you owe out then you're in debt and when you're in debt then you can't be your own man. That's capitalism'" (101). Easy is indebted to DeWitt for paying his mortgage and so DeWitt demands repayment. In the capital system, those with capital control those without; as DeWitt puts it, Easy "belongs" to him. Easy cannot define his situation, he cannot "be [his] own man" but must be what those in power want him to be. In the end, while Easy's access to the Deputy Mayor's office releases him from immediate danger, Miller reminds Easy that his freedom of movement comes with a price. Miller wants to know who killed Richard McGee and says to Easy, "'Give it to me, son. Give it to me and I'll let you off. ... Mess with me and I'll see that you spend the rest of your life in jail'" (212). Easy's continued access to the spaces of relative freedom is dependent on the information he has gathered. Once again those in power determine the space Easy occupies, and Easy has no choice but to acquiesce and name Junior Fornay as the culprit.

Dividing Borders: Reproducing the Spatial-Subjective System

There is little doubt that Easy traverses the geographic and legal divisions that had contributed to his production as a racialized other. It even seems that Easy's mobility

allows him to gain power, in the form of knowledge, which he can use to protect himself from the violence of the dominant white society. Todd Carter authorizes Easy's movements, however; and ultimately the knowledge Easy gains does not have an effect on the spatial-subjective system. Mouse compares Easy to Daphne, who passed for white on the basis of her color. "You learn stuff and you be thinkin' like white men be thinkin'. ... She look like she white and you think like you white. But brother you don't know that you both poor niggers" (205). Mouse argues that access to knowledge is not enough to change how the dominant society defines Easy. As Henry Louis Gates Jr. has noted, gaining knowledge previously reserved for whites has not overturned hierarchies, "rather ...[it] has preserved those very cultural differences to be repeated" (12). Similarly, Easy may gain power through his ability to traverse the racial spatial divisions prescribed by white society, but ultimately he does not change these divisions.

Easy's access to Todd Carter, for example, does not change the way Carter perceives Easy. "Talking with Mr. Todd Carter was a strange experience. I mean, there I was, a Negro in a rich white man's office, talking to him like we were best friends" (119). Easy simultaneously recognizes the violation of the normal spatial division of whites and African Americans through his presence in Carter's office and continues to refer to Carter as "Mr.," acknowledging that the difference usually marked by space remains in place. "Mr. Todd Carter ... didn't even consider me in human terms. ... I could have been a prized dog. ... The fact that he didn't even recognize our difference showed that he didn't care one damn about me" (119). Despite Easy's presence in white space, Carter does not consider him an equal. Rather, he sees Easy as less than human, as some sort of property to be used. Easy acknowledges that difference still divides the two. The fact that Carter

does not "recognize" the difference is not because it does not exist but because it is so great that it is not worth his notice or concern. Easy's ability to traverse the borders dividing the races brings him some power, but his border crossing remains under the control of those who constructed the borders in the first place. Easy's power, therefore, does not extend to changing the division based on race and reinforced through space and law enforcement.

In fact, at the end of the novel, Easy reproduces the spatial racial division. Easy is more rooted than ever to the community of Watts. Leaving the police station at the end of the novel, Easy notes; "I had two years' salary buried in the back yard and I was free" (212). His "freedom" is literally buried in his property in Watts. Stolen money, it is not free to circulate in the economy through the more traditional, lucrative (white) system of banking; rather, it must take root in Watts. Easy has also bought another house that he rents for additional income (214), giving him another tie to the geographic location that contains and defines him as non-white, as a racialized other, one who inhabits Watts. Thus, Easy's mobility has not only not changed his status, it has actually strengthened his connection to the geographic location white society has forced onto African Americans.

Similarly, his legal status at the end of the novel is really no different than it was at the beginning. As Easy leaves the police station in his state of "freedom," Officer Miller approaches him. Miller says to Easy; "'You think Carter gonna come save your ass when we arrest you every other day for jaywalking, spitting, and creating a general nuisance? Think he's gonna answer your calls? ... Mess with me and I'll see that you spend the rest of your life in jail" (212). Miller reminds Easy that his access to the space and power of Todd Carter is only temporary. In fact, in the eyes of the law, Easy is still a

de facto criminal, a jay walking, spitting, general nuisance. As such, the protection of the laws does not apply to Easy; Miller is perfectly capable of putting him in jail for the rest of his life regardless of his actual participation in criminal acts. If anything, Easy is now more noticeable to the police as a result of his border crossing, and thus more likely to be the target of police harassment.[48] After his exchange with Officer Miller, Easy remarks, "It might be that the last moment of my adult life, spent free, was in that walk down the City Hall stairwell" (213). Easy may have been free when he occupied the space of white power, but he is aware that he cannot maintain that position, that he is not free.

Devil in a Blue Dress portrays a complex spatial-subjective system wherein space, race, and law enforcement interact to produce Easy as a racialized other. While the spatial divisions are permeable, the power Easy gains through access to white space is limited and contained. Easy is unable to create a new space or subject position and he is unable to subvert the dominant society. If anything, the divisions become more clearly marked and Easy is more securely defined in his place. In Devil in a Blue Dress, space (with the help of the spatial tactics of the law) produces the racialized other, who, even in acts of defiance, reproduces the spatialized racial division. The spatial subjective system is in a steady-state.

White Noise: Consuming Spaces (and the Hidden Role of Class) in the Construction of the Postmodern Subject

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[48] The argument that Easy's border crossing paradoxically increases the surveillance of and maintenance of the borders is similar to an argument Sara Ahmed makes in regard to passing. Ahmed notes, "the dis-organizing of social identities [through passing] … can become a mechanism for the re-organizing of social life through an expansion of the terms of surveillance" (91). See Chapter Three for a discussion of passing and Ahmed's argument.

The first two novels explored in this chapter demonstrated how space contributes to the production of certain aspects of one's subjectivity such as race and gender. Paying attention to how one's subjectivity in turn constructs space led to the conclusion that two novels often read as subversive of the dominant ideological systems are, on the contrary, stories about marginalized subjects who are unable to effect meaningful change. In turning now to Don DeLillo's White Noise, one finds critics have the opposite problem in that they tend to underestimate the power of the subject. Most critics see the novel as exploring the conditions of society that contribute to the creation of a fragmented subject. The focus is usually on the role of the mass media, in particular, television, and its deconstruction of the idea of the Cartesian subject.[49] While I do not disagree with the characterization of White Noise's approach to media, a systems approach contributes an understanding of the role of the interaction of the subject and social factors such as space in the maintenance of a system that contributes to the always already fragmented subject.[50] The point is to demonstrate that the spatial-subjective system is at work not just in texts where the organization of space is central to the novel (i.e. the global space that enables Jasmine's migrations or the segregated space that resists Easy's movements) but also in texts where the primary focus is seemingly elsewhere. Finally, paying attention to space in White Noise illuminates the role of class in the novel in a way that might

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[49] For example, see John Frow's "The Last Things Before the Last: Notes on *White Noise*," which focuses on simulacra and television, noting that television representations "work as an integral part of a system for the shaping and reshaping of human identity" (426). Similarly, John Duvall notes, "Television, however, does not stop at structuring the conscious thinking of DeLillo's characters. More invasively, television and its advertising subliminally shape their unconscious" (440).

[50] In his book In the Loop, Tom LeClair also argues that White Noise should be understood as a novel about systems. LeClair suggests that "The Gladneys' strategies for evading uncertainty" are ineffective because they do not understand that uncertainty is a fact of a "systems-based conception of nature, mind, and mortality" (226). My approach complements LeClair's approach, but where he focuses on the novel's systems understanding of "nature, mind, and mortality," my focus is on space, class, and the role the subject plays in the (re)production of social systems.

otherwise go unnoticed. While not the central focus of the argument, the discussion of the interrelationship between class and space again illustrates the complexity of interlocking systems that characterize the reciprocal relation between space and subject in a spatial-subjective system.

One of the hallmarks of postmodernity is the representation of the subject as mutable. No longer is the subject conceived as sui generis. Rather, social forces shape subjectivity, which is malleable, and therefore unstable and subject to change. Don DeLillo's White Noise is well known for exploring the ways in which mass media contributes to the postmodern condition. White Noise also shows how the prototypical spaces of late 20th century America contribute to the conception and exploitation of the mutable subject as a way to facilitate consumerism. The space of the commercial strip isolates and fragments the individual, encouraging differentiation in place of communal identification. The increasing homogenization of culture thwarts the quest for differentiation, further encouraging attempts at defining oneself through consumption; a process epitomized in the space of the mall. This process of self-fashioning is not in the control of the individual, as is demonstrated through the novel's portrayal of the most fundamentally commercial space, the supermarket. In each case, the particular organization of space is a key component in the process of creating the consumer subject, who in turn perpetuates the system through his/her interaction with space.

The first step in the creation of the ultimate consumer subject is the alienation of the individual from a sense of a unique subjectivity connected to one's sense of place, community, or family. This alienation is accomplished in part through the homogenization of space. Much has been made of the use in the novel of brand names

that periodically erupt in the text, seemingly apropos of nothing but ultimately

symbolizing the saturation of our culture with commercialism. The first occurrence of

this technique (marking the importance of space?) is as follows: "The Airport Marriott,

the Downtown Travelodge, the Sheraton Inn and Conference Center" (15). These hotel

names are at once extremely specific and completely generic in their description of space.

Hotels are a particular kind of organization of space and the reader immediately has an

idea of the appearance of each hotel named. This is because these three hotels will look

the same no matter where they are located. No information as to what Blacksmith is like

(if this is where the hotels can be found), as opposed to any other location in the United

States, can be gleaned from the brand names. In fact, Blacksmith remains indistinct

throughout the novel. "What details DeLillo gives are the details of sameness, of any

small, college town" (Caton 43). If identity depends in part on the specificity of a place,

as Lee Zimmerman suggests (566), then the standardization of space implicit in

globalization, and made explicit in the invocation of brand name hotels, inevitably leads

to a loss of a specificity of identity since there is no longer a specificity of place.

In White Noise, Blacksmith's spatial organization contributes to the alienation

from community as well. "We all got in the car and went out to the commercial strip in

the no man's land beyond the town boundary. The never-ending neon. I pulled in at a

place that specialized in chicken parts and brownies. We decided to eat in the car. The

car was sufficient for our needs. We wanted to eat, not look around at other people"

(231). Nearly every town in America is now surrounded by similar commercial strips,

places dominated by neon and where no man exists. DeLillo does not specifically name a

restaurant here, despite his predilection for brand names, because such restaurants and

commercial strips are ubiquitous (again reinforcing the homogeneity of space). The

commercial strip encourages isolation in several ways. It is literally apart from the

community because it is located beyond the town boundary. Its location necessitates the

isolation and separation from others inherent in automobile travel, a fact emphasized by

the mention of their being in the car three times in the passage. Their location in the car

outside of town suits them because they do not want to be "around ... other people."

Even if they did, however, the commercial strip would prevent it, for it is a no man's

land. There is no sense of community in such a space. The homogenized environment

alienates the individual from community and from a sense of place.

Since place and community often contribute to a unique sense of self, the

alienation through homogenization promoted by suburban development provokes a

compensatory desire to differentiate oneself, to construct a unique identity, to escape the

homogeneity of ones' surroundings. This process is demonstrated clearly in White Noise

when Jack's identity is challenged by a colleague who sees him shopping in a mall and

Jack responds by going on a shopping spree (DuVall 441). "I shopped with reckless

abandon. I shopped for immediate needs and distant contingencies. ... I began to grow

in value and self-regard. I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a

person I'd forgotten existed" (84). Jack feels that his identity can be clarified through his

purchases.[51] This is not just a process of consumption however, it is a process of

navigating space. "We moved from store to store, rejecting not only items in certain

departments, not only entire departments but whole stores, mammoth corporations that

did not strike our fancy for one reason or another" (83). In navigating the mall, Jack's

identity is formed based on which stores he enters and which he rejects. This is

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[51] LeClair suggests of Jack's shopping that "the purchase of goods confers safety" (214).

emphasized by the idea that he "found" himself, "located" himself through his shopping. Apparently, his identity was located in certain stores (but not others). All that was required was for him to be in the right place (with the right sums) and then there he was. This is really a reciprocal relationship because it is Jack's actions and decisions, in conjunction with the predetermined space, that shape his identity and, through his purchases, contribute to the selective reproduction of certain stores and spaces in the mall.

To a certain extent, the space of the suburbs creates the problem (alienation through homogenization) and then provides the space to solve the problem (gain a new sense of self shopping in the mall – if you are lucky, you might find yourself half off). This solution may be an illusion, however, for while one may feel different from other shoppers based on where they shop, they have all been defined as consumers and their differences have been limited as much as possible. John Duvall notes "that the broad range of consumer choices in today's shopping malls, which appear as the embodiment of individual freedom, is actually a form of social control used to produce the consumers that capital crucially needs" (441). One may make different purchases, but what is important to capital is the compelling need to make purchases. Furthermore, the increasing mallification/mollification of America means that, while one may feel one's purchases are unique, really one is buying the same items as millions of others across the world who are also shopping in the Gap, the Banana Republic, and Old Navy (the same corporation owns all three).

Attempts at individual differentiation in response to homogenization benefit consumer capital and fail to counter homogeneity. An alternative reaction to alienation is

group identification. However, in <u>White Noise</u>, even group identifications based on

spatial divisions are rooted in and benefit consumer culture. The novel opens with the

"parade of station wagons" as a new school year begins at the College-on-the-Hill: "The

station wagons arrived at noon, a long shining line that coursed through the west campus"

(3). After this first line, the first paragraph devolves into a long list of the possessions

college students bring with them and how both parents and students recognize one

another in part through their visible affluence. Critics often note the emphasis on

material goods as an indicator of American consumer culture, and occasionally as an

indicator of class in the novel.[52] However, class divisions are equally marked spatially,

albeit more subtly. "This assembly of station wagons, as much as anything they might do

in the course of the year ... tells the parents they are a collection of the like-minded and

the spiritually akin, a people, a nation" (3-4). It is this coming together in a particular

space, the space of "west campus," that marks parents and students as belonging to a

certain socio-economic class. The description of their group identity is here figured as

cultural-spiritual, but later the class ties of the college population are made more

apparent. "Tuition at the College-on-the-Hill is fourteen thousand dollars ... I sense there

is a connection between this powerful number and the way the students arrange

themselves physically" (41). Today this figure may not seem unreasonable, although

even now such tuition would prohibit most qualified applicants from attending a college

without aid, but in 1984 this must have seemed an astronomical figure. Its enormity has

some vague connection to spatial arrangements in Jack's mind, which he later makes

more explicit, stating "it is only the language of economic class they are speaking, in one

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[52] For example, Cristoph Lindner notes "The sheer volume of goods signals that *White Noise* belongs to a world dominated by commodities, congested by their presence, glutted by their consumption" (138).

of its allowable outward forms, like the convocation of station wagons at the start of the year" (41). Jack acknowledges that class is a taboo subject, but it can be seen in spatial practice. Only those with the most wealth can afford to attend, have access to, and ultimately contribute to the production of, the space of the college. Simply being present at the assembly of station wagons is enough to indicate to others your membership in the "nation."

As a college professor, Jack has special dispensation to observe the class function of the move in day, but he takes pains to make clear that his presence in the designated space is not an indicator that he is of the wealthy class. Again, many critics have noticed how Jack disavows that his station wagon qualifies him for membership in the elite, since it is old and dilapidated. Before this however, Jack's position is marked spatially: "I left my office and walked down the hill and into town" (4). Leaving the assembly of station wagons, Jack descends into town. He does not belong on the campus as a resident, as the students do. He lives in town, which is situated below the college, both literally and figuratively. The town is down the hill, below the college physically, but also beneath the college students and parents on the economic ladder.

Nor is this division of space based on class (and class based on space) left to be inferred from the relative position of the college. Jack explicitly ties spatial divisions to class when he argues that his family will be unaffected by the airborne toxic event.

These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is

set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the

main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in low-lying areas

get the floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornados. I'm a

college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat

down his own street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and

pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don't

happen in places like Blacksmith. (114)

Jack's argument here is more than a little specious, which is quickly demonstrated by the

fact that he does have to evacuate and is ultimately exposed to the airborne toxic event.

And yet, much of what Jack says is true: in most American locales, the poor, middle

class, and rich do live separately such that what affects one group is not likely to affect

another. The causality of Jack's argument is faulty, one's class does not determine who

will be affected by a disaster, but one's class does determine where one lives and where

one lives just might affect one's exposure to danger. Spatial divisions, then, are created

by class divisions and reinforce them, especially since, as Jack notes, the division of

space is one of the few acceptable class distinctions we allow in our society.

Space contributes to the perpetuation of consumer culture in ways other than the

spatial division of class. The organization of consumer spaces works to disorient

individuals to the point where they cannot navigate the space on their own, they

experience what Jameson has called "postmodern hyperspace" (Postmodernism 44).

According to Jameson, postmodern hyperspace "has finally succeeded in transcending

the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate

surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external

world" (Postmodernism 44). Jameson goes on to suggest that this experience of

postmodern space "can itself stand as the symbol and analogon of that even sharper

dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds ... to map the great global multinational

and decentered communicational network" (Postmodernism 44). Jameson quickly moves

from an analysis of the effects of space on subjects to framing postmodern space as

symbolic. This echoes earlier statements where Jameson views postmodern culture as a

"figuration of something even deeper" (Postmodernism 37), "representational shorthand,"

and a "figural process" (Postmodernism 38). Of course cultural products will make use

of the symbolic, representation, and figuration, but Jameson fails to play out his own

logic as to the effects on individuals of these manifestations of postmodern culture. The

inability to locate oneself in postmodern hyperspace contributes to and exploits the

fragmentation of the individual and the loss of autonomy. This leads in turn to the

perfect consumer (who then helps reproduce spaces of consumption).

The ending of White Noise demonstrates the effect of suburban postmodern

hyperspace on the individual. "The supermarket shelves have been rearranged. ... There

is agitation and panic in the aisles, dismay in the faces of older shoppers. They walk in a

fragmented trance ... trying to figure out the pattern, discern the underlying logic, trying

to remember where they'd seen the Cream of Wheat" (325). The shoppers are lost and

cannot map their locations, all of their points of reference have been removed. They

"panic" and are dismayed because they do not understand the pattern. The result is "a

sense of wandering ... an aimless and haunted mood, sweet-tempered people taken to the

edge" (326). Unable to control their own location or gain knowledge of the new system

and its products, they enter "a fragmented trance" where their perceptions and cognitions

are immaterial. "But in the end it doesn't matter what they see or think they see. The

terminals are equipped with holographic scanners, which decode the binary secret of

every item, infallibly" (326). The shoppers are not allowed agency, only the terminals

are equipped with the ability to decode the new system.[53] The individuals have ceded

their autonomy and are dependent now on the machines.[54] Jameson might characterize

this as a moment of the postmodern sublime, "representations of some immense

communicational and computer network ... a network of power and control"

(Postmodernism 37-38). The terminals and scanners (i.e. the computers) have the secret

knowledge (itself encoded in the binary language of the computer) that is denied the

shoppers in the new supermarket. For Jameson, the postmodern sublime represents "the

whole new decentered global network of the third stage of capital itself" (Postmodernism

38). The effect of the (postmodern) space of late capital, then, is to transfer

agency/autonomy from the individual to the multinational network. Jack Gladney's

description of this process in the suburban supermarket demonstrates that, despite their

complete loss of control, the shoppers remain consumers. They no longer know what

they are purchasing, but they continue to make the purchases that support the very

organization of the space that made them.

The space of the suburbs in White Noise is a spatial-subjective system in steady-

state. The spaces of consumption, the commercial strip, the mall, and the supermarket,

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[53] E.L. McCallum presents a similar reading of this final scene, noting "people themselves are no longer humanist agents capable of mastering and navigating their surroundings, but elements in the system, subordinated to some other organization, some other drive" (207). Ultimately though, McCallum does not see this fragmentation as in service to the repetition of a steady-state, which McCallum would associate with the death drive, but as a fragmentation in service of transformation, which she associates with an epistemophilic drive. Though not employing McCallum's fine distinctions, Chapter Four's analysis of On the Road presents a reading of drive as a "nonindividualistic" force of fragmentation and transformation in a similar manner to the reading McCallum offers of "perverse narratives" in "Contamination's Germinations."

[54] Thomas Ferraro takes exception to such an interpretation of the supermarket in the novel, noting "calling the supermarket a site of cultural brainwashing in White Noise is, I think, just exactly wrong. Unlike their other family activities, the Gladneys know full well what they are doing when they go to the supermarket" (31). However, Ferraro ignores the last scene of the novel that I describe here. Furthermore, to argue as Ferraro does that "the supermarket is a mecca that permits a special concentration, and active attention to the business of being a family" (32) is undermined by the fact that the Gladneys momentarily misplace Wilder on one of their shopping trips, only to find him in someone else's cart.

create a consumer subject that is fragmented, marked by class, and unable to navigate

commercial space in any way other than as a consumer. In other words, commercial

space creates ideal consumers whose very consumption contributes to the perpetuation of

commercial space. Virtually every town in America has a commercial strip, a mall, and a

supermarket because American consumers make it profitable to organize space in exactly

this way. Other spatial organizations are possible, such as a downtown with independent

businesses and small markets specializing in certain goods, but more often than not this

spatial organization does not produce enough consumption to compete. White Noise's

celebrated exploration of postmodernity and its unstable subjects, then, includes an

analysis of how consumer spaces contribute to the production of the consumer subject.

Commercial space and consumer subjects interact reciprocally as components in the

reproduction of the postmodern spatial-subjective system in steady-state.

Conclusion: Despair and Hope

Paying attention to the spatial-subjective system in these three novels yields some

surprising as well as some not so surprising results. Most importantly, these three novels

are about the *reproduction* of complex, open systems. In Jasmine, one comes to

understand how gender identity and patriarchal power are reproduced across time and

space as well as how capitalism can benefit from what might appear to be the

destabilizing effects of globalization. This may be a surprising result, given that most

readings of the novel have focused on issues of change, not reproduction, including many

that argue the novel subverts dominant power, not that it supports patriarchy and capital.

The analysis of Devil in a Blue Dress produces the somewhat surprising interpretation of

Easy as reinforcing the very legal and spatial distinctions that reproduce the subjugation and subjectification of African Americans. Perhaps less surprising is the analysis of White Noise, which, while it is unique in focusing on space, concludes with many others that the novel is primarily concerned with the deleterious effects of postmodern culture. All three novels illustrate the spatial-subjective system in steady state, as well as the flexibility and adaptability of the spatial-subjective system that is in fact a characteristic of open systems. In other words, the inputs, the forces, and the interlocking systems involved in each representation of the spatial-subjective system vary, yet the result, the system's reproduction and the benefit to the interested organization of power remains the same. As with Gordon Matta-Clark's drawing, each system is composed of multiple arrows, the interrelation of which forms a whole system in steady-state.

The power of this explanatory model derives in part from the seemingly omnipotent ability of the spatial-subjective system to reproduce itself regardless of the constituent variables. No matter what the initial conditions or the changes made by those who would rather escape, the steady-state prevails. In this regard, the systems approach provides an important corrective to cultural studies approaches that attribute too much power to individuals to bring about change because their focus on positions underestimates the flexibility of systems to adapt to diverse conditions. The lack of power available to the individual to effect change in such systems may lead to a sense of despair. Similarly, the now common understanding of postmodernism that suggests the effects on subjectivity of postmodern culture support the very conditions of postmodernity often leads critics to despair that change is therefore unlikely. For example, Jameson notes that "the more powerful the vision of some increasingly total

system or logic ... the more powerless the reader comes to feel" (Postmodernism 5).

While individuals *are* powerless to effect change in the spatial-subjective system, this

does not mean that change cannot occur. Change can, and does, occur, but it occurs

through the mechanisms of emergence and the processes of systems. Individuals can

participate in these processes, but one does not *cause* change. Rather, change occurs

through the production of emergent space, through the interaction of space and subjects

under certain circumstances. The standard version of postmodernism, therefore,

underestimates the role of the subject in the processes of systems and the possibility for

change that results. Tom LeClair ends his analysis of White Noise (and his book) by

suggesting that an understanding "of what is now natural – systems among systems ... –

can accommodate ... a modicum of hope" (229-230). LeClair does not elaborate,

however, on why systems might provide hope. One answer is that knowing how systems

work helps us to know how systems change. Beginning where LeClair's analysis ends,

the analysis of the next three novels (over the next one and a half chapters) will show us

how.

CHAPTER THREE: PRODUCING EMERGENT SPACE

To Be (Where You Are) Not To Be

"every system is decompleted by the alterity or heterogeneity it contains within itself"

- Bruce Fink, xiv

Introduction: Equifinality

Systems contain structures. In fact, the interrelation of structures is essential to the functioning of systems. Analytic discourse's long love affair with structures may be a result of the importance of structures to systems. Like most lovers though, structuralists have been blind to the fact that what they love is but a part of the whole. While systems theory shows us that structures are not the end, it suggests structures may very well be the beginning. Or, at least, a very good place to begin. In other words, one may need to understand the structures within a system before one can understand the functioning of the larger system that contains the structures under consideration. Accordingly, Chapter Three begins with two structures. First, the argument proceeds via sections and sub-sections (this one is labeled *Introduction: Equifinality*). Each section appears to be its own structure, but the interrelation of the structures leads to a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Second, the argument begins with what may appear to be a structural understanding of subjectivity, but these structures are merely components of a systemic understanding of subjectivity that contains, but is not contained by, these structures. The "system" that contains these two structures is the argument pursued over the next two chapters. More specifically, the next two chapters explore the change process in spatial-subjective systems through an analysis of the mechanisms of emergence, including a

focus on the concept of emergent space as a necessary condition for emergence and change to occur in the spatial-subjective system. This chapter examines the role of the systemic subject in producing and interacting with emergent space to create the conditions necessary for change as exemplified in Colson Whitehead's The Intuitionist and Patrick Chamoiseau's Texaco.

These two novels illustrate two different ways in which a subject's interactions with the spatial-subjective system produce change via emergent space. The epigraph to this chapter, taken from Bruce Fink's The Lacanian Subject, outlines these two different approaches. Fink notes, "every system is decompleted by the alterity or heterogeneity it contains within itself" (xiv). This epigraph establishes the conditions we must always keep in mind: we are dealing with the process of change in a *system*. Change can emerge out of the functioning of the system itself, out of what "it contains within itself," through its alterity or through its heterogeneity. Alterity represents "the state of being other or different; diversity, 'otherness'" (Alterity) while heterogeneity is "composition from diverse elements or parts; multifarious composition" (Heterogeneity). In The Intuitionist, emergent space is produced and change occurs through alterity whereas, in Texaco, heterogeneity is the key to change. That change can occur in different spatial-subjective systems via different mechanisms is an important insight of a systems approach. There is more than one path to emergent space and change, and the appropriate path may differ according to the particular conditions in place.

In The Intuitionist change is a result of Lila Mae's alterity in the spatial-subjective system. The spatial-subjective system produces Lila Mae as a racialized Other, but also as a subject who knows. She thus comes to occupy the position of a black subject who

knows in white space, which is a position of alterity because it is other than the role she is

expected to occupy. Unlike Fulton, who passes for white, or Easy Rawlins, who passes

into white territory, Lila Mae's position does not reproduce the existing structure and

therefore cannot be captured by the dominant power system. The inability of the existing

spatial-subjective system to reproduce itself through Lila Mae's alterity creates a crisis

point in the system. The quasi-emergent properties of the elevator and Lila Mae's

position of alterity capitalize on this crisis point, leading to a new elevator with the

properties of emergent space that will lead to a change in the spatial-subjective system.

By contrast, in Texaco, emergent space is produced not through the position of

the subject in the system but through the activities of a systemic, heterogeneous, Creole

subject; a subject who is "running different operating systems" simultaneously. Both

novels contrast their representations of subjects that are effective agents of change with

"structural" subjects that fail to achieve change (Fulton, who is passing, and Esternome,

who is a postcolonial subject, respectively), but they illustrate different mechanisms for

the production of emergent space along the way. Thus, "equifinality": two novels with

different initial conditions and different paths ultimately arriving at the same result;

emergent space and change in the spatial-subjective system.

The Intuitionist: Alterity, or, the Wrench in the Gears

Opposite Sides of the Divide

The Intuitionist opens with the crash of a new elevator that Lila Mae, an elevator

inspector for the city, had recently given a clean bill of health. This crash quickly

becomes an issue in the upcoming election for the chair of the Department of Elevator

Inspectors, which pits two rival factions, the Empiricists and the Intuitionists, against one another. [55] The Empiricists lay the blame for the elevator accident at Lila Mae's feet in order to discredit Intuitionism. Seeking to clear her name, Lila Mae launches her own investigation and uncovers a race between the Empiricists and the Intuitionists to discover the lost notebooks of James Fulton, father of Intuitionism. The notebooks are believed to contain plans for the next generation of elevators (the so called "black box") that will change the world in which we live, and therefore will deliver considerable power to whoever can build it first. Both sides believe Lila Mae to be in possession of the notebooks, and the novel details Lila Mae's attempts to navigate the power struggle, find the notebooks, and clear her name.

In The Intuitionist, Lila Mae's subject/subjected position in the world of the Empiricists is that of the racialized other. In other words, Lila Mae's racial appearance is a primary determinant of her subordinated position in the Empiricist dominated society. To take just one example, wanting to attend anonymously the annual elevator inspector's gala, the Funicular Follies, Lila Mae simply dons a waitress' uniform and serves her co-workers. "She understood that this night was for all the Department but her. She went through the effort of pulling her hair back into a knob on her scalp but in retrospect considers this unnecessary. They do not see her. ... They see colored skin and a servant's uniform. ... In the Pit, she toils over paperwork next to these men every day. In here they

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[55] Michael Bérubé characterizes this conflict as a "generic division among varieties of mental labor than [sic] have corollaries throughout the intellectual world – in debates between literary historians and theorists, physical and postmodern anthropologists, traditional law professors and advocates of critical race theory. Empiricists are the old guard and Intuitionists the young turks" (171). Briefly, Empiricists view the elevator as a closed system following the rules of classical science. This results in an emphasis on observation in Empiricist inspections; what can be seen and documented is what can be considered fact. Intuitionists, on the other hand, take more of an open system approach to elevator inspection, characterized by the belief that the whole system is greater than the sum of the parts. Instead of requiring interactions between parts to be limited, linear and summative, it examines "parts in interaction" (von Bertalanffy 19) or "'sets of elements standing in interrelation'" (von Bertalanffy 38).

do not see her. She is the colored help" (153). Not only do Lila Mae's white co-workers not recognize her, they do not even see her. They repudiate her and exclude her from personhood because they see only the color of her skin and the servant's uniform she wears; "She is the colored help." In fact, her coworkers do not see her as a unique individual at work either. While the passage states she toils next to them, there is no indication of recognition of her presence at work, and if they did see *her* at work, they would be hard pressed not to see her in the restaurant.

That her co-workers deny her full personhood is also demonstrated through the grammatical movement of the passage. Lila Mae starts out in the "subject" position in the sentences; "she" is the first word of the first two sentences and inaugurates a description of her thought and actions. In the third sentence, the subject changes to "they," indicating her white coworkers, and she has become the object ("her" - the racialized other) that they do not see. Then, there is no personal reference to Lila Mae at all in the sentence, "They see colored skin and a servant's uniform." Finally, in the last sentence, "she" returns, but in this case it is a description of her marked primarily by her race. While she is the subject here, it is not a subject that thinks or acts, but one that is defined entirely by her color and her role as "help." To the Empiricists, Lila Mae is defined solely by her objectification, thereby justifying her exploitation.

While Lila Mae's subjectivity as a racialized other is determined primarily by the dominant white male elite categorizing her based on her race, space also contributes to producing this subject position. At times, the spatial production of the subordinated racialized other is literal. For example, aside from the two elevator inspectors, the only other African American employees of the Department are mechanics for the fleet of

automobiles. They work in the garage underneath the Department's office building.

"This space in the garage is what the Department has allowed the colored men – it is underground, there are no windows permitting sky, and the sick light is all the more enervating for it" (18). The trope of the "underground" as the location for the "invisible" African American male is well known; and its use is heightened here by the lack of natural light that would allow visibility. While the trope of the underground/invisible is commonly understood as being visual, it is also spatial. It is the *space* of the garage that is underground, beneath notice, excluded from all natural light. The prohibition against leaving this space which is the only one the Department has "allowed" them makes clear the position of the African American men in the Empiricist dominated Department as racialized other, literally underneath the white power structure.

This literal use of space to define African Americans as other to the dominant white group occurs elsewhere in the novel.[56] For example, Lila Mae's time in college at the prestigious Institute for Vertical Transport is marked spatially. "Lila Mae lived in the janitor's closet because the Institute for Vertical Transport did not have living space for colored students" (43). Of course, segregation is a spatial practice.[57] Inevitably the space allocated to the other is inferior; in this case, it is a closet as opposed to a dormitory.[58] Cynthia Willett describes a less formal but equally effective means of spatial segregation wherein whites "mark these [public] spaces through gestures, ... practices, and other embodied styles of expression. These signs send messages that blacks are anomalous, if

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[56] The only extant critical article on the novel, Michael Bérubé's "Race and Modernity in Colson Whitehead's *The Intuitionist*," notes "the novel offers a cognitive map of the politics of race and space in the urban United States" (163).

[57] See Mike Davis' chapter "Homegrown Revolution" in City of Quartz, which examines the racial segregation of Los Angeles accomplished through spatial practices such as Homeowner's Associations, deed restrictions, zoning laws, etc.

[58] Mills notes that, in separating between whites and nonwhites, "the Racial Contract demarcates space, reserving privileged spaces for its first-class citizens" (49).

not intruders onto white space" (255). Lila Mae encounters such bodily expressions in the first scene of the novel, when she arrives at a building to inspect its elevator. The superintendent barely opens the building door to her and when she announces her purpose, "The man's lips arch up toward his nose and Lila Mae understands that he's never seen an elevator inspector like her before" (4). The superintendent's expression of displeasure is followed by a demand to see Lila Mae's badge; "He doesn't bother to look at it. He just asked for effect" (5). The man's expressions and practices are meant to signal that Lila Mae is not wanted in this space (though he ultimately must let her in). Lila Mae knows how to read the signs of white space, as demonstrated when she leaves the city to visit her alma mater in the suburbs, "which has been overgrown with kingsize discount emporiums and family restaurants catering to the primary color crowd since the last time she was out here" (84). While not bodily expressions, the box stores and chain restaurants are marked whites only (sometimes blatantly, as in Cracker Barrel). The "primary color crowd" is not a crowd of red, yellow, and blue, but those whose "color" is of "primary" importance in the white dominated society.

Segregation occurs in the city as well. Lila Mae lives "deep in the colored city" (166), which the novel describes so that it is clearly meant to represent Harlem. As two goons search Lila Mae's apartment for James Fulton's notebooks, they comment on her location: "'How much do you think she pays for this place?' 'I wouldn't live in this neighborhood if you paid me,' Jim says without regret" (29). The passage goes on to describe the fears of whites living close to the neighborhood and the efforts of real-estate agents to demarcate the boundaries that separate the "colored city" from the white city. As Steve Pile notes, this sort of geographic segregation is about "the ways in which

people gain a sense of who they are, the ways in which space helps tell people their place in the world, and the different places that people are meant to be in the world" (Pile 6). You know who you are in part through where you are allowed to live.

Despite the hegemony of the Empiricists and their rationalistic, structural world view, Lila Mae's subjectivity is not structurally determined. Even within the spatial-subjective system of the Empiricists her subjectivity is multiply determined. Thus, while space (especially those spaces that are directly controlled by Empiricists) contributes to the construction of Lila Mae as a racialized other, it also produces Lila Mae as a subject who knows. The subject who knows is a subject whose knowledge grants a position of agency in the spatial-subjective system through a certain recognized expertise. By contrast, the racialized other is a subject position that is, by definition, presumed to not know anything of value to the dominant subject.[59] Lila Mae's development through space as a subject who knows begins early in her childhood, when she is six. The novel introduces this episode strangely; "Lila Mae has forgotten this incident. But no matter. It still happened" (116). While there has always been a third person omniscient narrator, it has been one of limited omniscience, rarely intruding into the story. This straightforward declaration of the narrator's omniscience, therefore, marks what is to follow as significant as the narrator takes on the role of the one who knows (like the psychoanalyst) what is important in the development of Lila Mae.

The analepsis begins with Lila Mae, thirsty and wanting to get a drink, contemplating violating the strictures her mother laid down that she should be in bed at this late hour. "She had contemplated this larceny many times before and always

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[59] "Subpersons are deemed cognitively inferior, lacking in the essential rationality that would make them fully human" (Mills 59).

persuaded herself against it" (117). Violating her mother's rules of staying in bed and

not, therefore, getting a glass of water is elevated to a "larceny," a violation of the law.

On this night, Lila Mae proceeds anyway, trying to avoid detection the entire way. She

gains the kitchen only to find her father there, sitting in the dark. Instead of punishing

her, he asks her to read what he has been reading.

> She peered down at the paper, which was yellow in the candle's light.
>
> Above and below the drawings the words sat in small lumps and taunted
>
> her. ... Starting at one place was the same as starting any other place. So
>
> she picked one of the drawings at the top of the page, the one that looked
>
> like her mother's loom, and drew the tiny letters together, taking them one
>
> at a time and drawing them together. ... She said haltingly, 'On ... yon ...
>
> ho-host-ing ...'
>
> Her father said, she felt the words in his chest against her back,
>
> 'Union Hoisting Engine.' Her father read, 'Arbo's Patent Double Gear
>
> Hoisting Engine' (119-120).

This scene can be read as the beginning of Lila Mae's development as a subject who

knows. She is mastering language, and more specifically, literacy. She begins the

passage as a passive subject who wants only to behave as expected, to keep to her place

by following the rules laid down by her mother. This passage represents a turning point

in her development, however, as her father does not punish her for violating the

expectation that she remain in bed. In fact, he rewards her transformation from passive to

active, allowing her to get the water and sharing his reading with her. He views this only

as the beginning of her education, instructing her: "You better listen to your teacher"

(120). First he instructs her in reading/language and then he directs her to continue this education. What is important to the Father is that she masters language, the key to becoming a subject who knows. The form that language takes, an elevator catalog, is important. Chronologically in the story line presented in the narrative, Lila Mae's first words are "Union Hoisting," the description of an elevator. In this way, elevators (through their symbolic representation in language and drawings) participate in the formation of Lila Mae's subjectivity as a subject who knows.

Lila Mae not only begins her lifelong mastery of elevators here, she changes her object of desire to the Phallus. When she first looks at the page, the drawing she chooses as a starting place is "the one that looked like her mother's loom" (119). She wants to decipher objects that are of her mother, who she has previously identified as the one she must please. By the end of the passage, however, the loom turns into an elevator component, the signifier of her Father's desire (Lila Mae's father had himself wanted to be an elevator inspector but was denied because of his race). The elevator's verticality, its ability to rise and fall, make it an ironic phallic symbol. What is important in the context of the novel, however, is that the elevator represents a position of power. The manifest conflict of the novel is the race for the chair of the Department of Elevator Inspectors. He who controls this chair (both candidates are male) controls elevators and wields all of the power. Mastery of the phallic elevator, then, makes one a subject who knows not just because of the knowledge involved, but also because of the power to act that knowledge entails. In this scene, Lila Mae begins to desire power, which manifests

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itself as a desire for the object that her father desires, the elevator.[60] Thus, the elevator

plays a substantial role in producing Lila Mae's specific subjective dynamic as the

woman who wants to operate and not embody the phallic object of male desire as she

embarks on the path of the subject who knows.

That the elevator plays a role in defining her specific subjective dynamic is also

evident after graduation, when she becomes an elevator inspector. "The first colored

woman in the Department of Elevator Inspectors. She wanted to tell all the people on the

sidewalk of her accomplishment" (243). Lila Mae defines herself as the first colored

woman elevator inspector. While her race and gender remain a part of her own sense of

herself, elevator inspector receives equal, if not more, prominence. In fact, she defines

herself as an elevator inspector, "colored woman" is simply a modifier of the compound

noun elevator inspector. She wants to tell complete strangers that this is who she is, what

she has accomplished. It is so important to her that she does whatever she can to fill the

part, wearing the same suit as the male elevator inspectors and coming to take the suit as

a part of herself. When she is without her clothes, staying as a "guest" at the Intuitionist

House, the narrator notes, "Misses her suit: she doesn't spend her little money on things

that she doesn't need, but she needs the cut of her suit to see herself. The bold angularity

of it, the keen lapels – its buttons are the screws keeping her shut. The tailor seemed to

know what she needed, understood the theater Lila Mae needs to leave the house whole

and be among other people" (56). While describing it as an act of "theater" makes one

think of it as a costume, a role that she plays that is a temporary and/or partial identity

and not her "permanent" self, the rest of the passage undermines this interpretation.

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[60] This implies Lila Mae is following a prototypical "male" development. According to Lacan, "sexuation" is not dependent on biological sex but rather on one's relationship to the phallus. See Lacan's <u>On Feminine Sexuality</u> and Chapter Eight in Fink's <u>The Lacanian Subject</u>.

While it is indeed only a suit of clothes, it is what is needed for Lila Mae "to see herself" and to be "whole." Her suit, which is a sign of her job as an elevator inspector, so defines Lila Mae's subjectivity that without it she cannot be a whole person.

It is not simply the space of the elevator that leads to Lila Mae occupying the position of the subject who knows. Just as spatial segregation contributes to defining nonwhite as racialized other in the Western world, access to privileged space contributes to defining one as privileged. Charles W. Mills notes that "the norming of the individual is partially achieved by *spacing* it, that is, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of space" (42, emphasis in original). Thus, as detrimental as the segregated housing at the Institute for Vertical Transport is, it cannot eliminate the fact that Lila Mae is in the space of higher learning. Her access to this space "imprints" her with its characteristic knowledge, defining her as a subject who knows. This quality then opens doors to other spaces that would otherwise be off limits to her as a racialized other. For example, Lila Mae simply assumed that she could not join Intuitionist House activities because of her race, but Mr. Reed assures her otherwise because she is "'one of us'" (i.e. one with the knowledge of Intuitionism). Once she is staying at the Intuitionist House, she is mistaken for a visiting professor; her occupancy of the guest room reserved for prominent lecturers imbues her further with the qualities of the one who knows. Thus, the spatial production of subjectivity in the novel positions Lila Mae as simultaneously on opposite sides of the structural divisions of black/white, cognitively inferior/subject who knows.

Passing versus Alterity

There is more to Lila Mae's ability to disrupt the spatial-subjective system than her occupying two sides of a structural divide, however. After all, James Fulton shares many of Lila Mae's characteristics and was unable to effect change. Both Lila Mae and Fulton are African Americans who ultimately operate in a subject position outside of the one that the dominant spatial-subjective system has prepared for them. However, Fulton achieves his unorthodox subject position through his ability to pass as white, while Lila Mae achieves her subject position through her formative experiences with the spaces of the elevator. While both are, to a certain extent, liminal subjects, Fulton's liminal position reinforces structural divisions while Lila Mae's is alterior and therefore disruptive. The difference is crucial because, in the end, Fulton does not transform the dominant spatial-subjective system and Lila Mae does.

According to some theorists of liminality (see Ashley), the very presence of boundaries or borders creates the possibility of resistance and change for those who are able to exploit the space between the two worlds and/or *move* between the two worlds, participating in both. This concept has its roots in theories of liminality, derived from the anthropologist Victor Turner, who saw the liminal as the spatio-temporal moment of transition in rites of passage in pre-industrial societies during which participants have left one stage of life but not yet entered another.[61] As such, Turner characterizes liminality as a "blurring and merging of distinctions" (26), which is often an "interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cultural 'cosmos'" (41). Not fully in one space or the other, according to Turner the liminal subject occupies a position that is "temporarily undefined, beyond the normative social structure" which therefore "liberates them from structural obligations"

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[61] See the chapter "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual" in Turner's From Ritual to Theatre.

126

(27). This position is supposed to be one that is "potentially and in principle a free and experimental region of culture, a region where not only new elements but also new combinatory rules may be introduced" (Turner 28). At times, Turner's description of liminality resonates strongly with a systems understanding of change. For example, he writes:

> When persons, groups, sets of ideas, etc. move from one level or style of organization or regulation of the interdependence of their parts or elements to another level, there has to be an interfacial region or, to change the metaphor, an interval, however brief, or *margin* or *limen*, when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potentiality when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance. (44)

The emphasis on the interdependence of parts and the hierarchy of levels mirrors the description of the functioning of systems. Even more striking is the "instant of pure potentiality when everything ... trembles in the balance," which is a nearly exact description of a system that has reached a crisis point. Turner's emphasis on potential and the generation of novelty from liminality has led cultural critics to view the liminal as a condition of "possibility," both for the subject who can determine his/her own subjectivity and for the culture(s) that can be transformed by new "combinations of cultural givens" (Ashley xvi-xvii). Literary critics have seized upon this idea of the transformative power of liminal spaces and liminal subjects and read it into various

127

literary works,[62] despite the fact that Turner insists the liminal is limited to pre-Industrial societies (53).

Critics of this idea of the transformative possibilities of liminality, on the other hand, emphasize the inability of liminal subjects to change the underlying structural/binary logic that authorizes divisions in the first place. Critics attack the structural logic of liminality as it manifests not just in liminal theory, but in theories of hybridity and border crossing as well. "The very thought of the hybrid, then, grounds the possibility of demarcating new and old, modernity and its others [...] the work of the hybrid conditions and determines hierarchical identities" (Michaelsen, "Grounds" 660). If we can delineate in the liminal subject the characteristics he/she gains on each side of the border, we are simply highlighting the very existence of the border. Michaelsen goes so far as to say "the very idea of hybridity undergirds [...] the idea of different entities – guarantees their space, their properties" ("Hybrid" 4). Support for such a reading can be found in Turner's own work on the liminal since Turner sees the liminal in pre-Industrial societies as serving a normative function. "The *liminal* phases of tribal society invert but do not usually subvert the *status* quo, the structural form, of society; reversal underlines to the members of a community that chaos is the alternative to cosmos, so they'd better stick to cosmos" (Turner 41, emphasis in original). This conservative function is not only characteristic of the liminal, but of the one who transgresses through border crossing as well. "The border [...] maintains the difference of cultures, of national identities, and although it allows transgression, a certain trespass, it nevertheless is not open and mandates that one return home" (D. Johnson 132). In Johnson's reading, the border allows the definition of the other and the self, and this function of the border cannot be

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[62] See, for example, Victor Turner and the Construction of Cultural Criticism, edited by Kathleen Ashley.

erased through border crossing but is rather strengthened by it (D. Johnson 131). Critics of the liminal/hybrid/border crossing emphasize the structural aspects of the theory and criticize it on these grounds. Ultimately, both critics and proponents are correct; when a liminal subject fails to escape a structural approach, as in passing, transformation will not occur. However, a systemic liminal subject that transcends structural divisions, as in alterity, can catalyze a system into crisis, leading to transformation.

Fulton's liminality is a result of his passing for white, and as such, it is not transformative because it does not escape the structural logic of racial division. The novel makes sure to point out the difference between Fulton and Lila Mae; "Fulton a spy in white spaces, just like she is. But they are not alike. She's colored" (139). This passage acknowledges that both Fulton and Lila Mae are in a space that is not their own. It characterizes both as spies in white space. However, there is a difference; Lila Mae is colored and Fulton does not appear to be so. In other words, Fulton appears to belong in the white spaces. As such, Fulton actually poses no threat to the spatial-subjective system that divides space based on race in order to benefit the dominant racial group; in fact, Fulton upholds this very distinction. As Sara Ahmed notes, "Acts of 'transgression' implicit in passing do not, then, transcend the systematization of differences into regularities" (91). Fulton may be transgressing, but he is not changing the system. He may be able to report on white space to African American space (though it appears he does not even do this, since he has almost no contact with African Americans, including his family, once he enters the white world) but he is in no position to change the way the spatial-subjective system operates.

While Fulton does express an interest in change through his work on theoretical elevators, he knows his position is precarious. "In constant fear of that shadow, the shadow of the catastrophic accident that would reveal him for what he was. The shadow that envelopes him and makes him dark" (232). For Fulton, nothing would be worse than being revealed as dark, as not white, and therefore operating within white space on false pretenses. He knows this would be catastrophic, bringing down all that he had worked for, just as the catastrophic elevator failure that begins the novel brings down the elevator. Fulton's fear points out the reason that passing cannot ultimately transform the system; the catastrophe of discovering that passing is possible actually becomes "the means by which relations of power are secured, paradoxically, *through this very process of destabilization*" (Ahmed 89, emphasis in the original). The discovery of passing simply leads to more and better surveillance and enforcement of the lines of demarcation. As Ahmed notes, "the dis-organizing of social identities ... can become a mechanism for the re-organizing of social life through an expansion of the terms of surveillance" (91).

Such an expansion of surveillance can be seen in the reaction to the failure of the elevator, which is explicitly linked to the inevitable failure of passing. "The elevator pretended to be what it was not. Number Eleven passed for longevous. Passed for healthy so well that Arbo Elevator Co.'s quality control could not see its duplicity, so well that the building contractors could not see for the routine ease of its assembly coeval doom" (229). The elevator is said to be passing; it fools all of the white employees of Arbo and the contractors. It operates in their world as something it is not, and the inevitable result is doom, catastrophic accident. The accident itself sets the plot of the novel in motion and leads to an investigation that is akin to an increase of surveillance of

the boundary between a proper elevator and one that is passing. The Empiricists seek to use the failure of the elevator to strengthen their position, which is also the position of white privilege. It is not surprising then that Fulton's passing is similarly destined to fail. Fulton cannot change the system because in reality he is not a challenge to the system. He has accepted its structural terms of spatial division based on color and made himself to conform to those terms.

Not only does Fulton's act of passing accept the terms of division, but it reinforces the valorization of the dominant white group. As Sara Ahmed notes, "Passing as white supports a national desire to assimilate difference into a generalized white 'face of the nation'. Here, the spatial configuration of communities of belonging involves the legitimation of passing for white as an individual and national story of progress" (Ahmed 93-94). Passing as white is seen as progress for it is the white community that defines the nation as white, thereby devaluing what is other and non-white and producing whiteness as such. Imperfect though the division certainly is (on its own terms, since it is of course impossible to accurately maintain the division based on race as Fulton himself demonstrates), Fulton changes his own subject position, not the terms of the division.

Fulton, then, has an effect similar to that of Easy Rawlins in Devil in a Blue Dress. Easy's border crossing is productive in that it extricates him from the danger of his situation, but ultimately his actions do not bring about substantial change in the spatial-subjective system. Instead, Easy reinforces the division between white and African-American space, legal and illegal. Easy may gain knowledge of the way the spatial-subjective system operates, but his knowledge is always contained and turned to the benefit of the white power structure because it is a knowledge of the structural

division of space and not of how to overturn this organization. Easy demonstrates substantial movement, but it is not the movement required of emergent space because it is contained and turned to benefit the existing system.

Lila Mae's liminality differs from Fulton's and Easy's because of how it was achieved. Fulton achieves his liminality by accepting the structural division of race. Lila Mae's liminality, on the other hand, is one of alterity. It is the result of her production by the spatial-subjective system as *both* a racialized other and also an Intuitionist elevator inspector. Unlike Fulton, she is not forced to choose one side of the binary/structure (she cannot escape being seen as black but this does not preclude her from authority). Rather, she can be multiply determined by all of the component parts of the system in interaction. Nothing is foreclosed. She is able to "move" between the two worlds, existing in a position of "possibility," and catalyze "transformation." Thus, reading the novel as a straightforward conflict between two sides, the Empiricists and the Intuitionists, and their views of subjectivity misses the mark.[63] Lila Mae is both Empiricist and Intuitionist, male and female, a racialized other and a subject who knows. She is an alterior subject because she is other than the racialized other the dominant spatial-subjective system expects her to be.

Lila Mae is alterior; she cannot be defined by the subservient side of the many binaries of the novel, no matter how much those in power would like to keep her fixed to the subordinated position. When her friend Chuck describes the growing conservatism of the Department, he notes, "just look at the messy rise of Intuitionism, or the growing numbers of women and colored people in the guild, shoot, just look at Lila Mae, flux itself, three times cursed" (20). Chuck identifies the oppressed side of each binary

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[63] See Bérubé, page 171.

(Empiricism/Intuitionism, male/female, white/colored) and labels Lila Mae as belonging

to all three. While Chuck believes that the growing influence of these groups is causing a

"flux" to which the conservatives are reacting, he inadvertently identifies the flexibility

of Lila Mae's subjectivity by describing her as "flux itself." Lila Mae moves between the

poles of each binary and is defined more by the combinations she creates than by any one

structural component. For example, Lila Mae wears the same suit as the men in the

Department. That it is essentially a man's suit tailored to fit her body further supports the

earlier claim that Lila Mae's sexuation is male. She has adopted her father's desire to be

an elevator inspector to the extent that the masculine signifiers of the position, such as the

man's suit, become essential to her own definition of herself. Lila Mae is not

"performing" gender here, nor is she "passing" for "male;" she occupies the position of

phallic knowledge, just as she occupies the position of the one who knows in the spatial-

subjective system. The point is not that Lila Mae is "really" "male" or "female" as

society would stereotypically define these terms, nor that wearing a man's suit makes one

male, but that Lila Mae's subjectivity draws from multiple systems as necessary, and

does not adhere to the prototypical characteristics that those who categorize her as a

woman would expect.

Occasionally, others recognize the combinations Lila Mae presents. For example,

Ben Urich describes Natchez to Lila Mae: "One tough customer. Guess he'd have to be –

a colored man working in a white outfit. Like you, I guess" (211). Urich's description

applied to Lila Mae is a profusion of confusion of categories. Urich identifies Lila Mae

as male, "a colored man ... Like you," though he clearly recognizes her as female as

well. Similarly, the description of the "white outfit" connotes both her position at a white

job and her "wearing" the guise of whiteness, just as she "wears" a suit of maleness, while remaining identifiably "colored." Lila Mae is simultaneously all of these things and none of these things. As defined by the dominant groups, these categories are supposed to be mutually exclusive; in combining them Lila Mae is not defined by the dominant groups but combines the multiple components into a unique whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.

While Lila Mae is demonstrably subjected to prejudice and discrimination based on her race and gender, she also has access to the perquisites of power normally reserved for the dominant white elite. Lila Mae meets with Mr. Reed in the inner courtyard of Intuitionist House.

> The taciturn sentries (Victorian row houses, stodgy brownstones) have
>
> their backs turned to her. This interloper has dispensation, business with
>
> authority, and there are hungry thousands on the street beyond demanding
>
> closer scrutiny. Keep them out. (58)

Lila Mae has access to the spaces of authority; she is on the inside of the courtyard that is designed to keep the downtrodden masses "out." At the same time she is described as an "interloper" with special "dispensation." Her status as an other remains marked, but she is allowed to pass by the "sentries" that scrutinize others. Lila Mae is in flux and able to move between worlds because she possesses qualities of both worlds without favoring any one over any other. Unlike Fulton who passes for white or Easy in his use of linguistic masking, Lila Mae does not obscure any one aspect of her alterity in order to be accepted.

Lila Mae is already known to be "dark." Her position in the white spaces is gained through her knowledge of the spaces of the elevator and not through deception. She is a clear challenge to the division, operating in white space and remaining (to the Empiricists) a racialized other, she demonstrates that the division in fact cannot hold. Since she is not passing, she does not implicitly endorse the assumption that white is better, that one has to be white to be an elevator inspector. Rather, she explicitly refutes this assumption through her very presence. Similarly, she does not surreptitiously challenge the division based on race and thereby expose the surveillance as the "real" problem that needs to be addressed. Lila Mae's challenge is direct. The surveillance of the borders of the division is not broken; no one could fail to see that she is a black woman operating in a white man's space. Therefore, she represents a direct challenge to the necessity of the division on these racial (and gendered) grounds. While others are constantly trying to reinforce the distinctions Lila Mae eschews, she demonstrates that the distinctions are, on their own terms, meaningless. They have meaning to the extent that the dominant powers can enforce them and make them have meaning, but their meaning is not inherent and is therefore subject to emendation.

Crisis Point, or, the Wrench

Lila Mae is being otherwise in the spatial-subjective system of the Empiricists. She is the alterity that will ultimately decomplete the system. Lila Mae acts as a mechanism of emergence because she jumps rails (moves openly between positions) in the spatial-subjective system as a result of an iteration of the spatial-subjective system.[64]

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[64] Neil Smith makes a similar argument about the havoc mobility can cause when marginalized subjects (the homeless) "'jump scales'" to be in places they are not supposed to be. He notes, "jumping scales

Space produced Lila Mae as a racialized other and as a subject who knows. Instead of reproducing the spatial-subjective system by producing yet another subject as racialized other, the system inadvertently produced a racialized subject in white space. The change in functioning of the system caused by the difference Lila Mae represents acts as a tipping point, leading to emergent space and the potential for change. Recall that the same does not occur with Fulton. While, on one level, Fulton seems to be the same as Lila Mae, a racialized other and a subject who knows in white space, he does not *function* this way in the system. As far as the system is concerned, Fulton is in the proper space, and any revelation of the miscategorization of Fulton would have no effect on the functioning of the system since at no point does he challenge the way in which the system is supposed to work. The system continues to function smoothly with Fulton in white spaces. Lila Mae, on the other hand, is a wrench in the gears. The system cannot function with her in place.

That the existing system finds it difficult to function with Lila Mae's systemic alterity is demonstrated by the exertions of both the Empiricists and Intuitionists to contain her; but ultimately Lila Mae cannot be made to serve either component of the existing system. Perhaps not surprisingly, efforts to contain Lila Mae manifest in efforts to control her space. As soon as it is made known that Lila Mae "*is the one*," representatives of the Arbo Elevator Company search her apartment for more of Fulton's notebook pages (211 emphasis in original). Interrupted in the act by Lila Mae's return home, Jim and John refuse to vacate her apartment until Mr. Lever arrives and demands it of them, despite Lila Mae's multiple entreaties that they leave. "Everything is different

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allows evictees to dissolve spatial boundaries that are largely imposed from above and that contain rather than facilitate their production and reproduction of everyday life" (90).

now, it seems to Lila Mae. Nothing in her apartment appears to have been moved, and yet everything is different. ... She doesn't feel as if she lives here anymore" (40). Jim and John take control of Lila Mae's space so that it no longer feels like her own. The Intuitionists and Empiricists also try to use space to control Lila Mae and convince her to give them Fulton's notebooks, though the two use space differently as a persuasive mechanism. The Intuitionists give Lila Mae a luxurious room in their house, for her "safety," with "the biggest bed she has ever slept in," and a room "twice as large as her one at the Bertram Arms" (47, 56). Lila Mae is uncomfortable with the arrangement from the start, however, for she knows that acceptance of the space "means she owes him [Lever]" (56). The Empiricists' use of space to control and convince Lila Mae is more blatantly coercive. Lila Mae is kidnapped in a car "with no buttons to unlock the door in the backseat, or handles to roll down the window" (98), again taking her ability to control her space away from her. She is taken to a "cell" where Chancre tells her that she will either deliver the black box or be tortured. "Whoever owns the elevator owns the new cities" (208), and because everyone believes Lila Mae has or can get the new elevator, everyone wants to own Lila Mae.

Despite the various attempts to contain Lila Mae by controlling her space, however, Lila Mae cannot be made to serve the existing spatial-subjective system. She leaves Intuitionist House, leaves her apartment, and is not swayed by Chancre's threats. When she does come into possession of Fulton's notebooks, she does not choose sides in the power struggle between the Empiricists and the Intuitionists, Arbo and United, but she gives some of the information to all of them, while withholding important information from all as well. Lila Mae's freedom from the dominant powers is

represented spatially. The last section of the novel begins: "Lila Mae has a new room. It's a good size" (254). Lila Mae finally has a room of her own, and unlike the janitor's closet at the Institute, her apartment while working for the Department, or the interrogation cell, her new room is sizable and under her control. "She likes this new room. They might find it, they might be coming for her once they figure things out. But that won't be for a while. There's time to move on and find another room" (254). Lila Mae is so far out of the control of the extant system that they no longer know how to locate her space, and if they do find her new room, she plans to have already moved beyond their reach. The last two-page section of the novel repeats the word "room" in reference to Lila Mae's new apartment seven times. This repetition of reference to her new space emphasizes her escape from the spatial system that reinforces the power of the Empiricists and the Intuitionists. "Sometimes in her new room she wonders who will decode the elevator first. It could be Arbo. It could be United. It doesn't matter" (255). In fact, it does not even matter which side wins the race, for Lila Mae is completely out of their control. In her new space, she has the power to deliver the emergent space of the black box and a new spatial-subjective system.

That Lila Mae cannot be contained and cannot be turned to the advantage of those in power creates a crisis point in the existing spatial-subjective system. Recall from Chapter One that Massumi defines a crisis point as "an equilibrium-seeking system ... [that] suddenly perceives a deterministic constraint, becomes 'sensitive' to it, and is catapulted into a highly unstable ... state enveloping a bifurcating future" (Massumi, Users 95). The system's inability to incorporate Lila Mae is the deterministic constraint. The bifurcating future is between a resolution of the crisis that returns the system to its

state of equilibrium and the movement of the crisis into a state of emergence. The entire novel enacts the way that Lila Mae creates a crisis point. Lila Mae inspects the elevator whose crash causes the crisis that sets the plot in motion. The Empiricists and Intuitionists try to restore equilibrium by controlling Lila Mae, who is the key piece both try to manipulate in the race for the "black box" because "If they don't have it, they don't control it" (209). If they are not in control, then everything is unstable. Finally, while the story encompasses events in Lila Mae's life and the life of Fulton, the main plot events occur in the compressed time of a crisis point. The bulk of the novel takes place over the space of a few days that differ dramatically from what came before and after which things may never be the same, for Lila Mae or anyone who uses elevators. The time-space compression of the novel mirrors the nearly instantaneous nature of a crisis point in a system undergoing emergence. In fact, despite the Empiricists and Intuitionists' best efforts to control the crisis Lila Mae represents, the novel ends on the brink of the production of emergent space.

Emergent Space and Change in the Spatial-Subjective System

Lila Mae's alterity in the spatial-subjective system, therefore, makes her the perfect catalyst for the production of emergent space. Emergence is caused as much by who she is and where she is as by what she does, however. In fact, Lila Mae's actions are not solely responsible for the production of the emergent space of the "black box," since the elevator is always already a quasi-emergent space. The elevator is a quasi-emergent space in that it demonstrates characteristics of both emergent space and non-emergent space. Of primary importance to emergent space and to the elevator alike is movement.

As mentioned in the first chapter, emergent space is not defined by positions but rather by the movement that occurs prior to the emergence of positions. Similarly, for the space of the elevator, it is not the beginning or ending that is important, but what happens in between, the movement, that is important. This is manifest in the name *elevator* itself, which emphasizes the movement from low to high one hopes for in the space of the elevator. As a rider one may be primarily interested in the ground floor space where one starts and the tenth floor space that is the destination, but the space considered the elevator itself is the space that moves in-between. An elevator that does not move ceases to be an elevator and quickly becomes a claustrophobic box from which one needs to be rescued.

Another quasi-emergent property of elevators is the recursivity of their movement. Elevator movement is highly repetitive in its verticality; the movements within an elevator and across all elevators occur within particular limits. As Lila Mae notes of elevators, "They go up and they go down" (78). In this way, elevator movement is recursive in the sense of the word given in its first definition: "periodically or continually recurring" ("Recursive," def. 1). The repetition or recursivity of elevator movement is not without variation, however. Human subjects add an element of indeterminacy (another property of emergent space) to the elevator's movements through their interactions with the spatial-subjective system. In other words, individuals seemingly direct the movement of the elevator through the mechanism of the call buttons.

Nonetheless, an elevator's movements are only quasi-emergent because, despite the variation and recursivity, the limits within which they occur are very stringently

defined.[65] The elevator will not move beyond the top floor, it will not move from floor

three to five without passing four, etc. Under normal circumstances, the spatial-

subjective system of the elevator lacks feedback (its mechanical operation, of course,

relies on feedback, but only in a relatively closed system for the purpose of a pre-defined

function). Feedback is essential to emergence (and emergent space).

Finally, elevators in use enter the space of the everyday. Once they leave the

conceived space of the engineer's plans, elevators participate in lived and perceived

space. Again, this is a function of their participation in the spatial-subjective system as

they become a space for the use of individuals trying to get from one space to another.

As such, they are a part of spatial practice, which "embodies a close association, within

perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and

networks which link up the places set aside for work" (Lefebvre 38). For many, the

space of the elevator is the space of daily routine and a part of urban reality. In fact, it is

perhaps the last link in the routes and networks linking places set aside for work as it

takes many from the street to the office (and back again, recursively). Its status as an

everyday space makes it ripe to become a lived space as well. As a lived space, it

embodies "complex symbolisms" (Lefebvre 33); it is "space as directly lived through its

associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'"

(Lefebvre 39). This can be seen in The Intuitionist in a passage describing a billboard for

an elevator company; "elevator ads probably only register in civilian heads as a dim

affirmation of modernity, happy progress to be taken for granted and subconsciously

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[65] Jameson makes a similar point in Postmodernism. In his reading of the space of the Westin Bonaventure hotel in Los Angeles, he first introduces the elevators as providing an escape from the postmodern space of the lobby, but he goes on to note "even this vertical movement is contained" (43). One cannot really escape this way, as the destination is a cocktail lounge on the top floor that provides its own postmodern space.

cherished" (14-15). The elevator becomes a symbol used in graphic art to represent

modernity and progress. Not only that, but it is "directly lived" as a symbolic space in

that it is only dimly registered, so much a part of the everyday lived experience that it is a

part of the subconscious. Like all emergent space, then, elevators in the world are more a

part of lived and perceived space than conceived space.

All elevators contain some of the properties of emergent space, such as

movement, recursivity, and lived and perceived space. Fulton and Lila Mae's "black

box" adds other qualities of emergent space. Primarily, the "black box" is full of

potential, though the change it will bring is indeterminate. The term black box is at once

highly evocative and ambiguous. Since Fulton and Lila Mae are both "black," it seems to

refer ironically to the elevator as the product of a "black" approach to elevators, but what

this approach may be is left undetermined.[66] The systems approach of the Intuitionists

also calls to mind the "black box" of engineering problems where known inputs enter a

so-called black box, operations of an unknown and indeterminate quality occur, and

known outputs emerge. The uncertainty of the operations of such a black box matches

nicely with the uncertainty/ambiguity in the novel of how the black box actually differs

from a standard elevator. Among many other interpretations of this metaphor, the black

box could also represent a coffin, an interpretation that will be explored in more detail

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[66] Popular reviews of The Intuitionist characterize the novel as highly ironic. See for example Laura Miller or Gary Krist. While on one level the irony of the novel provides much of its humor, on another level it obscures the fact that we don't know what we think we know. If the elevator is the phallus, then it is not possible to argue that the elevator is just an elevator, which is the conceit on which the irony functions. We must, therefore, take the elevator seriously, but not as an elevator. Rather, it is simply the mechanism that gets us from one place to another, from the old spatial-subjective system to the new. As such, it is not important (nor possible) to trace literally how Lila Mae produces the black box. It is only possible to trace how she creates the crisis point out of which emergent space arises and to delineate the characteristics of emergent space present in the "elevator" that she delivers.

below.[67] The sheer potential of the metaphor of the black box makes it an exemplary metaphor for the potential of emergent space.

Part of the reason it is believed the new elevator holds the potential for change is because of the change wrought by the invention of the elevator in the first place. Referred to in the novel as the "first elevation," the invention of the elevator allowed cities to grow vertically, to reach new heights that were previously unimaginable. This changed the landscape of the entire city; a transformation that continues on into the present of the novel. As an old building is destroyed to make room for a newer, taller building, Lila Mae realizes that the new elevator will lead to a "second elevation" whose effect will be just as radical. "They will have to destroy this city once we deliver the black box. The current bones will not accommodate the marrow of the device. They will have to raze the city and cart off the rubble to less popular boroughs and start anew" (198). The black box has the potential to change things so radically that the very bones will need to be reworked, not even the skeleton of the current space will remain unchanged.

While both Lila Mae and Fulton speculate on what the new space will look like after the emergent space of the black box is delivered, both the space of the elevator and the result of the change wrought by the elevator remain indeterminate. "What does the perfect elevator look like, the one that will deliver us from the cities we suffer now, these stunted shacks? We don't know because we can't see inside it, it's something we cannot imagine, like the shape of angels' teeth" (61). The space of the perfect elevator cannot be

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[67] In fact, there are several allusions to a connection between elevators and death in the novel; "But who can resist the seductions of elevators these days, those stepping stones to Heaven" (16). "There's an old inspector's maxim: 'An elevator is a grave.' ... A coffin" (46); "or do you prefer the box, the coffin, that excises the journey Heavenward" (106).

determined (in fact, Intuitionism holds that the perfect elevator's space is actually variable, changing according to the needs of the passenger(s)). Likewise, the space of the city that the new elevator will bring is indeterminate. Fulton notes in *Theoretical Elevators*, "'We do not know what is next'" (37). This indeterminacy is a property of all emergence in systems; it is not possible to predict what change will result in advance.

While the resulting changes cannot truly be known, Lila Mae and Fulton both believe that the new space will lead to a new relationship between space and the subject. Fulton speculates on what it will be like to ride the perfect elevator as it reaches previously unimaginable heights:

> Half enjoying it now. The walls are falling away, and the floor and the ceiling. They lose solidity in the verticality. At ninety, everything is air and the difference between you and the medium of your passage is disintegrating with every increment of the ascension. It's all bright and all the weight and cares but brightness. Even the darkness of the shaft is gone because there is no disagreement between you and the shaft. How can you breathe when you no longer have lungs? The question does not perturb, that last plea of rationality has fallen away floors ago, with the earth. (222)

The space of the elevator changes, as it no longer has walls, a floor or a ceiling. The elevator well is gone too, as the elevator has become air. Not surprisingly, a change in the space corresponds to a change in the subject, which becomes one with the elevator, "the difference between you and the medium of your passage ... disintegrating." Just like the elevator, the subject is said to undergo physical changes as it no longer has lungs with which to breathe. Not only has the physical subject changed, but the idea of the

rational subject is gone too. In the passage, rationality is connected with the old spatial order, which is earthbound. The term rationality also conjures images of the Empiricists, whose method is based on rational, classical science. Both rationalism and by extension Empiricism have fallen away from the new emergent space. By implication then, the new space will not suffer from the same problems in relation to the subject as the old space, which is why "for Lila Mae, the quest for it [the black box] now becomes part of the struggle for racial justice" (Bérubé 166). The new space will not be based on the senses, which have been obliterated and/or replaced. In other words, sight and color will no longer determine the subject and his/her relation to the world. A new space and a new subject have the potential to emerge from the emergent space of the perfect elevator.

It is also possible to read this passage as a description of death. The subject becomes an object "as the difference between you and the medium of your passage is disintegrating." The movement from darkness "into the light" echoes the (clichéd) description of near death experiences, as does the implication that you are no longer "earthbound." There is no breath, as in death, but this hardly matters because the organs have stopped functioning. There are no lungs, and there is no rationality because the brain has stopped working. The use of the figurative language of death in describing the new elevator is apt for it represents the metaphorical death of the subject that will inevitably result from such a drastic change in the spatial-subjective system. Furthermore, while change will result from a new spatial-subjective system, it is impossible to know what the resulting change will actually bring. Death, of course, has long been used as a metaphor of uncertainty, the ultimate limit beyond which one cannot know. While Lila Mae and Fulton both assume the new spatial-subjective system will be a better world, a world free

from the racism of the one they currently reside in (based as it is on the visual regime

epitomized by the Empiricists who judge everything on the basis of what they see), the

systems theory of emergence insists that change is not teleological. It is not possible to

know in advance if the new space and the new subjects will be better or worse than what

came before, or what these terms might mean. The novel reminds us of this in the

penultimate paragraph of the book; "There was no way Fulton could foresee how the

world would change" (255). It is Lila Mae's intuition that things will be better, but what

is not contested is that they will be different.

Texaco: *Heterogeneity*

Introduction

Patrick Chamoiseau's Texaco and Colson Whitehead's The Intuitionist both tell

the story of daughters accomplishing in the big city what their fathers could not. Both

tell the story of an oppressed racial group struggling against the forces of the dominant

society. Both explore the interactions between subjects and space in the productions of

the spatial-subjective system. Most importantly, both explore the production of emergent

space and the ensuing process of change in this system. This chapter includes both

novels, however, not because of their similarities but because they demonstrate two

different approaches to the production of emergent space. Change in the spatial-

subjective system in Texaco is the result of the type of subject in place, not the place of

the type of subject, as in The Intuitionist.

The Intuitionist shows how space can produce a particular subject in the wrong

place, which creates a crisis point and the possibility of emergent space. In contrast to

this process, space in <u>Texaco</u> produces individuals for the benefit of systems of power,

moving from the subject of slavery to contemporary urban squatter settlements. [68] As in

<u>The Intuitionist</u>, the result is a subject (Esternome in <u>Texaco</u>, Fulton in <u>The Intuitionist</u>)

who is unable to effect change in the system because of his reliance on structural

principles (such as a hierarchical understanding of race and gender) that reinforce the

existing hierarchy. Even when Esternome creates the Noutéka of the Hills, there is no

change in the primary spatial-subjective system itself because he seeks an outside to the

system where no outside exists. The unique spatial-historical context of Martinique,

however, ultimately produces a heterogeneous, Creole subject, as demonstrated in the

novel by Marie-Sophie Laborieux. She produces a Creole space, which becomes an

emergent space that the existing spatial-subjective system cannot determine how to

exploit. The characteristics of créolité embodied in Texaco are also reflected in the style

of the novel, which incorporates a multiplicity of voices and an emphasis on orality. In

the end, the preference for the oral gives way to an anxiety about the written, which is a

clue that the open system of créolité that has escaped the dominant interests of the

hierarchical spatial-subjective system is in danger of losing its transformative power.

The Christ who gives Texaco hope may ultimately represent the adaptation of the system

to incorporated difference (as in <u>Jasmine</u>). Nonetheless, <u>Texaco</u> presents an emergent

space that creates change in the spatial-subjective system, if only locally and for a limited

time.

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[68] In general, for something to "benefit a system of power" means that it contributes to the continuation of
the system. It is also likely to continue or even increase the distribution of rewards to those who benefit
from a system of power. Thus, as discussed in Chapter One, the spatial techniques of late capitalism tend
to perpetuate the capitalist system and its economic benefits to the capital class (see Harvey and Jameson).

In addition to presenting a different mechanism for the production of emergent space, Texaco includes a more detailed representation of emergent space than in The Intuitionist, where the emergent space of the black box is primarily speculative and its properties must be inferred from the quasi-emergent properties of the existing elevators. The emergent space of Texaco, on the other hand, is more fully depicted in the novel. This difference can be accounted for through the scope of change in the spatial-subjective system each novel portrays. The second elevation of The Intuitionist is likely to change the *entire* spatial-subjective system. Such a complete transformation cannot be represented from within the current spatial-subjective system because it remains uncertain and unknown. The emergent space in Texaco, however, transforms the spatial-subjective system of the city of Fort-de-France, but not the entire spatial-subjective system of late capitalism. As such, Texaco offers a glimpse of what emergent space can look like and accomplish on a small scale. Though change on this level may not be longevous, it may be all that an individual subject can accomplish.

Hierarchy and the Spatial-Subjective Subject of Colonialism

Texaco is a frame narrative that begins with the heroine, Marie-Sophie Laborieux relating the story of the Urban Planner's arrival in her quarter (also named Texaco) and ends after Marie-Sophie's death. The bulk of the narrative is purported to be Oiseau de Cham's (a play on the name of the author, Patrick Chamoiseau) recording of the story Marie-Sophie told to the Urban Planner to explain the genesis of the Texaco quarter, a shantytown that erupted on the site of the Texaco oil company's storage fields. Marie-Sophie insists that to understand how she came to be the founder of Texaco, one must

understand her father's life story as well as her own. Her father, Esternome, was born into slavery, was freed when he saved his owner's life, and spends the rest of his life trying to "conquer" city, first in Saint-Pierre and, after Saint-Pierre is destroyed by a volcanic eruption, in Fort-de-France. Marie-Sophie is born in Fort-de-France and cast out onto its streets after the untimely death of her parents. She struggles at a series of odd jobs and moves throughout the city until she comes to found Texaco. The last third of the novel concerns the struggles of Marie-Sophie and the other residents of Texaco to gain basic services from the City and to fight the constant attempts of the Texaco company and the City to evict the residents and destroy their housing. The Urban Planner is sent to Texaco to promote its eradication, but after hearing Marie-Sophie's story, the Urban Planner is convinced that Texaco must be preserved.

Although the novel opens with a framing account of recent events, it quickly moves to Marie-Sophie's account of her father Esternome's life, most of which she knows only from the stories he has told her. The space of slavery produces Esternome as a subject who is subject to a racist power structure. Of course, space is not the predominant characteristic that defines Esternome's subject position in an economic system predicated on slave labor where one's position in the system is determined first and foremost by the color of one's skin. However, in slavery as in most systems of power, space and the regulation of space play an important role in establishing subject positions that reinforce the existing system. Foucault suggests as much in <u>Discipline and Punish</u>. His genealogy of changing systems of power and the ways in which they produce subjects includes a genealogy of changing spaces, from the scaffold to the panopticon and the prison. While space is not the focus of Foucault's argument in

Discipline and Punish, it is clear that space plays a role in the production of "man as an object of knowledge" (24). The space Foucault is interested in, of course, is the space of discipline. Space is essential to discipline: "In the first instance, discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (141). Foucault then goes on to enumerate several spatial techniques used to discipline subjects, including the "enclosure" of students, the military, and factory workers (141-142). Another technique is "partitioning." "Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (143). Other disciplinary spatial techniques include creating "functional sites" (143) and ranking (145). Foucault sums up the disciplinary techniques of spatial organization in the following passage:

> In organizing 'cells', 'places' and 'ranks', the disciplines create complex
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> spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical. It is
>
> spaces that provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out
>
> individual segments and establish operational links; they mark places and
>
> indicate values; they guaranteed the obedience of individuals, but also a
>
> better economy of time and gesture. (148)

Ultimately, one's position in a particular place for a particular purpose partially defines who one is. Space defines one's position, movement, contact with others, value, and behavior. Thus, the production of the subject/individual can be highly spatial, as Foucault goes on to demonstrate in his analysis of the production of prisoners through the space of the prison. Of course, for Foucault, all of this is in the service of power, even if it is a micro-physics of power, and not the state power of earlier times.[69]

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[69] For another examination of how space is constructed to reinforce/reproduce divisions along class, race, and gender lines in order to benefit power, see Neil Smith's "Homeless/global: Scaling places."

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An analysis of the economic system of slavery can also focus on spatial

techniques. One of the defining characteristics of slavery is the regulation of movement

in space and how the ability to move differs depending on one's subject position

(Nourbese 134). For example, even after he is freed Esternome cannot move freely

without constantly offering his papers to prove his status. Often, the importance of space

in the slave system is represented through the symbol of the plantation house, which is

referred to as the Big House or Hutch in the Caribbean tradition.[70] Texaco describes the

power of this space; "The Big Hutch rose in the center of the outbuildings, sheds, and

straw huts. From it poured the fields, gardens, the coffee-sown lands climbing the slope

of trees (with precious wood). It dominated whole, seemed to inhale all" (44). The Big

Hutch occupies the center; its position is the center of power and the nerve center of the

slave system. It is the source, for "from it" comes the "fields, gardens [and] ... lands."

Not surprisingly, an individual's position in slavery can be determined by one's position

in space relative to the Big Hutch. First come the outbuildings, then the sheds, and

finally the straw huts, home to the slaves, furthest from the center of power and deemed

less than the tools and property granted space in outbuildings and sheds. This spatial

dynamic is made even clearer when the novel notes that proximity to the Big Hutch led to

"increasing nobility" (44) and power. "The Béké himself didn't get so much respect. In

the fields, ... his silhouette seemed frail or feeble-but, by the Big Hutch, on its doorstep,

he was invincible" (44). The Béké[71]derives his power as much from space as from any

other technique of power in this formulation; the more he is associated with the Big

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[70] Maeve McCusker notes that the significance of the space of the house in the Caribbean has its roots in the plantation house but extends into the present day. Thus, the space of the "house" in Texaco becomes the key to her reading of the novel.
[71] Béké is a term for the "(native born 'white') elite" (Bongie 4), in this case, the plantation owner.

Hutch, the more invincible he becomes. Neither violence nor economics nor education is the focus of this portrayal of the slave system in the Caribbean, which focuses on the way in which space defines the subject through one's position in the spatial hierarchy.

The Big Hutch defines Esternome's subjectivity as well. Born in the space of slavery, Esternome is forced into slavery. However, he was also born into the Big Hutch, and thus "he admitted to having been a real houseboy" (44). "He became arrogant toward the cane blacks as any house servant would" (44). A houseboy or house servant, Esternome's subject position as a slave and the definition of what kind of slave he is are determined by his position in space, in the Big Hutch. The power this space has in defining Esternome is made even clearer after Esternome gains his freedom. Having saved the Béké's life, Esternome was freed and could leave the system of slave labor. Yet he finds he cannot; "He dared neither leave nor really stay. Strange baggage, the plantation had become for him a kind of haven" (49). All he has ever known is his subjectivity as defined by the space of the Big Hutch and the plantation. Despite the incredible cruelties of slavery, when he gains his freedom Esternome at first cannot leave what for him has been a haven, his only home, and thus, his only space of subjectivity. Space helps to produce the slave as subject, for the obvious benefit of the slave owner (in this case, the slave/subject literally saves the owner's life), and the subject of slavery cannot leave the space that defines him.

Despite his initial inability to leave the plantation, Esternome eventually moves to the City on the advice of a Mentoh.[72] While Esternome revels in the City as a place of

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[72] The book explains the Mentoh, "History calls them necromancers, conjurers, sorcerers" (51). The negative connotations of these definitions reflect the opinion of History with a capital H, but the attitude of the Creole subject toward this supposed purveyor of African mystical tradition is itself not uncomplicated.

freedom, here too, space is arranged as a hierarchy and produces subjects for the benefit of colonialism. While Esternome is free and slavery is eventually abolished, Martinique remains in the grips of the colonial system and the City remains a key site of colonial power. As Roy Chandler Caldwell, Jr. notes, "the White Man, of course, is not absent from the cities. Quite the contrary: under colonial regimes the City was the principal seat of imperial values, the cultural instrument of colonization" (28). More than just a cultural instrument, the City is also a spatial instrument enforcing the hierarchies that underpin the colonial system spatially. McCusker notes that "colonialism was, first and foremost, a spatial enterprise, concerned with the appropriation and exploitation of territory, and that notions of space, displacement and location are central metaphors in postcolonial writing" (41). In Texaco, the link between the colonial system and space, displacement and location moves beyond the level of metaphor. Esternome understands first-hand how the colonial system exploits the plantation, but also how it in turn creates the City. "He understood that here the misery of the great plantations ended. All of that lonely blood, the godless pain ... ended up here in boucauts, barrels, packages, to follow the sea routes. ... He also understood ... that the plantation's wealth had created this town" (75). While the plantation and the City are vastly different places, they are connected in the system of colonial space. The blood and pain of the plantation are transformed into barrels and packages in the City. Thus, the "plantation's wealth," the product of the labor of the space of the plantation, creates the City as a transfer point in the distribution of goods in the colonial system. While the roles of these two places differ, they both work spatially to produce the colonial system that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

Mentoh's are treated with reverence and respect, but also fear and suspicion. Both attitudes result in a spatial isolation of Mentoh's who live apart from society.

The city also works to reinforce the hierarchy of the colonial system spatially. "Béké's and france-whites went around in carriages, dined on dinner on the top floors of restaurants, and paraded on the steps of the theater or the cathedral whose creamy white stone broke up the shadows" (69). The spatial images the novel uses to describe the position of the whites in the City also describe their position in the colonial system: the top. They travel in the best conveyances, dine on the "top floors," are seen on the steps (obviously space and color are interrelated in this system; the steps that raise the whites above the rest are themselves white while those of lower status are in the darkness of the shadows and are themselves dark). "City was the province of store-békés and boat-owning france-békés" (77). This phrase defines City ambiguously as either owned by békés or the predominant location of békés. Either way, identifying the most sought after space as the space of békés and erasing the presence of blacks (by not even describing their place) when they also live in the City reinforces the hierarchical system in decidedly spatial terms. The spatialization of the hierarchy is underscored by describing the ruling békés spatially as "store-békés and boat-owning france-békés." The békés are described by their location (and their possessions); they are either tied to stores or tied to France.

By contrast, blacks in the city live in the dilapidated Quarters like Texaco and Morne-Abelard that the City is constantly threatening to eradicate because it views the Quarters as a threat to public health ("the [city] council had been waging an open war, for a few years now, against the insalubrity of a few quarters" (25)) or as the homes of "vagabonds" (164). The novel underscores the role the City plays as a spatial mechanism of the colonial system sorting subjects according to their position in the hierarchy of power by stating, "City was a Big Hutch. The Big Hutch of all Big Hutches. Same

mystery. Same power" (80). While it may seem to hold more freedom, the City turns out

to be little different than the plantation; it holds the same power, the same spatial/racial

divisions that reserve the best spaces and places for the whites and relegate the blacks to

lesser spaces and subjectivities in service of the power of the system, in this case,

colonialism.

Space also reinforces stereotypical gender divisions in the novel, which reinforces

patriarchy and, by extension, colonialism. Whereas Esternome learns to be a carpenter

and is a builder of houses, Marie-Sophie spends most of her working life as a maid, or

keeper of houses. Similarly, when Esternome is constructing houses in the hills, his

companion, Ninon, takes on the stereotypical feminine role of nurturer. "My Esternome

was astonished to discover that his woman [Ninon] possessed a vast know-how. A

knowledge of the land and of survival. Without it, they would have been lost in these

motherless heights. ... She braided brooms with screwpine which made the earth inside

the hutch shine. She planted around the hutch some of these plants which perfume, which

feed, which heal, and which knock out all kinds of zombies" (135). Esternome builds

while Ninon tends to the interior of the house and the earth. Ninon's roles are essential to

survival, but they are also described as distinctly feminine as they are aligned with

motherhood.

Finally, in Texaco, the women protect the houses by dispersing the children and

fighting the police, while the men stand aside and try not to get involved. This is

because, according to strict gender roles, the women's role is to protect the home and

make the community, and Texaco is a space of community and home. While many of the

men in the novel wander and feel few ties to a home space (e.g. Nelta, the drifter), the

women make the hutches into homes and make ties to one another. As Edward Soja

notes in Thirdspace, "hegemonic power ... actively produces and reproduces difference

as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division that are

advantageous to its continued empowerment and authority" (87). Such a gendered

division of space and labor reinforces patriarchy, which, through metaphors of

paternalism, is also a support to colonialism.

The result of the spatial reinforcement of hierarchies of race and gender is that

Esternome's is a hierarchical subjectivity. All subjectivity is systemic and multiply

determined and Esternome, defined as he is through the interaction of race, gender, and

space, is no exception. However, much like Fulton, Esternome's subjectivity cannot lead

to change because it reproduces the binary divisions of the dominant paradigm, in this

case, that of slavery and colonialism, which define one as either European/White or

other/Black. "My Esternome learned to label each person according to his degree of

whiteness or unfortunate darkness. ... Each and every one dreamt of whitening

themselves" (70). Everyone, including Esternome, strives to become white because

whiteness is at the top of the hierarchy.[73] "[T]he békés looked for blue-blooded France-

flesh able to dissolve their past as common freebooters; the mulattoes eyed those more

mulatto than themselves or even some fallen béké" (70). While the ability to move up

and down the ladder of color implied in the description undermines the idea that color is a

"natural" and naturally determined marker of superiority, the same movement serves to

strengthen the structural paradigm white/black by reinforcing the value associated with

color at every step on the ladder. Furthermore, the very idea of movement is actually

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[73] Lorna Milne notes of Texaco, "Martinique is clearly ... to be understood as fundamentally a
(post)colonial society programmed by hierarchical relationships" (163).

undermined in this passage because everything is described conditionally; the movement

does not actually occur in this passage, it is only dreamt of, looked for, and eyed. In the

end, the unattainable ideal of whiteness remains on top while the all too attainable

darkness remains "unfortunate," on the bottom.

The hierarchization based on race works to reinforce itself and prevent change.

Lorna Milne explains:

> [T]he Black subject who has been taught to seek models of all that is
>
> desirable in an other who is White becomes incapable of identifying with
>
> anything in his own make-up and background. ... this undermining of the
>
> sense of self leads to a kind of splitting in the subordinated subject. ...
>
> [who] is forced to compensate for the apparent emptiness, or lack of self,
>
> .... With White postures or 'masks' that only further deny and undermine
>
> his own subjectivity. (164)

This kind of psychological splitting is amply demonstrated in Texaco where Esternome

takes on the White posture by "brush[ing] the waves of his oiled hair with the hope that

one day in that honey year they would wave on his forehead." That this splitting creates

an "apparent emptiness" is also demonstrated in the description of "black affranchis, like

my dear Esternome ... [who] lived as if they had insuperable zombies to civilize under

their resplendent rags and descendants to humanize with a ray of whiteness" (70). The

desire to be white and dismissal of all other reinforces the valorization of all things white,

leading non-whites to participate actively in the subordination of any and all other. This

subjugation is particularly directed toward those who are even less "white." For

example, in Texaco, once Esternome is freed and living in the City, he found that he was

"distancing himself from them [land slaves] without even understanding how" (78). The how is made clear, however, in the description that follows: Esternome acts more and more like a free blackman, who acts as White as possible. A former slave himself, instead of seeking solidarity and resistance with the slaves, Esternome distances himself from them and aligns himself with those trying to be white.

While Esternome's attitude toward slaves and blacks in general is complicated (later in the novel he does identify with them, continues to live with them, and recognizes that he is one of them), he never ceases to be a colonized subject. Throughout his life he idolizes France, crediting the French with abolishing slavery despite the fact that they were responsible for instituting it in the first place. During World War I, Esternome tries to enlist to fight on the side of France, saying "*Ah, if I still had my strength! Vuve la Fouance ... Long leeve Fwance ...*" (190). Finally, even as Esternome takes on his life's mission to conquer City for blacks and overthrow the domination of the békés, he is unable to see past his hierarchal understanding of color. Late in Esternome's life, when Césaire is beginning his rise to power in Martinique, Esternome hopes that Césaire is a Mentoh who can offer further instruction on how Esternome should proceed to conquer City. Esternome and Marie-Sophie go to hear Césaire speak and Esternome, immediately upon hearing Césaire's French, turns to leave, explaining, "He's a mulatto ..." (251). Having flipped the hierarchy and made an attempt to place the black Mentoh on the top of the scale and the white béké on the bottom, Esternome has not escaped the structuralist paradigm. A mulatto falls in between, not purely one or the other, and therefore tainted. While "normally" the taint is that the mulatto is not "white" enough, Esternome feels he is not "black" enough (after all, a mulatto cannot be a Mentoh since a Mentoh comes

from an African, and therefore, black, tradition). Unable to escape the binary paradigm, Estermome cannot capitalize on Césaire's movement for change because Estermome can only see Césaire in structuralist terms.

Nor does Estermome's attempt to escape the hierarchical spatial-subjective system by taking to the hills succeed in bringing about change. Estermome believes that "up there the land will be ours," that there exists a space outside of the colonial system on Martinique (121), which he refers to as the Noutéka of the Hills. There is no outside of the spatial-subjective system of colonialism and its hierarchies, however. Estermome expects the hills to be free of the upper levels of colonial society: "they had only (my citizen thought wrongly) tackled the hills up to the coffee's height" (121). The chronicle of their trip up the hills reveals that the hierarchical organization of space remains intact. The closer to the city, the more prominent the inhabitant. Estermome and Ninon first pass whites; "their presence told us we weren't far enough away. And definitely not high enough" (124). Next they pass mulattoes, "who by marrying each other will end up becoming all white and possess life" (124) and who continued holding slaves even though abolition was declared. Then they pass maroons, blacks who had escaped slavery; "they came out ... so we'd know that this place was taken, that we should beat the bush a little further" (125). Finally, they arrive at an area populated primarily by black affranchis and other societal outcasts. Despite the hope he held out for the hills, its inhabitants are arranged in the accepted hierarchy and they continue to practice the exclusionary habits and desire for whiteness that characterize the colonial system. And even though Estermome and Ninon eventually find a place, it is at the edge of the spatial-subjective system, not outside of it. "The békés, we learned, had gone through the

country with a fine-tooth comb. Even up to the furthest reaches of the birds' flights they had swept everything up, laid a greedy hand. From time to time, they'd barge in savagely, dislodge the occupant, undo the straw hutches" (126). All of the land belongs to the békés, who exploit it and those on it when it is to their benefit.

In fact, the Noutéka serves more as a storage area for unneeded labor than as a space outside of the colonial hierarchy. With the rise of the sugar factories and their need for labor, the residents of the Noutéka abandon their project to work once again for the békés. "The Noutéka of the Hills seemed aborted. … The great conquest of the hills was piteously going down the Factory's heap of connecting rods" (139-140). The hills were never outside of the spatial-subjective system, they simply served as a fallow place for labor until it was needed again. The connection between the Factory system and the earlier manifestations of colonial exploitation is made clear; "He remained stunned before such power, a bit like before the Big Hutch or the City lights" (140). Just as before, the Factory is a space of power in the colonial system - a space that organizes its subjects in hierarchies in order to maximize its power. "He didn't see his Quarter make new trails, submit to the great roads. He didn't see the hill people submit to the békés at harvest time, nor lose themselves in the great factories one season at a time" (147). Those in the hills once again submit to the békés in the fields and in the factories. The hills provide a cheap source of labor in this hierarchy, but not a space to change the distribution of power in the spatial-subjective system of colonialism, nor even a space outside of this power.

The Creole Spatial-Subjective System

In Texaco, space and the spatial-subjective system produce the slave subject, the

colonial subject, and the gendered subject, all of whom serve colonialism, in part

because, like Esternome, they reinforce the hierarchical structure necessary to

colonialism's success. However, Texaco also explores how the unique spatio-temporal

situation of Martinique produces a different kind of subject, a heterogeneous, Creole

subject or subject of créolité, which is a subject that is ultimately capable of producing

change. While Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant introduce the term créolité in In

Praise of Creoleness (Eloge de la Créolité), the concept that they flesh out has its roots in

the work of Edouard Glissant, to whom they dedicate their book (Dash 12).[74] Glissant

writes, "The idea of creolization demonstrates that henceforth it is no longer valid to

glorify 'unique' origins that the race safeguards and prolongs" (140). Instead of a

foundational approach to identity based on a (mythical) pure origin, "creolization is the

unceasing process of transformation" (Glissant 142) that is the result of "Diversity, which

is ... the human spirit's striving for a cross-cultural relationship" (Glissant 98). Glissant

sums up his conception nicely when he writes, "Sameness requires fixed Being, Diversity

establishes Becoming" (98). For Glissant, Caribbean identity is made up of multiple

forces interacting in constant movement. Identity is constantly becoming and is never an

other that can be contained, and therefore stabilized.[75] Obviously, this conception bears

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[74] Chris Bongie notes that Glissant has criticized Bernabé et.al.'s formulation of créolité as relying on
essentialist/foundational language despite its claims to avoid such an approach. See Chapter Two of
Islands and Exiles.

[75] J. Michael Dash summarizes Glissant's views nicely, noting how Glissant "uses the term transversality
in Caribbean Discourse to refer to the synchronic system of converging forces that constitute Caribbean
identity. Glissant's objective is to theorize an otherness that cannot be contained or appropriated.
Consequently, his model is based on fluidity and movement – as he puts it, on 'becoming' as opposed to
'being'" (11). Bongie largely agrees with this interpretation of Glissant, but argues that even Glissant's
rhetoric inevitably includes some references to a fixed identity. "Glissant ... has not fully abandoned,
although he has certainly adapted and attenuated, the sort of particularistic logic that undergirds traditional

great similarities to a systems understanding of subjectivity (as indicated in part by

Glissant's adoption of Deleuze and Guattari's language of becoming): it is an interaction

and relation of forces in movement, not a simple structure of contained forces operating

in cause and effect mode.

Bernabé et al. attempt to define the subject that results from this "dynamic" in In

Praise of Creoleness, where the authors note, "Creoleness is the *interactional* or

transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural

elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and

Confiant 87). Again, the emphasis is on the interaction of parts (here represented as

cultural elements), a systems approach to the Creole subject. The Creole subject is

heterogeneous, composed of different parts, running different "operating systems," but

achieving completion through the interaction of components, not a summation.

According to Bernabé et al., the first step to reclaiming this identity is to establish an

interior vision that "restores us to ourselves in a mosaic renewed by the autonomy of its

components, their unpredictability, their now mysterious resonances" (Bernabé,

Chamoiseau, and Confiant 86). Chris Bongie latches on to terms like interior,

"ourselves," and "autonomy" to argue that Bernabé et al. are actually reinscribing a

foundationalist identity politics, despite their best intentions. "It would not be a difficult

task to deconstruct this affirmative vision of 'Creole identity' and its obsessive recourse

to a language of authenticity and foundations" (Bongie 64). However, while emphasizing

the interior vision of component parts in Eloge, it is important to note that it is a

"temporary synthesis" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 82) that is unpredictable and

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identity politics and that a superficially euphoric understanding of the creolization process would appear to put into question once and for all" (Bongie 69).

mysterious, emphasizing the ultimately unpredictable and unknowable behavior of systems. "Because of its constituent mosaic, Creoleness is an open specificity. It escapes, therefore, perceptions which are not themselves open. Expressing it is not expressing a synthesis ... It is expressing a kaleidoscopic totality" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 89). Here the authors argue against closure, there cannot be a definition ("To define would be here a matter of taxidermy" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 88)) for by definition a definition would stop the movement of the system, freezing it into a structure that is no longer open to movement and therefore change. Creoleness is "the adaptation of Europeans, Africans, and Asians to the New World; and – the cultural confrontation of these peoples within the same space, resulting in a mixed culture called Creole" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 93). As such, "it is in harmony with the *Diversity*" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 90), but it is not a diversity that is a mixture of defined others that do not interact and do not combine. Rather, créolité is a diversity in constant interaction, of "constant dynamics" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 111). It is a systemic subjectivity that emphasizes systems processes, not hierarchies.

The Creole subject emphasizes the subject's systemic nature. While all subjects ultimately must be understood as systemic, Glissant and Chamoiseau's theory of créolité is important because it foregrounds systemic processes that are particularly conducive to promoting change (i.e. openness, flexibility, movement, diversity, etc.). However, their notion of créolité suffers in two respects: it does not consider how such a subject will interact with other systems (and may lose some of its openness as a result) and it pays too

little attention to the role of space in the production of the Creole subject.[76] While

Glissant and Chamoiseau posit the space of the Caribbean as a prerequisite for créolité,

they place the emphasis on culture: "Diversity ... means the human spirit's striving for a

cross-cultural relationship, without universalist transcendence" (Glissant 98). Glissant

and Chamoiseau either leave the role of space in the production of culture unexamined or

give it only a cursory, supporting role. For example, when describing the discourse

appropriate to créolité, Glissant eschews Western realism and suggests that "Describing

the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in

the process of creating history" (105). While suggesting that we move beyond a

conception of space as mere container, Glissant conceives land as separate from

individuals and community and subordinate to time. History and individuals are

inextricable but Glissant does not clearly articulate the relation between individuals and

space. Glissant at least posits some role for space, whereas Bernabé et al. revert to a

conception of space as mere container. "Creoleness is the *interactional or transactional*

aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements,

united on the same soil by the yoke of history" (87). The component parts in interaction

here are "cultural elements," which again are constrained by time through "the yoke of

history." Space simply provides the location, "on the same soil," but Bernabé posits no

role for the effects of space on cultural elements or the subject, or vice-versa.

The role of space in the production of the Creole subject is much more explicit in

Texaco than in the theories of créolité. In the Quarters of the city Marie-Sophie can

interact with all manner of people, from whites to mulattoes to "athletic blackmen," from

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[76] Later critics working with the ideas of créolité pay more attention to the importance of space. See J. Michael Dash's The Other America and Ernest Pépin's "The Place of Space in the Novels of the Créolité Movement."

wealthy landowners to middle-class proprietors to indigent poor. She takes on aspects of each (regardless of race or gender hierarchies), learning to read and write in French, learning how to build a hutch, learning how to fight the colonial forces of the City. The connection between the space of the Quarters and the Creole subject is occasionally made explicit. "Before there was a community of people, there was one of huts carrying each other, tied through one another to the sliding land, each getting its bearings from the other" (277). The proximity of the huts makes a community of the people. The importance of the space of the huts to the subject is emphasized through the use of personification; the huts become subjects in figurative language, "carrying each other," getting bearings from one another. Just before this passage, Marie-Sophie describes this Quarter as a community of people from all over, a Barbadian, a milato, a coolie, a veteran of WWI, a tree planter, etc., describing the diversity created by this Creole quarter. Marie-Sophie continues her description; "To walk through a lane (which would cross through lives, intimacies, dreams, fate) you had to shout *Good day everyone, Evening ladies and gentlemen*, and ask to go through" (277). Here again, space and subject are intermixed through catachresis. Crossing a lane should be purely spatial, involving one side, the middle, and the other side. But here a crossing does not involve spatial coordinates but subjective ones, "lives, intimacies, dreams." The novel personifies the space of the Quarter and spatializes the subjects of the Quarter.[77]

Ultimately, Marie Sophie recognizes that her subjectivity and her spatial positioning are interrelated. "Evidently, people had settled *around me*: a living space bigger than the others made my home the nucleus of Upper Texaco" (362, emphasis in

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[77] Ernest Pépin notes that it is in the space of the urban Quarter "that the real mixing took place" and that the production of the Creole subject could not occur on the plantation (9).

the original). Ostensibly describing the geography of Texaco, Marie-Sophie notes that her home is the center of the Quarter. However, she begins by noting that this settlement pattern is *around her*, not her home, but herself. She is the center of Texaco just as her home is the center of Texaco. They are one and the same, which is emphasized by her use of the phrase *living space*, combining subjective and spatial terms in one phrase. Underscoring this connection is the fact that Marie-Sophie adopts as her secret name, the core of her inner self, Texaco, the very name of the Quarter that she inaugurates. Again, her subjectivity and her space are equated, and both are Creole. As Lorna Milne notes, "the Quartier is in many ways a central symbol of Creole identity in the text: Creole culture is expressed in its peculiar architecture, its location and its social structures; and Marie-Sophie herself entertains an especially intimate relationship with it" (165). Milne notes the interrelation of the subject and space in <u>Texaco</u>, though she emphasizes the Creole subject as causing the Creole space, the causality cannot actually be determined. What is important here is that, operating as a system, the two reinforce one another such that the subject produces a certain space and the space produces a certain subject, both of which are Creole.

Marie-Sophie's Creole subjectivity rejects the hierarchical paradigm of the subject Esternome embodied. "The invitation for Marie-Sophie and Texaco to identify with the colonizer is, in other words, firmly declined" (Milne 166). Edouard Glissant writes of créolité: "To assert that people are creolized, that creolization has value, is to deconstruct in this way the category of 'creolized' that is considered as halfway between two pure extremes ... Creolization as an idea means the negation of creolization as a category" (Glissant 140-141). In other words, the Creole subject is not a hybrid subject

that is simply a mixture and therefore on the scale between the binary white/black, European/other. The Creole subject is something altogether different. Dash makes this point clear in his discussion of Glissant:

> It is through the idea of repositioning Martiniquan opacity in terms of a mobile counterpoetics of diversity that Glissant makes the link with the Caribbean's hemispheric identity. If interlectal space opens up the possibility of disrupting a stable, secure plenitude of meaning and replacing it with errancy and dislocation – a going back and forth (reversion and diversion) – then no ultimate state can either be defined or fixed. (12-13)

The Creole subject is one that is produced through interlectal space, which is systemic. The Creole subject, then, is the perfect subject for the production of emergent space, which the hierarchical subject can never produce because he/she is bound to reproduce a "defined or fixed" state.

Marie-Sophie produces the space of Texaco. Early in the novel, Marie-Sophie states, "Texaco, my work, our Quarter, our field of battle and resistance summed up my interest in the world" (25). The entire narrative is the narrative of how Marie-Sophie produces Texaco. For example, at one point Marie-Sophie explains the significance of the stories Esternome tells her, which she in turn relates to the Urban Planner and Oiseau de Cham and which become the first half of the narrative. "I didn't realize the reach of his words, but I foresaw their hidden importance: they would, beyond my Esternome, feed a legend that would give me momentum for my battle to found Texaco" (200). The purpose of the narrative, then, is to explain what lay behind Marie-Sophie's "battle to

found Texaco," leaving no doubt that she is responsible for its production. In fact, Marie-Sophie gives herself the name Texaco and builds her hutch, her "anchor in City" (297). "Then things went very fast. My hutch attracted other hutches ... it was soon known that there was room by Texaco" (300). The hutch that Marie-Sophie built becomes the center of Texaco. Since this is also her secret name, "that there was room by Texaco" takes on the double meaning of room by the oil company's tanks and room by Marie-Sophie, who, in producing the space, becomes inseparable from it. Lorna Milne notes that the Creole subject enters into "a dynamic reciprocal relationship with external factors such as history and the environment" (173). Of course, the environment includes space and it is easy to see how the Creole subject is in a reciprocal relationship with space in Texaco whereby the two mutually produce one another. As Milne notes, "it is fitting that the shacks of Texaco should be made out of whatever materials come to hand, ingeniously adapted by the inhabitants, for they thus express the ..., flexibility and adaptability of the Creole subjects who are their owners and creators" (170). The Creole subject creates the Creole space, which contributes to the production of the Creole subject.

Not only does the Creole subject create the space of Texaco, but it is a space that differs substantially from City. Marie-Sophie notes, "we reinvented everything: laws, urban codes, neighborhood relations, settlement and construction rules" (317). For example, the terms of construction are spelled out: "Our hutches sat on the soil, espousing its contours, without scraping any ground away, no modifications in the profile of the bank" (318). Unlike the construction typical of City, where swamps are drained, earth moved, and pavement laid, in other words, the construction of "*dominated*" space characterized by "a slab of concrete" (Lefebvre 164), Texaco's hutches are designed in

harmony with the landscape and resemble Lefebvre's concept of appropriated space, "a

natural space modified in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group" (165).

Another characteristic of the space they produce that differs from City is that there is "no

private land" (318). "In our mind, the soil under the houses remained strangely free,

definitively free" (319 emphasis in original). While the land of Texaco is legally owned

by the Texaco corporation, for the settlers it is a lived space, "space which the

imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (Lefebvre 39). In the settlers'

imaginations, in their "mind," the space is not defined as property but as "*definitively*

free," which is to say at no cost, available, and without restriction. The above examples

demonstrate how the Creole subject invents the laws, codes, and rules exemplary of

Lefebvre's conception of conceived space. While "neighborhood relations" are not easily

categorized in Lefebvre's spatial triad, Lefebvre does note that "social space

'incorporates' social actions" (33). It is clear in the novel that neighborhood relations

create a unique spatial characteristic. "In other words, with her [Marie-Clémence] in our

Quarter of Texaco, a life without witnesses, like life downtown, was a difficult wish. All

was known of all" (19). Marie-Clémence is the "beneficial glue" of the neighborhood,

making sure everyone is apprised of everything that occurs (20). This creates a space

unlike that in the downtown of City; Texaco has its own unique neighborhood relations

that make it a "communauté" (19). Marie-Sophie and her fellow Creole subjects produce

the space of Texaco.

Texaco as Emergent Space

Texaco is not just different from City; it is a space designed to conquer City. For Marie-Sophie, to conquer City is to change it. To change space requires emergent space. Texaco becomes just such an emergent space, as can be seen in its characteristics of perceived space, lived space, movement, repetition, temporary status, and harboring potential. That the space of Texaco is more of a perceived space (the space of the everyday) as opposed to a conceived space (the space of the planner) is made clear throughout the novel, particularly in the notebook entries of the Urban Planner who often contrasts the order of the City center with the "disorder" of Texaco. "In its old heart: a clear, regulated, normalized order. Around it: a boiling, indecipherable, impossible crown" (184). The Urban Planner often refers to the City center as "regulated" or "normalized order." It is the epitome of Lefebvre's conception of conceived space, which is not surprising given the presence of such a thing as the Urban Planner in the first place. By contrast, however, the City center is surrounded by quarters such as Texaco, which is characterized as perceived space in that it is the space of everyday life, filled with people going about their business in such close proximity that the result is "a boiling, indecipherable, impossible crown." It is indecipherable only by the conventions of conceived space, however. To those who live there, for whom it is the space of the everyday, the space of Texaco is quite clear, which is why Marie-Sophie can "enlighten" the Urban Planner (184).

Texaco is also a lived space, or "space as directly lived" (Lefebvre 39). The Urban Planner notes, "I suddenly got the feeling that Texaco came from the deepest reaches of ourselves and that I had to learn everything"(165-6), and "She taught me to reread our Creole city's two spaces: the historical center living on the new demands of

consumption; the suburban crowns of grassroots occupations, rich with the depth of our stories" (170). As a lived space, Texaco is the space of the everyday user as well as the space of an individual's imaginative processes, symbols and images. This is implied in the Urban Planner's vague recognition that in Texaco there is a different symbolic system than the one he is used to working with in conceived space. It is a system that comes from "ourselves," meaning Martinicians as opposed to the West, and that he will have to "learn." It is something he will have to learn, be "taught," to read, which comes from the symbolic system of Creole "stories." J. Michael Dash picks up on this symbolic aspect of Texaco, stating that it is "a new forest of symbols for the urban maroon. Not the official knowledge but an alternative way of knowing how to combine, scramble, and improvise is the key to survival" (143). Other critics emphasize the "everyday" aspect of Texaco as lived space in contrast to the planned nature of conceived space. For example, McCusker notes that "the ideal Creole home requires no institutional support, but is an organic, living and breathing construction" (59). Similarly, Caldwell remarks, "Instead of imposing a standardized order, the Creole city permits – even invites – a multiplicity of local responses" (37). For both McCusker and Caldwell, the emphasis is on the way in which Texaco arises out of the practices of its inhabitants that sets it apart from the "standardized order." This, of course, is also the very characteristic that makes Texaco a lived and perceived space.

Texaco is also a space both of movement and repetition. These two emergent, systemic qualities are easy to see in the novel. The Urban Planner notes, "The Lady [Marie-Sophie] taught me to see the city as an ecosystem, made up of equilibriums and interactions ... Nothing but the haphazard whirls of the living" (257). The movement

here, brought to the foreground by the "whirls of the living," is the movement of the

systemic interaction of parts. The Urban Planner uses the language of systems to

describe this aspect of Texaco, describing it as "an ecosystem." Texaco is also produced

through the constant movement of people in and out of its space. All of the original

inhabitants save Marie-Sophie relocate after the first destruction of Texaco, and new

inhabitants are constantly arriving to replace and supplement those already there. Texaco

is full of the movement of a growing urban space.[78]

Not only is Texaco full of movement, however, it is full of recursive movement.

This recursivity is largely a result of the interaction between the inhabitants of Texaco

and the City's dominant classes, the Texaco company, and the police. The oil béké is

constantly calling in the law to tear down the hutches of the urban settlers, who inevitably

rebuild Texaco as the same but different.[79] Marie-Sophie notes of her first attempt to

locate a home at Texaco, "I planted them six times, and six times some of the béké's

blackmen ... set fire to them in my absence" (309). But she is not swayed and stays on,

rebuilding every time. Ultimately, the settlement is destroyed and rebuilt "thirty-twelve

times" (335). In each iteration, Texaco must be seen as temporary (another property of

emergent space) as it is likely to be destroyed again when the béké "ran back to blow on

the embers of the police" (335), but the process constantly repeats itself as the inhabitants

refuse to give in to the demands of City.

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[78] J. Michael Dash makes a similar point: "Much recent Caribbean writing can be interpreted as experimentations in mapping a new urban space that is contingent, nomadic, and diverse" (138). More specifically, in describing Fort-de-France in Texaco, Dash writes "Equally important is the constant reference to the mangrove, which suggests, in the new town, not a rigidly conformist space, not grounded in a foundational poetics, but one that is constantly being made and remade" (143).

[79] In this sense, the conflict between the structural/hierarchical regime of the dominant group and the heterogeneous systemic approach of créolité is even more violent and direct than the clash between the Empiricists and the Intuitionists in The Intuitionist.

The very fact that they are recursively destroyed/rebuilt gives the houses of and

space of Texaco the quality of potential; it is always on the verge of being destroyed or

renewed. It is constantly in the emergent state of becoming other. McCusker notes, "the

depiction of the house turns on the appropriation of a precarious and ever-evolving space

... rather than on the enjoyment of this space as an intimate shelter" (55). The space of

Texaco is unstable, constantly evolving, precarious, and thus full of potential rather than

"an accomplished reality" of the standardized notion of space "as an intimate shelter"

(McCusker 55). In this way, the domestic space of Texaco is at once gendered feminine

and not. It is the woman's space of home and community, but it is simultaneously not

"an intimate shelter" but a dangerous space of construction/destruction. The "gender" of

the space of Texaco is heterogeneous, consisting of, and thus determined by, multiple

factors.

The potential and recursivity of Texaco as an emergent space also show that the

spatial-subjective system of colonialism cannot co-opt Texaco into the hierarchical

structure that had heretofore defined space on Martinique. In addition to repeatedly

destroying the homes at Texaco, the City periodically attempts to find alternative

locations for Texaco's residents. Texaco is the property of the béké and the City attempts

to maintain the hierarchical order by preserving the béké's space and moving its

inhabitants to less desirable Quarters where they can be regulated and disciplined in

public housing. Over time, however, fewer and fewer Texaco residents take City's offer

of relocation and always "those who had left were replaced by new persons" (355). The

Texaco Quarter refuses to participate in the organization of space that is of benefit to the

colonial system and the colonial system seems to be momentarily at a loss about how to make use of the emergent space of créolité.

Style and Créolité

The importance of many of the characteristics of créolité that lead to emergent space is emphasized through the novel's incorporation of these same characteristics into its stylistic conventions. For example, the Creole subject is composed of multiple parts in interaction, which in turn creates the movement necessary for emergent space. This same multiplicity is enacted in the novel through the use of multiple voices in the narration. The novel uses a variety of methods to present multiple voices: there are two narrators, Marie-Sophie and Oiseau de Cham; there are several inter-texts,[80] including Marie Sophie's notebooks as well as the notebooks of the Urban Planner; and often Marie Sophie narrates events from someone else's perspective, including the first half of the novel, in which she relates her father's life as he told it to her. The effect is strengthened by the clear differences in tone and style of the various voices presented. For example, the following passage moves from Marie-Sophie's narration to the notes of the Urban Planner, which are set off in the text. "Morning would find the poor things [fireflies] blinking with sadness, the left wing tied to the right in an afflicted twitching. Jesus, Mary, what a tale ...

People have only moaned about the insalubrity of Texaco and other such

quarters. But I want to listen to what these places have to tell" (143).

Marie-Sophie's voice is colloquial, conversational, and informal. It is marked by metaphors, personification, expletive, and incredulity. While the Urban Planner also uses

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[80] Dash also draws the connection between the multiple texts and the heterogeneity of Texaco (144).

personification in proposing that places can speak, the effect is quite different. The Urban Planner is far more serious; he wants to learn from the quarters and their speech is really only a metaphor for his learning. The vocabulary differs; Marie-Sophie refers to "poor things" while the Urban Planner is more academic in his choice of words such as "moaned" and "insalubrity." In short, there is no mistaking the two voices as the same, and if there were, the inset of the Urban Planner's notes in the text assures that its difference will be noted. Much as the emergent space and créolité consist of multiple parts in interaction, the narrative itself is composed of multiple voices all commenting on the story of Texaco.

Another aspect of créolité that is manifest in the emergent space of Texaco is the importance of the lived experience of the subject (resulting in the production of lived and perceived space). For Bernabé et al. any literature intended to represent créolité should "identify what, in our daily lives, determines the patterns and structure of the imaginary" (100). The most effective means for capturing daily life is through its language, and thus orality is privileged in créolité (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant 95). The style of Texaco is meant to mimic the oral through its use of colloquialisms and conversations. Colloquialisms abound: "So as the saying goes – if your mother won't give suck, try your father" (119). Colloquialisms indicate an informal tone of familiarity consistent with everyday speech. The familiarity of speech is also indicated by Marie-Sophie's frequent addresses to Oiseau de Cham, her interlocutor. For example, Marie-Sophie states, "Chamoiseau, these stories about trees don't interest me. If I tell you this it's because you insist" (118). This passage gives the impression that Marie-Sophie is engaged in conversation with the author. She invokes him in a direct address, "Chamoiseau," uses

the word "tell" to indicate speech, and posits an exchange through the fact that

Chamoiseau insists she speak. What is represented then is meant to mirror a conversation

or oral discourse. While not strictly a stylistic device, the sense of orality of the narrative

is further supported by the convention that Marie-Sophie is telling her story. In fact, the

narrative is a story of a story, for the periodic addresses to Oiseau de Cham reinforce the

idea that Marie-Sophie is telling him the story of how she told the story to the Urban

Planner.[81] The bulk of the narrative is the story told to the Urban Planner as told to

Oiseau de Cham. It is perhaps doubly oral, a twice-told story of the production of the

lived space of Texaco. As such, the oral nature of the text reinforces the Creole,

emergent space through its emphasis on the everyday.

Emergent Change as a Matter of Scale

While McCusker finds the Creole hutch, and thus the space it constructs, to be full

of potential, her reading of Texaco concludes with the assertion that the final age of

concrete and City's acceptance of Texaco means that the potential has been foreclosed.

"The ideal Creole home requires no institutional support, but is an organic, living and

breathing construction. However, like the oral tradition which is also mourned in *Texaco*,

this house has been collapsed into a static order of definition and of sameness, a state

which metonymically gestures towards the condition of the assimilated island itself"

(McCusker 59). In contrast, Roy Chandler Caldwell Jr. reads Texaco as a new,

postmodern space. "The Creole city realized in Texaco provides a counter-model to this

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[81] Buzelin notes that in Texaco "the author recreates the discursive setting of traditional story-telling" (72).

vision of a centralizing postmodernism destructive of all local culture" (Caldwell 37).[82]

These two seemingly diametrically opposed readings of the same text seek to resolve the same question: either Texaco is an active space of resistance or the dominant system has reincorporated it and its resistance has ended. The reality may lie elsewhere. Texaco may represent an emergent space that is full of the potential for change but which, as an emergent space, only operates on a local scale. In other words, both McCusker and Caldwell may be right: the emergent space of Texaco may not lead to change on the global scale of the spatial-subjective system of late capitalism, but it may produce change on the local level of the spatial-subjective system of Fort-de-France.

The implication in the novel is that Texaco does change the spatial-subjective system of Fort-de-France. The Urban Planner argues that instead of seeing Texaco as a problem, "we must dismiss the West and re-learn to read: learn to reinvent the city" (269). The reinvention implies that the space of the city will change as a result of an interaction with Texaco, though at this point the Urban Planner is still approaching the situation from the perspective of conceived space, which can be seen in his emphasis on learning, reading, and inventing, all of which rely on the mental conception of what a city should be. Another indication that Texaco will change the spatial-subjective system comes at the very end of the novel when the Urban Planner and the city begin to extend services to Texaco. "And indeed, he told me that City would integrate Texaco's soul, that everything would be improved but that everything would remain in accordance with its fundamental law, with its alleys, places, with its so old memory which the country needed" (381). While the idea of integrating Texaco into City suggests that City will

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[82] The "vision of a centralizing postmodernism destructive of all local culture" that Caldwell refers to is largely the one Frederic Jameson presents.

absorb Texaco and ultimately eradicate its difference, the suggestion here that Texaco itself will not change raises another possibility. If Texaco does not change but becomes a part of City, then City itself must change in order to incorporate Texaco.

There is also the change in the subject that occurs as a result of the emergent space of Texaco. This change is personified in the change of the Urban Planner from a practitioner of the Western notion of conceived space to a proponent of the space of créolité in Texaco. The Urban Planner writes in his notebook, "The Creole city returns to the urban planner, who would like to ignore it, the roots of a new identity: multilingual, multiracial, multihistorical, open, sensible to the world's diversity. Everything has changed" (220). Here the Urban Planner implies that the change is not just in him but is more universal, a whole new identity exists as a result of the emergent space of the Creole city, and "everything has changed." Caldwell Jr. echoes the Urban Planner's sentiments when he suggests that "Texaco is not just a place to live, but an entire culture, the entrance into History, a new identity" (30). That this is a change that is a result of the emergent space is again made clear when the Urban Planner notes, "When I say 'Creole urban planning,' I am invoking: *a mutation of the spirit*" (234, emphasis in the original). The emergent space of Texaco leads to a potential change in the space of Fort-de-France and a definitive change in the subjectivity of the Urban Planner, who believes that the change has the potential to affect many more. Thus, the novel seems to argue for a change in the spatial-subjective system as a result of Marie-Sophie's production of the emergent space of Texaco.

The novel leaves the overall impact of this change open to question, however. As in The Intuitionist, the novel cannot present a definitive articulation of what the new

spatial-subjective system looks like on a global scale. One never sees the new space of the City of Fort-de-France, for the novel concludes on the verge of this transformation, just as one never sees the results on spatial organization of the second elevation because The Intuitionist concludes at this point. This is perhaps the necessary result of presenting a fictional representation of "contemporary" emergent space. Neither novel can present a vision of what the next spatial-subjective system looks like because it is impossible to predict the results of change via emergence in advance. Furthermore, a truly emergent phenomenon is likely to change the current spatial-subjective system so radically that speculation as to what will come next is largely futile because it is forced to draw upon the conventions of the current system in order to represent a future system that by definition is a change in those very conventions. In other words, there is a limit beyond which fiction cannot go. Faced with the impossibility of representation in this context, it is not surprising that the two novels might find it more appropriate to leave the future open.

Another possibility, in Texaco at least, is that the change in the spatial-subjective system is highly localized and/or quickly incorporated into the existing system in order to essentially eliminate its effects, as McCusker argues. Support for this reading is readily available in the novel as well. In particular, near the end of the novel the oil béké visits Marie-Sophie and admits defeat. Marie-Sophie comments, "I understood he had come to see up close the one who had vanquished him, and remind her that the war was much larger and that on that level he was not losing and never would" (364). While Texaco may change the space of the oil company's property, and even the spatial-subjective

179

system of Fort-de-France. its broader impact is limited by the continuing power of the békés and capitalism.

Just as the style of the novel enacts the key tenets of créolité, support for the argument that the characteristics of Texaco are under pressure can be found in the anxiety over the written word. Marie-Sophie describes her writing as a closure, an end to the openness so characteristic of créolité, the Creole subject, and the space of Texaco. "I began to write, that is: to die a little" (321). Writing is seen as equivalent to death, the ultimate in stasis, an association made clear when she notes; "I was emptying my memory into immobile notebooks without having brought back the quivering of the living life which at each moment modifies what's just happened" (322). The notebooks lack movement, which is essential to "living life." Not only that, life is recursive because "at each moment [it] modifies what's just happened." All of this is lost with the written word "done in the French language, not in Creole" (321). The result of the loss of movement, recursivity, and openness of créolité is twofold: "Texaco was dying in my notebooks though it wasn't finished. And I myself was dying there" (322). Marie-Sophie fears that codifying the story of Texaco into the written word will prevent its further development as well as her own (once again reinforcing the strong subject-space tie). Of course, the written word may not be as stable and static as Marie-Sophie fears, but the translation of the Creole into French may yet signal an incorporation of the emergent into the colonial system. In this case, the stilted, academic, establishment style of the Urban Planner's prose may also be a poor harbinger. His willingness to learn the language of Texaco may be read (as it is by McCusker) as a sign that the establishment is finally learning how to incorporate and exploit the Creole spatial-subjective system that

180

had heretofore been a space for change. The ambivalence of the ending suggests the question cannot be decided. Texaco is an emergent space that has changed the local spatial-subjective system, but the duration and extent of this change is in doubt. The two examples of emergent space presented in this chapter have demonstrated change as imminent or occurring on a small scale but not wholesale change in the spatial-subjective system. To see the *effects* of change in the spatial-subjective system resulting from an emergent space, it is necessary to turn to another space of movement; it is necessary to go on the road.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRODUCING EMERGENT SPACE REMIX

Hitting the Open Road

Get your motor runnin'
Head out on the highway
Lookin' for adventure
And whatever comes our way
Yeah Darlin' go make it happen
Take the world in a love embrace
Fire all of your guns at once
And explode into space

\- Steppenwolf

For literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a production and not an
expression.

-Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 133

Introduction: Born to be a Process

"Born to be Wild" might have been an appropriate title for the theoretical work

of Deleuze and Guattari. The Steppenwolf lyrics and quote from Anti-Oedipus offer a

similar injunction to emphasize process over a goal, production over an expression. For

though the Steppenwolf song offers the advice to "head out on the highway," really there

is very little practical, goal-oriented information here (how, exactly, does one "take the

world in a love embrace"?). Steppenwolf actually suggests a process: make yourself

available to all kinds of experience by leaving everyday locations and seeking out new

spaces, especially spaces, like the road, that seem to invite chance events. The goal of

this experience remains ambiguous; perhaps only Jack Kerouac's character Dean

Moriarty can fully understand what it might mean to "make *it* happen." It behooves us,

then, to go beyond the manifest content of the lyric. It is not actually the highway that is essential, but the process of being on the highway. Deleuze and Guattari, for once, are more straightforward. What is important about literature to them is its process, the production and not what is produced.

Similarly, emergent space cannot be a goal; it can only be a process. The production of emergent space (the process) is important, not the particular form (content) that emergent space happens to take at any given moment. Nor is emergent space the result of either the presence of a conscious subject or the presence of one kind of space. Rather, emergent space produces and is produced by a certain kind of interaction between individuals and space: it is really more of a process than content. This process exists in On the Road (1955) but not in Going Native (1994), where the interaction between individuals and space is best described as a steady state relationship, demonstrating that it is not the space of the road that leads to emergent space. In On the Road, the space of the road is an emergent space that results in the production of postmodern space. The road becomes an emergent space in On the Road by means of the interaction between Sal and Dean, their recursive movement, and the lived space of the highway. This interaction is itself the result of the systemic processes of desire.

Paying attention to the spatial-subjective system and the production of emergent space in On the Road reveals quite a bit about the novel that has not been noted in the past. Most critics have assumed that Sal and Dean are subjects independent of their spatial, cultural, and societal surroundings, whether for good or ill. An analysis of the spatial-subjective system in On the Road, however, demonstrates that it is a novel about process. On the Road is about being as process, being in, of, and through the world, not

about being as transcendence or separate from the world. Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of the relation between subject and space, the processes of being, in this case desire, is about more than an understanding of subjects. The processes of the subject have an impact on the world. In On the Road, the processes of subjectivity produce emergent space.

On the Road is about the processes that constitute desire and the desires that constitute process. Sal Paradise's desire is for mastery, not of others, but of himself. On the Road is the chronicle of Sal's attempts to discover spaces that he believes will enable him to control his self-definition independent of others' intervention. Sal seeks this control in the space of the road, the frontier, and the other (both at home and abroad), which correspond to formulations of self-discovery, masculine individuality, and authenticity, respectively. These spaces fail to deliver, however, because they are imaginary spaces that cannot fulfill Sal's desire. His failure to achieve the desired space and control leads to a repetition compulsion, which drives the narrative's content and style, and introduces the processes that are necessary to emergent space. The repetition compulsion of Sal's desire manifests in his constant movement, recursivity, temporariness, and creation of lived space, characteristics which are simultaneously enacted in the novel's style and are the necessary components of emergent space. The result of these processes is the emergence of a new, postmodern space characterized by a collapse of time and distance, increasing homogeneity, and the proliferation of nostalgic representations of imaginary spaces.

In Going Native, on the other hand, postmodern space is the precondition for the journey of the protagonist not its result, and the space of the road lacks any of the

qualities of emergent space because the capitalist system has co-opted the processes of desire. There is no change in the spatial-subjective system and the novel ends in the same postmodern space in which it began. The space of the road is not what is important to the production of emergent space. While the space of the road was the condition for the change that resulted in On the Road, in Going Native the space of the road has been incorporated into the postmodern spatial-subjective system. The space of the road is therefore no longer capable of becoming an emergent space in postmodern space. Identifying the emergent space of the road in On the Road does not enable one to replicate emergent space in order to achieve change in any spatial-subjective system. The best that can be hoped for is recognition of the characteristic processes that comprise an emergent space, and perhaps an ability to encourage these processes, but the reproduction of the emergent space particular to a certain moment cannot be achieved.

The Emergence of Postmodern Space in Kerouac's On the Road

"Machines driving other machines"[83]: Sal and Dean and the Roads less Traveled

On the Road consists of five parts, the first four of which detail extended, cross-country road trips taken by the first person narrator, Sal Paradise, usually accompanied, at least part of the way, by his friend Dean Moriarty.[84] Often described as lacking a plot, the novel describes events on the road, the development of Sal and Dean's friendship,

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[83] (Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus 1)
[84] On the Road is a fictional novel, but it is loosely based on the experiences of Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady, as well as many of the other leading figures in the "Beat" movement. Critics usually identify Sal as standing in for Jack and Dean as standing in for Neal Cassady. The conflation of the biography with the fiction extends to the point that critics often speak of Jack when talking about Sal and vice versa. I prefer not to speculate on what is "fact" and what is "fiction" and will deal exclusively with the text. For an interesting account of how postmodern culture blurs the lines between fact and fiction through the creation of "Jack Kerouac" as a commodity, see Rona Johnson.

their pursuit of "IT,"[85] and the counter-cultural philosophy of the Beats.[86] The literary

criticism of Jack Kerouac's On the Road is diverse.[87] Critics have explored everything

from how the novel "offers us a road map ... to colonial patterns of racialisation that

persist long after the end of formal colonialism" (Saldaña-Portillo 87-88) to how the

novel explores competing notions of how to achieve transcendence (Giamo). Within this

diversity of approaches, however, it is possible to discern two primary threads of

analysis: those who argue that On the Road is radically subversive of dominant American

values and those who argue that the novel is ultimately conservative of American values.

For example, Omar Swartz writes "On one level Kerouac, through Paradise, is striving to

create for himself a situation of freedom and experience by rejecting as insufficient the

value base offered to him by his culture" (179). To Swartz, Sal and Dean's rejection of

America's "insufficient ... value base" "vitalizes an opposition to the psychological and

potentially physical oppression of the corporate state" (181).[88] On the other hand, those

who feel the novel is essentially conservative often make an argument similar to the one

Ellen Friedman applies to the entire Beat movement. Using Kerouac as an exemplar,

Friedman notes:

> Kerouac's *On the Road*, in particular, seems fecklessly rebellious. ...The
>
> master narratives, strangely, seem more alive in the beats' work than they

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[85] "IT" is never defined conclusively, although Dean makes several semi-lucid attempts to explain what it is. Critics often describe IT as a moment of transcendence. Ben Giamo, in his article "What IT Is?," writes: "IT, a transcendent state of pure excitement, stops the felt experience of linear time screeching in its tracks" (191).

[86] Robert Holton notes, "During the early postwar era, the pressures to conformity in middle-class white American culture were enormous, and it should come as no surprise that a reaction against that conformity – The Beat Generation – should arise and attain notoriety" (77).

[87] For a representative sampling of critical approaches to On the Road, see Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, edited by Harold Bloom.

[88] Other examples of critics who find On the Road to be primarily subversive include Wilson, Primeau, and Mortenson.

do in works of modernity. They are the contexts of the beats' rebellion.

The beats, in their very opposition, legitimate master narratives and thus

position themselves, in some ways, outside modernity. (250)

On the Road's tendency to legitimate master narratives is more blatant than Friedman's

deconstructive reading of the novel implies. Sal and Dean's racism and misogyny are

glaringly obvious to contemporary readers, and well documented by critics. Add to these

characteristics the novel's valorization of the individual and it is not surprising to find

that many critics read the novel as inherently conservative despite its reputation in

popular culture as an avatar of the counter-cultural Beat movement.[89]

Such readings, however, are based on a mistaken interpretation of the role of Sal

and Dean in relation to space in the novel. Whether the focus is on Sal and Dean as

subversive or reinforcing cultural values in taking to the space of the road, these critics

emphasize Sal and Dean as subjects separate from the spaces they inhabit, constructing a

subject-object dichotomy that then proliferates into every analysis. Thus, Sal and Dean

become the subjects who define themselves either against the object of the conformist

culture they despise or against the equally objectified racial or gendered other and the

spaces they occupy. Critics see Sal and Dean as either subversive or normative subjects.

This approach is misplaced because On the Road is best understood as about the *process*

of change. A focus on process is a focus on the relationship between Sal and Dean and

space, not the dichotomization of subject and object.[90]

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[89] In addition to Friedman, another critic who sees the novel as ultimately conservative of dominant ideology is Holton. For a discussion of the novel's treatment of minorities and women, see Adams, Holton, and Saldaña-Portillo.

[90] Deleuze and Guattari attack the subject-object dichotomy in their discussion of process. "This is the second meaning of process as we use the term: man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other – not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression (cause and effect, subject and object, etc.); rather, they are one and the same essential reality.

On Desire

The primary process in <u>On the Road</u> is desire. Whether it is based in the sexual

instinct, the death instinct, or the pleasure principle, desire is the result of a striving for

mastery over the disposition of the self. Freud argues that love consists of two

"currents": an affectionate current and a sensual current. The affectionate current "is

formed on the basis of the interests of the self-preservative instinct and is directed to the

members of the family and those who look after the child" (Freud, "Universal" 180).

Fundamentally unable to care for itself or provide for its own needs, the infant, out of an

impulse for self-preservation, forms an attachment to its primary caregiver. This

attachment "corresponds to *the child's primary object-choice*" (Freud, "Universal" 180

emphasis in original). This affectionate current is joined by the sexual instincts already

present in the infant. Freud notes, "We learn in this way that the sexual instincts find

their first object by attaching themselves to the valuations made by the ego-instincts,

precisely in the way in which the first sexual satisfactions are experienced in attachment

to the bodily functions necessary for the preservation of life" (Freud, "Universal" 180-

181). As Catherine Belsey notes, the sexual instincts Freud describes are secondary to

the self-preservative instinct (391).[91] The sexual instincts are secondary in a specific

way, however. It is not that they cannot be satisfied until self-preservation is assured;

rather, it is that the sexual instincts are made to serve the goal of the self-preservative

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the producer-product" (4-5). This is clearly an attack on a structural understanding of reality, one that relies on cause and effect relations within binary or structural operations. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the mutuality of producer-product as a relationship of process; they determine one another through their interaction just as subjects and space form a mutually productive relation in the spatial-subjective system.

[91] See Belsey's "Desire in theory: Freud, Lacan, Derrida" for a more detailed analysis of Freud's theory of desire.

instincts as they contribute to the "cathexes of his ego-instincts" (Freud, "Universal"

181). Unable to control his/her environment, the child desires an attachment with those

who can. Sexual desire is formed in service to an instinct for self-preservation, or the

wish to gain control over one's own life and death.

Desire may also receive support from the operation of the pleasure principle.

Freud describes the pleasure principle as the impulse to lower unpleasurable excitations

(Beyond 3-4). This is famously illustrated by the anecdote of his grandson's game of

fort-da, described in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. The child throws a wooden spool

away from himself and says "fort" or "gone" and then retrieves the spool by means of its

attached string and says "da," or "there." Freud interprets the game as a re-staging of the

event of the child's mother's leaving and returning. As his primary object choice, the

loss of his mother is distressing; the child repeats the situation in play in order to

effectuate the return. Freud notes, "these efforts might be put down to an instinct for

mastery" as the child seeks to turn his passive role into an active one (Beyond 15). The

child seeks to alleviate the unpleasure caused by his situation of dependence by

alleviating the distressful excitation. In the case of the disappearance of the caregiver, the

child seeks to become the master of appearance and disappearance, causing the displaced

object of desire to come and go on his command. Freud offers another interpretation of

his grandson's game: that the child seeks revenge for his mother's leaving. "In that case

it would have a defiant meaning: 'All right, then, go away! I don't need you. I'm

sending you away myself'" (Beyond 15). Either way, the pleasure the child receives

from repeating the disappearance of the desired object comes from an assertion of his

mastery over the situation. His desire, then, is not really for the object but for control

over the object that has heretofore represented survival. In the game, his own self-preservation is no longer dependent on the other, but is now under his control. He is able to say "*I* don't need *you*." The subject seeks to define himself without the intervention of another party.

Desire, as a drive for mastery, may also be located in the death instinct, according to Peter Brooks' reading of <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u> in "Freud's Masterplot: Questions of Narrative." Brooks writes, "Desire is the wish for the end, for fulfillment delayed so that we can understand it in relation to origin, and to desire itself" (299). To Brooks, desire is the motive force of the death instinct about which Freud speculates in <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u>. However, it is not a desire for the end by any means. Brooks suggests that the end has to be achieved by way of repetition, which is the continued operation of the death instinct (Brooks 291). Repetition, in turn, "is mastery ... an assertion of control over what man must in fact submit to [death] – choice, we might say, of an imposed end" (Brooks 286). The drive for quiescence, then, is yet again a drive for control over the disposition of the self, even when quiescence is guaranteed regardless of an individual's actions.

Regardless of where it finds its source, desire is best understood as a systemic process. In fact, part of what characterizes desire as a systemic process is the very fact that it has multiple determinants. Desire is not simply derived from the sexual instinct, the death instinct, or the pleasure principle. Each of these sources may contribute an impetus and they may reinforce one another at times or work against one another at other times. This is a reading against Brooks, who locates desire solely in the death instinct ("Desire is the wish for the end"). To accomplish this, Brooks maintains that the pleasure

principle is really subordinate to the death instinct; "the pleasure principle ... serves the death instinct, making sure that the organism is permitted to return to quiescence" (295). However, this is not how Freud describes the relation between the two psychical impulses, which may at times work toward the same ends but are at other times in opposition. For example, the repetition compulsion's tendency to repeat the unconscious repressed works directly against the pleasure principle's resistance located in the ego (Freud, Beyond 24). Freud's text also reveals that the sex instinct and pleasure principle at times reinforce one another, in contradiction to Brooks' logic. "The pleasure principle long persists, however, as the method of working employed by the sexual instincts" (Freud, Beyond 7). That this alignment of the pleasure principle and the sexual instincts early in the argument of Beyond the Pleasure Principle is seemingly contradicted by later developments in Freud's text is not a result of a revision of the concepts but of the fluid nature of psychical impulses (and thus desire).[92] Desire may derive from any one of the postulated sources; most likely it has multiple determinants that interact with one another systemically.

Desire is relational not just in the interaction of multiple psychical processes but in that it involves the relationship between the child and his/her primary object choice. It is the relationship of dependence of the child to the primary caregivers that leads to the development of desire for control over the self. In the fort-da episode the relation between the child and the primary object choice promotes desire. In this case, it is the child's anxiety over the departure of the caregiver that leads to a search for mastery. The

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[92] Catherine Belsey notes "In Freud's account the psychosexual impulses resemble waterways which flow from different springs. ... and in this way it becomes possible for the two streams to unite – or to diverge" (385). Her point, which is well taken, is that the seeming clarity of the metaphor distracts from its potentially pernicious effects. And yet, the metaphor is not as clear as Belsey asserts, since Freud continues to be read as a structuralist and not systemically.

sexual instinct may be motivated by affectionate currents directed toward those who provide care, while the pleasure principle is motivated by anxiety directed toward those who withdraw care. Both provoke desire for control, and both are the result of the perceived relation between the two beings, whether it is characterized by dependence, security, or insecurity. Nor is the relational component of desire monocausal either. The incest taboo intervenes in the relationship between the child and the mother, leading in normal development to another object choice (Freud, "Universal" 181). A third relation, that of the individual to society, intervenes to mediate the relation between child and caregiver. In tracing the vicissitudes of relation and the sexual instinct in Leonardo da Vinci's life, Freud concludes, "In this way repression, fixation and sublimation all played their part in disposing of the contributions which the sexual instinct made to Leonardo's mental life" ("Leonardo" 132). Desire, then, has its root in the relation between individuals and others as well as individuals and society. In turn, these relations impinge on multiple psychical processes: the sexual instinct, the pleasure principle, repression, and sublimation, to name but a few. These processes combine, reinforce, and impede one another so that desire has multiple determinants, and ebbs and flows depending on internal and external constraints. Put simply, desire is a process.

"Going the wrong way": Imaginary Spaces/Imaginary Subjects

In On the Road, Sal's desire for self-preservation and mastery is displaced onto the concepts of individuality and subjectivity. In other words, Sal Paradise must maintain control over self-determination by remaining unique in the face of pressures to conform; to do otherwise would cede control of the self to others. While Sal and Dean Moriarty

192

decry conformity throughout America, they most often identify it with the particular

space of urban, East Coast culture. When Sal completes his first road trip, he ends up in

Times Square, which he describes in detail:

> New York with its millions and millions hustling forever for a buck
>
> among themselves, the mad dream – grabbing, taking, giving, sighing,
>
> dying, just so they could be buried in those awful cemetery cities beyond
>
> Long Island City. ... I stood in a subway doorway, trying to get enough
>
> nerve to pick up a beautiful long butt, and every time I stooped great
>
> crowds rushed by and obliterated it from my sight, and finally it was
>
> crushed.... Where Dean? Where everybody? Where life? (106)

Sal identifies the city as the space of conformity. There are no individuals in this

description, just the "millions and millions hustling forever for a buck." They form

"great crowds" that work against Sal's desire. Sal is trying to salvage a cigarette butt, but

the crowd obliterates it. They prevent Sal from acting on his desire to participate in an

alternative economy because it is not in line with their pursuits. As Omar Swartz has

noted, this is a symbolic death to Sal, who twice notes the lack of individual life in the

city.[93] The hustling of the millions is simply leading to "dying, just so they could be

buried in those awful cemetery cities." Even in death they are not individually

differentiated; they are all buried the same in "cemetery cities." At the end of the

passage, Sal asks in vain for Dean, who he sees as the epitome of individuality. He

continues, "Where everybody? Where life?" For Sal, there is no individual life in the

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[93] Omar Swartz argues that Sal takes to the road because "the road leads away from his symbolic death in the city – the world of work, marriage, school, and the military" (174).

city, only the death of the individual through conforming to the demands of the culture symbolized by New York.

Later in the novel, Sal again expresses his disappointment with those who seek only to conform and not to pursue their own desires. Riding on a bus through Michigan, Sal strikes up "conversation with a gorgeous country girl" (242).

> She was dull. She spoke of evenings in the country making popcorn on
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> the porch. Once this would have gladdened my heart but because her
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> heart was not glad when she said it I knew there was nothing in it but the
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> idea of what one should do. (242)

Sal finds the girl dull not because of the mundane activities she engages in, but because she only does them because it is what is expected of her. Sal tries to draw the girl out in further conversation but finds "she didn't have the slightest idea what she wanted" (243) aside from sitting on the porch, which she mentions two more times. Sal concludes, "It was all over. She was eighteen and most lovely, and lost" (243). To Sal, her inability to know and act on her own desires, to be her own individual and not simply sit on the porch because it was "what one should do," means that her life is over, she is lost.

Sal sets out to discover alternative spaces throughout America to avoid the fate of the conformist. The space of the road is promising because Sal believes it will provide a space free from conformity and therefore a fertile space for self-discovery.[94] In fact, whenever Sal begins to feel tied down he evinces his desire "to get back on that road"

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[94] Craig Leavitt argues that Sal and Dean take to the road as a means of escape "from what they saw as a restrictive and repressive middle-class American culture" (Leavitt 219). Carole Gottlieb Vopat takes a different view of Sal and Dean's travels. She argues that "Sal Paradise goes on the road to escape from life rather than to find it ... he runs from the intimacy and responsibility of more demanding human relationships" (3). Most critics, however, agree that Sal and Dean are simply trying to escape the "culture of suspicion and control" of the time (Swartz 173). See also Hipkiss, Wilson, Mortenson, and Primeau.

(57). Sal revels in "the purity of the road" (134) because he believes "the road is life" (211). As Kris Lackey has noted, Sal sees the space of the road as conducive to "reflective criticism" that will allow access to "an authentic self" not "perverted by a socially formed self-consciousness" (93). He is not dissuaded by his Aunt's warning that Dean "would get me in trouble" (10) because trouble is a sign of non-conformity and freedom from the everyday. Kris Lackey notes that women in the novel are associated with the domestic spaces of home that Sal and Dean are trying to escape (138-141). Thus, that Sal's Aunt warns him against Dean may be all the more reason for Sal to join Dean on the road, as he desires freedom from domestic conformity as well as freedom from cultural conformity. In other words, Sal believes it is on the road where one can discover one's unique individuality because one is freed from the fetters of community and conformity.

Sal's belief in the separation between everyday society and the purity of the road is emphasized in his mystical descriptions of the road. "The car was swaying as Dean and I both swayed to the rhythm and the IT of our final excited joy in talking and living to the blank tranced end of all innumerable riotous angelic particulars that had been lurking in our souls all our lives" (208). The oral component of the style is instructive here as "tranced end" easily becomes transcend, by means of which the road leads to the higher realm of the angelic. Sal believes he will discover his soul in the pure life of the road, far removed from the corruption of society. For Sal, the soul, the seat of the self, exists outside of social forces and needs only to be discovered. It is truly self-sufficient and not under the control of any outside influences.

Sal continues to believe that the road will offer a freedom necessary to the

discovery of his "true self" even after it has continuously failed to do so. On their final

trip south to Mexico, Sal remains hopeful, commenting that this trip is "not like driving

across Carolina, or Texas, or Arizona, or Illinois; but like driving across the world and

into the places where we would finally learn ourselves" (280). At this point, Sal has

driven across all of the states he names (and more) and has failed to experience the much

anticipated moment of self-discovery, but he remains hopeful that Mexico will provide

the drive "where we would finally learn ourselves." Sal's attempt to find a traditional

subjectivity (i.e. one not determined by societal influences) on the road accesses a long

tradition of viewing road travel as a means to self-discovery. As Rachel Adams notes,

"unplanned movement across physical space becomes a metaphor for travel into the

uncharted depths of subjectivity. Exploiting the parallelism between physical mobility

and self-discovery" (69), the journey on the road is a journey into the self. Ronald

Primeau's study of the road narrative genre identifies self-discovery as one of the primary

sub-types of road narrative. He notes, "In one way or another, every highway hero wants

to get away from the distractions of everyday life and drive into a time and place where

the inner self can emerge" (69).[95]

The novel presents indications that the space of the road does not represent the

freedom and individuality necessary to self-discovery that Sal thinks it does, however. In

fact, the road is constructed as a component piece of the network of the power of the

state, which has as much interest in enforcing conformity on the road as it does in the

city. An official state presence is rarely felt in the novel, except for when it intrudes on

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[95] See also chapter four of Rowland Sherrill's Road-Book America, which situates going on the road as "a form of self-recovery or –discovery" in the picaresque tradition (84).

the space of the road. Several times the police interrupt Sal and Dean's road revelries, usually for a moving violation. At one point they are pulled over for driving eighty miles an hour "in the fourth lane of a four-lane highway, going the wrong way" (135). The police proceed to harass the party, leading to complaints about their abuse of power. Sal and Dean just want to be free to be individuals on the road, but the police are determined to make them conform. This scene enacts in miniature the central complaint of the novel in depicting the antagonism between the individualistic Beats and the powers that be. Yet, at the heart of this conflict is an acknowledgment that the space of the road, the space that is meant to symbolize freedom in this novel, has a right way and a "wrong way." The road is constructed, regulated, policed. It is decidedly not free, and one violates the rules of the road at one's own peril. In the case of the space of the road, failure to conform leads at best to police harassment, and at worst to death in an automobile accident. Either way, freedom and individuality are restricted on the road.

Not only is Sal mistaken in his conception of the space of the road as free of conformity, he is also mistaken in his belief that it is possible to achieve self-discovery, dependent on an authentic self free from the influence of others. This is because no such self exists. Rather, subjectivity is constructed through social forces (including space) in interaction with individuals. During a night on the road spent in a movie theater in Detroit, Sal and Dean sit through six double features. "We saw them waking, we heard them sleeping, we sensed them dreaming, we were permeated completely with the strange Gray Myth of the West and the weird dark Myth of the East when morning came. All my actions since then have been dictated automatically to my subconscious by this horrible osmotic experience" (244). What Sal discovers in the movie theater of Detroit is

not an authentic self that, once free of the ties that bind, can reflect on experience through his own conscious thought, but a subjectivity that is socially constructed, causing everything the individual does to be directed subconsciously by images of a Hollywood Western and a filmic portrayal of Istanbul (both of which are spatial imaginaries). Images of the American West and the Arabian East permeate Sal's actions and desires throughout the novel. There is no self-discovery on the road because there is no "self" to discover.

Sal and Dean's inability to find an alternative to the city in the space of the road leads to a proliferation of alternative spaces. For example, Sal turns to the space of the Western frontier, which has a long tradition in the American imaginary as a space free from the pitfalls of urbanity.[96] Sal simultaneously acknowledges this tradition and its lack of a basis in current reality in his descriptions of the West. "We arrived at Council Bluffs at dawn; I looked out. All winter I'd been reading of the great wagon parties that held council there before hitting the Oregon and Santa Fe trails; and of course now it was only cute suburban cottages of one damn kind and another" (19). Sal expects to see the space of "great wagon parties," a space that he constructs in his imaginary through the works of literature on the West. Instead, he finds the "suburban cottages" of contemporary America. Nonetheless, Sal continues to search for (and find) cowboys and the space of the frontier throughout the novel. Working as a security guard in California, Sal describes his walk to work; "Then it was a fast walk along a silvery, dusty road beneath inky trees of California – a road like in *The Mark of Zorro* and a road like all the

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[96] On the role of the frontier in the American imaginary, see Michael S. Kimmel. There is also a long tradition of road narratives seeking "to recover both the virgin land of preindustrial America and the experience of having that land all to yourself, of projectively mastering it" (Lackey 68). For more on the frontier as a trope of road narratives, see chapter one in Kris Lackey's Roadframes.

roads you see in Western B movies" (64). To Sal, the West resembles nothing more than

a movie version of a Western. Despite having just crossed a busy highway leading to San

Francisco, what Sal sees is the romanticized Spanish California of Zorro.[97] Sal's visions

of the space of the West owe more to the movies and literature than to the space that he

occupies.

The Western frontier also brings an (impossible), traditional, masculine

subjectivity with its imaginary.[98] Craig Leavitt argues that the portrayal of Dean

Moriarty in On the Road represents the Western ideals of virility, self-knowledge,

freedom from conventional culture, authenticity, and a life of passion. For example, at

the onset of the novel, Sal compares Dean favorably to his friends from the East, for

Dean's character "was not something that sulked and sneered; it was a wild yea-saying

overburst of American joy; it was Western, the west wind, an ode from the Plains,

something new, long prophesied, long a-coming ... A western kinsman of the sun, Dean"

(10). Such stereotypes of masculinity valorize mastery, and imply an ability to control

one's own definition without the intervention of others. The association of the space of

the West with masculinity is confirmed for Sal on what he describes as "the greatest ride

in my life," which is notably in the back of a truck full of men, all of whom embody one

aspect of masculinity or another (24). From the football players to the farmers to the

independent hobo, virility, strength, and independence abound on this ride. As they drive

across Nebraska and into "the beginning of the rangelands," Sal notes, "A lot of men

were in this country" (30). This masculine subjectivity is the one Sal associates with the

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[97] Dan Fyfe explores Sal's visions of the West in his essay "The American Frontier in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*," where he notes that Sal journeys into "the frontier dreamscape in his failed quest" (197).
[98] For more on the West, and in particular the cowboy, and its relation to American conceptions of masculinity, see chapter six in Michael S. Kimmel's The History of Men.

American ideal of individuality and self-reliance for which he is searching. Sal believes he will find this in the West.

As with the space of the road, however, the space of the West ultimately fails to provide the authentic masculine subjectivity for which Sal longs. When crossing the road he sees as from a Western B movie, Sal says, "I used to take out my gun and play cowboys in the dark" (64). The cowboy, of course, epitomizes the American ideal of masculinity.[99] On the one hand, Sal's desire to occupy the subjectivity of the ideal of American masculinity and individuality manifests itself in his ability to not see the difference between the space of San Francisco and the space of the cowboy. On the other hand, Sal manages to note that he can only "play" at being a cowboy and that his model for this fantasy is strictly imaginary. In fact, Sal cannot occupy the role of the cowboy, as he soon learns making his rounds. He asks a noisy group to quiet down and they slam the door in his face. "It was like a Western movie; the time had come for *me* to assert *myself*" (65 emphasis mine). Continuing his vision of the West as Western and himself in the role of the assertive, Western masculine subject (cowboy), Sal tries again to enforce order. Notably, occupying this role is a matter of self-control, as Sal emphasizes that *he* must assert *himself.* Upon opening the door, however, the other men offer Sal a drink, and he accepts. "And I went to all the doors in this manner, and pretty soon I was as drunk as anybody else. Come dawn, it was my duty to put up the American flag on a sixty-foot pole, and this morning I put it up upside down and went home to bed" (65). Far from the Western sheriff/cowboy ideal of America, Sal becomes the town drunk instead, demonstrating a complete lack of self-control. His ideal of the space of the West

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[99] Michael S. Kimmel refers to "the cowboy as the model of American masculinity" (95) and Primeau notes that road narratives often invoke the "cultural values of the American cowboy motif with its frontier spirit and adulation for the rugged individualist" (73).

as the space of authentic America is turned upside down, just like the flag he fails to raise properly.

Sal is unable to achieve the masculinity he envisions as appropriate to the space of the Western frontier because masculinity is an unachievable construct. While Sal sees masculinity as a state of independence, he continually defines masculinity in opposition to other terms. Most obviously, masculinity is defined in the novel in opposition to femininity. This takes the form of Sal and Dean constantly fleeing domestic spaces and the women that anchor those spaces. However, Sal and Dean cannot maintain a masculinity defined in opposition to femininity; they cannot constantly keep to the space of the road. In fact, they always return home and to the women they have been fleeing. While Dean is constantly taking to the road to get a divorce, his flight is just as often motivated by the desire to marry another woman. Masculinity depends on femininity as an opposite for its definition, but as with all binary oppositions, the pure distinction can neither be achieved nor maintained. Sal seeks to position himself as masculine but is unable to avoid collapsing into its opposite. Sal's inability to raise the flag up the pole, his inability to get it up, symbolizes his failure to define himself as a man.

The final space to which Sal turns in order to find the control over the self he desires is represented in the novel by a number of different spaces. As has often been noted, Sal and Dean search for IT in the spaces of the other throughout On the Road. These spaces include the space of the migrant farm worker in California, the primarily African American jazz clubs in cities across the country, and what Sal calls the space of the "fellahin" in Mexico. In each of these cases, Sal is seeking an escape from mainstream culture, and hopes to find an authentic subjectivity, one that is self-

determined and free of the corruption of society.[100] As Robert Holton notes, "Kerouac's

fellahin appeared to exist in a more authentic, more real and vital space beyond the

confines of a consumer culture" (79). As they drive into Mexico, Dean comments on the

people they see along the way; "'Everybody's cool, everybody looks at you with such

straight brown eyes and they don't say anything, just *look*, and in that look all of the

human qualities are soft and subdued and still there'" (278). Here Dean simultaneously

subordinates and valorizes the other. He suggests they are somewhat less than human in

that their human qualities are soft and subdued, subordinated to some other, unnamed

qualities, yet he acknowledges their humanity nonetheless. In fact, his use of the word

still could be taken as surprise that these non-white, non-Americans have human

qualities, or it could be interpreted to mean that here, among the fellahin peoples of the

world, human qualities have not yet been lost, as they have in the contemporary U.S.

culture Sal and Dean seek to escape. This latter interpretation gains credence when Sal

notes, "The sun rose pure on pure and ancient activities of human life" (278). To Sal and

Dean, Mexico is both a pure space and, therefore, a space of pure humanity. Once again

Sal's conception of space and subjectivity is based on binary logic. Ancient Mexico is

opposed to civilized America. "Life was dense, dark, ancient. ... They [Indians] had

come down from the back mountains and higher places to hold forth their hands for

something they thought civilization could offer, and they never dreamed the sadness and

the poor broken delusion of it" (199). Dark and ancient, the Indians come to the road to

beg from Sal and Dean, who represent civilization. Civilization, however, is corrupt; the

Indians' hopes are a delusion. "They didn't know that a bomb had come that could crack

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[100] See Malcolm for Kerouac's use of jazz and its "appeal to marginalized white males" (105). Adams and Saldaña-Portillo discuss Kerouac's use of Mexico as an alternative to the U.S. culture he is trying to escape.

all our bridges and roads and reduce them to jumbles" (199). The roads of civilization are under threat from the very technology that separates civilization from the ancient. The opposite of civilization is therefore the opposite of corrupt: pure. This logic, of course, can be traced back to the tradition of the "noble savage" in Western thought, once again demonstrating Sal's tendency to rely on older, traditional notions of Western subjectivity that emphasize self-determination in opposition to social determinism. Sal sees Mexico as a space of "ancient activities," which are thereby authentic in a way that the madding crowds of New York are not.

Once again, however, these spaces and the others Sal and Dean find in them are imaginary constructions built on a structural logic inconsistent with the systemic nature of the spatial-subjective system. At the heart of the description of the trip to Mexico is the stop Sal and Dean (and their companion) make at a small town brothel. "It was like a long, spectral Arabian dream in the afternoon in another life – Ali Baba and the alleys and the courtesans" (289). The space of Mexico, to Sal, represents a dream of exotic others, and it doesn't matter what continent the other is from, for they are all the same to Sal. Sal does not see the economic hardship that drives the exploitation of the women and girls that work in the brothel; rather, he sees only princes and courtesans. He mystifies the space beyond all recognition in the belief that he has finally found the "strange Arabian paradise ... at the end of the hard, hard road" (290). As Rachel Adams notes, "Built into Kerouac's account is a certain awareness that his characters' impressions of Mexico are so deeply informed by desire that they have very little to do with the scenes before their eyes" (62). Sal's desire blinds him to his own participation in the perpetuation of the social construction of space and subjectivity.

The same mystification occurs when Sal spends time living and working with

Terry in the cotton fields of California. Sal romanticizes the experience, suggesting that,

despite the hardships, "it was beautiful kneeling and hiding in that earth" (96). Though

working alongside "Okies," Mexican American, and African American laborers who are

struggling just to get by, who in the course of decades "progressed from ragged poverty

... to a kind of smiling respectability in better tents" (95), Sal refuses to see beyond the

valorization of the other in service of defining the subject. Mark Richardson notes, "This

is the dreamwork of a cruel social order because it presents a way of thinking that erases

oppressive conditions" (215-216). One result of this "dreamwork" is that On the Road

seemingly legitimates racial stereotypes that undergird white privilege, despite the

novel's overt challenge to the status quo.[101] Another result, however, is that it allows us

to see that the authentic, traditional subject does not exist in the space of the other, at

least not in the way that the novel has constructed it. As Gary Minda notes, through this

story we are "forced to rethink the way identity has been constructed in some of our most

basic narratives, and, more importantly, how that construction of identity has caused

violence to those marginalized by our narratives" (351-352). The identities and

subjectivities Sal presents are constructed; they are not, in other words, self-contained

monads. While Sal's repeated appeal to the spaces of others suggests he does not

consciously recognize that these spaces do not provide the alternative spatial system he

wants to find, his actions may in fact prove otherwise. Sal does not stay long in Sabinal,

California, despite his depiction of it as a perfect idyll. Nor does Sal, ultimately, enjoy

the destination of Mexico City, where he becomes violently ill and is abandoned by

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[101] See Robert Holton's "Kerouac Among the Fellahin: On the Road to the Postmodern."

Dean.[102] In both cases, he returns immediately to New York, the very space for which

Mexico and California are supposed to be the antidote. On some level, then, Sal

recognizes that these are not the spaces for which he is looking.

Sal's failure to achieve his desired space and subjectivity is inevitable because all

desire is destined to fail at being consummated. Freud argues that since the original

object of desire is unattainable, it is to be replaced with "an endless series of substitutive

objects none of which, however, brings full satisfaction" ("Universal" 189). In On the

Road the object of desire is a space that represents the possibility of an individual that has

complete mastery of the self. Not only will this never satiate the original desire, it is also

not achievable on its own terms because Sal's conceptions of space and subjectivity are

imaginary constructs. The inevitable failure leads Sal to compulsively repeat his efforts

to master both his space and his self. As Freud writes of the repetition of desire in

Beyond the Pleasure Principle, "it is the difference in amount between the pleasure of

satisfaction which is *demanded* and that which is actually *achieved* that provides the

driving factor which will permit of no halting at any position attained" (51 emphasis in

original). It seems as if Freud is anachronistically writing about On the Road for Sal

cannot halt at any position, his desire is the *driving* factor that keeps him on the road,

because no space can meet his demand for control.

Process:Content; Process:Style; Process:Emergent Space

Desire is the driving force behind Sal's actions in On the Road and it is

characterized by a repetition compulsion that causes him to constantly take to the road. A

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[102] Adams suggests that with this illness "Kerouac humbles his character, showing the consequences of his
arrogant fantasies of incorporation and mastery" (65).

repetition compulsion can form around almost any behavior motivated by desire. As such, repetition compulsions will vary in their composition from case to case. Sal's repetition compulsion has its own component processes. Sal's repetition compulsion is characterized by constant movement, recursivity and temporariness as each movement fails and is repeated with a difference, and the creation of lived spaces as Sal attempts to occupy a space to fill his own needs. The fact that these characteristics of Sal's repetition compulsion are enacted stylistically in the novel emphasizes their importance. These component characteristics are also the essential characteristics of the process of emergent space.

The novel's repetition compulsion involves a repeated search for appropriate spaces on the road. As each space fails to satisfy desire, Sal must move on to another space. In addition, the space of the road itself is characterized as a space of movement in the novel. Movement, therefore, is an important component of the process of desire represented in On the Road. In fact, since Sal's desire for control is not entirely conscious, movement becomes the conscious goal as it metonymically stands in for all of the spaces of the road. The result is the primacy of movement to the space of the road in On the Road. In other words, the road is not about departure and destination, but about the space in-between and the movement that creates that space. A conversation between Dean and Sal illustrates this point; "'we gotta go and never stop going till we get there.' 'Where we going, man?' 'I don't know but we gotta go'" (238). Dean emphasizes mobility, the need to go. The destination, the "there" that stops movement, is so immaterial that Dean doesn't even know where there is; he only knows the importance of

going.[103] Sal also understands the importance of movement and its ascendancy over

fixity. At the beginning of his second cross-country trip he notes, "We were all

delighted, we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and

performing our one and noble function of the time, *move*" (133 emphasis in original). To

Sal, movement is the noble function; points of departure represent confusion and

nonsense. This is why, when he senses Dean is depressed in San Francisco, Sal offers to

take him on a trip to New York and Europe. They never go to Europe, but this was never

really the point; the point was the movement, the leaving San Francisco for the "kicks" of

the road. In fact, as Mortenson notes, "Many of the most important events in the novel

… take place in the spaces *between*, while moving from one location to another" (59

emphasis in the original). Thus, not only is mobility and movement essential to the space

of the road, it takes priority over the endpoints.[104]

The novel's emphasis on movement is enacted stylistically, especially through

word choice and sentence construction. For example, Sal describes Dean on the car ferry

crossing the Mississippi river in New Orleans: "He covered everything in a jiffy, came

back with the full story, jumped in the car just as everybody was tooting to go, and we

slipped off, passing two or three cars in a narrow space, and found ourselves darting

through Algiers" (141). The sentence is jam packed with verbs: nine in all, seven of

which explicitly connote movement (covered, came, jumped, go, slipped, passing,

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[103] Erik Mortenson notes that "Dean's need to constantly 'go,' … needs to be understood as a desire for both spatial and temporal movement and flux" (62).

[104] This prioritization of movement over terminus has led many to compare the space of On the Road to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic space. Holton calls Kerouac "a Deleuzian nomad" (80) and Marco Abel's article "Speeding across the Rhizome: Deleuze meets Kerouac *On the Road*" suggests we read the entire novel through the lens Deleuze and Guattari provide. While Abel's focus is on the novel's style, he does argue that "the novel's repetitive content … has entered a zone of proximity with the rhizomatic structure of the American earth itself" (236). On the relation between Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome and emergent space, see Chapter One. For Deleuze and Guattari's brief discussion of Kerouac, see Anti-Oedipus (132-3 and 277).

207

darting). While the novel is written in the past tense, which might normally indicate the completion of movement, a sense of movement is reinstated through variation in verb forms. The past predominates but the sentence also provides the infinitive and gerund verb forms, introducing a sense of imminent and ongoing movement, respectively. Perhaps most important is the syntactical emphasis placed on the active verbs. While the sentence as a whole is compound, it is comprised of relatively simple clauses, primarily of the declarative variety. However, the subject, once stated, is dropped so that the following clauses begin with the verb; "He covered ... came back ... jumped ... we slipped ... passing ... found." It is not the subject, "he" or "we," that is important, but the verbs, "came ... jumped ... slipped ... passing ... found."

The compound sentence structure reinforces the emphasis on movement provided by the active verbs. Each clause is short (the longest containing a mere fifteen syllables) and separated by a comma so that the reader moves quickly from one to the next. The run-on leaves one out of breath and with the sensation that much ground has been covered without the interruption or cessation in movement brought on by a period. Even a semi-colon would interrupt the forward progress; the comma, however, merely adds to the sense of piling on clauses without stopping. Furthermore, most of the words are monosyllabic and short; "came back with the full story." Such word-choice creates a staccato rhythm wherein it is difficult to accentuate one phrase more than another. The result is that the reader speeds along rapidly. As with the punctuation, there is little natural resting point in the sentence and one moves from one end to the other with a speed that calls attention to the very movement of the sentence.

Emergent[105] space is highly dynamic, which is to say, it relies heavily on the

movement of its constituent parts. The emphasis on movement within and between

structures in systems theory is not simply a corrective to the overly deterministic

approach of structuralism. The interaction and movement, systems theory points

out, provides for escape from and/or changes the structuring apparatus. This can

be seen in Massumi's explication of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming."

"Becoming is an equilibrium-seeking system at a crisis point where it suddenly

perceives a deterministic constraint, becomes 'sensitive' to it, and is catapulted into

a highly unstable supermolecular state enveloping a bifurcating future" (Massumi,

Users 95). Here Massumi uses the language of systems theory to describe the

interaction of structures and components as an "equilibrium-seeking system." This is

a system at the point of emergence, where it seemingly spontaneously self-organizes

into a higher level of complexity, changing the system radically. In the language of

Deleuze and Guattari, as used here by Massumi, the change is from a

molecular/molar system to a "supermolecular state." It is important to note that

this emergence is a movement, in this case Massumi refers to it as being

"catapulted," implying extreme movement and velocity away from the apparatus that

had been constrained/constraining until the very moment of release. Further

emphasizing the movement inherent in this point of emergence, Massumi adds,

"Becoming is directional rather than intentional" (95); "The most that can or should

be done is to enumerate ways in which becoming might be mapped without being

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[105] What follows in another font is an excerpt from Chapter One on the role of movement in emergent
space. Ideally in a dissertation on systems theory, one would be able to move between concepts and
sections as the need arose and without the constraints of the conventions of a linear narrative. The excerpts
in this chapter are a way to approximate the effects of such a flexible, recursive, narrative structure.

immobilized" (103); and, "Becoming is always marginal, a simultaneous coming and

going in a borderland zone between modes of action" (106). The emphasis is on

"directional," mobile (by way of "immobilized"), "coming and going," all descriptions of

movement. Again, this movement can lead to a change in the structures of the

system; "Becoming-other orchestrates an encounter between bodies, ... in order to

catapult one or all onto a new plane of consistency" (98). A whole new plane, or in

Deleuze and Guattari's language, a new plateau, is achieved through this movement,

leaving the old structures and system behind. Further, Massumi refers to this

moment of becoming-other, or in the language of systems theory, emergence, as a

moment of "freedom," although he is quick to point out that it is not a freedom of

the subject but a freedom engendered by the movement of the system (98). Thus,

the movement and interaction among and within structures that is an inherent

aspect of systems is also the aspect of systems that allows them to change and

allows system components the opportunity to escape the deterministic bounds of

structures.

Another characteristic of the movement of emergent space is the importance of

recursivity. Recursive, or repetitive, movement is also characteristic of the movement in

On the Road, motivated as it is by Sal's repetition compulsion. At first, this recursivity

seems to be an afterthought or necessitated by circumstance; "Here I was at the end of

America – no more land – and now there was nowhere to go but back" (77-78).

However, it soon becomes clear that Sal's propensity "to cross and recross towns in

America" is really the entire point, as the chronicling of the four round trips is the

narrative (245).[106] Despite the repetition, however, "very few actions in this novel are ever repeated exactly" (Mortenson 59). Each trip follows a different route, with some legs repeated exactly and some altered until the last trip is north-south instead of east-west. As Mortenson noted, the events on each trip differ, and the (stated) reasons for each trip differ, but each trip repeats many of the same elements (speed, movement, unpredictability) as well. Recursivity, or iterative repetition, leads to emergence.

Marco Abel makes a similar argument about the repetitive movement of On the Road:

> The continual repetition of this movement – Dean coming to Sal or; as Dean later joyfully points out, Sal finally coming to him (182) – produces the novel's strong sense of rhizomatic connectedness. The continuing variation of their travels affects multiple communities and locations; by speedily traveling across the rhizome of the American landscape they physically and spiritually effectuate a new, largely unknown America.
>
> (235)

A discussion of what the "new, largely unknown America" consists of appears below. For now, it is important to note Abel's emphasis on the repetition of the movement in On the Road as well as the fact that this repetition includes variation. Movement in On the Road, then, is recursive, and as a result it produces emergent space and contributes to the emergence of a new America.

Several critics have noted the way in which Kerouac's style enacts the sense of movement and repetition that his content portrays, and that this also has led to a certain

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[106] Peter Brooks argues in "Freud's Masterplot: Questions of Narrative" that such repetition is the point of all narrative.

emergence.[107] Marco Abel's "Speeding Across the Rhizome: Deleuze Meets Kerouac *On the Road*," however, is the most interesting given its parallels to this discussion of emergent space. Following Deleuze, Abel argues that the novel's style produces a becoming and that we should attend to how its style produces rather than interpreting what the content signifies (228-229). In other words, what is important to <u>On the Road</u> is its process, in this case, its style. The key element of Kerouac's style in this regard is repetition, just as repetition is a key element in the production of emergent space. "In short, by introducing repetition as a major element into his writing-style, Kerouac invents not only a new poetics but also a new map of the American landscape" (237). While Abel's primary focus is on Kerouac's style, he cannot avoid connecting the style and content of the narrative repetition. Together, style and content produce "a new map of the American landscape." New maps both produce and reflect new spaces. Abel, therefore, makes a direct link between literature and the production of a new space. While I am not suggesting that the relationship between the two is as directly causal as Abel would have it, it is clear that literature has a role to play in the representation of emergent space as a process and that this representation effects our understanding of space and thereby the functioning of the spatial-subjective system.

As the novel describes the repetition of Sal's desire, it enacts the importance of repetition by making it a key component of the novel's style. Images are oft repeated, particularly images of death. Repetition is also a key element of conversation and thought, and thus is important to spontaneous prose.[108] At one point, Dean asks, "'What's your road, man? – holyboy road, madman road, rainbow road, guppy road, any

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[107] See Weinreich's chapter "The Road as Transition," Albright, and Malcolm.
[108] For Kerouac's description of spontaneous prose, see "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose."

212

road. It's an anywhere road for anybody anyhow. Where body how?'" (251). The

repetition (with variation) of the road here is beyond obvious, and it mirrors the primary

form of the repetition compulsion in the novel; taking to the road to discover what road is

"your" road. Dean recognizes that it is not the particular road that matters, but the

repetition. Thus, "any road" will do and the repetition switches from being a repetition of

"road" to a repetition of "any": "any road ... anywhere ... anybody anyhow." Finally

body and how are repeated but road drops out from the last sentence altogether. The

interrogative "Where body how?" makes little sense; it is as if the phonetic repetition has

become more important than connotation. The where (the road) and the how (holyboy,

etc.) are unknown and immaterial, as long as the repetition continues. Repetition is

essential to the processes of desire, of emergence, of literature.

While all space is dynamic and movement is fundamental to emergent space,

emergent space requires the presence of a particular kind of movement. At least

some of the movement in emergent space must be recursive movement. Movement in

emergent space is recursive in that it "uses the results of its own operations as the

basis for further operations – that is, what is undertaken is determined in part by

what has occurred in earlier operations. ... such a process uses its own outputs as

inputs" (Luhman 139). Recursive movement in emergent space can seemingly repeat

itself forever, but there is often enough variation in the repetition to ultimately

result in change. This variation is the result of the action of the recursive

movement itself through the processes of recursion, or feedback. Again, Brian

Massumi's Parables for the Virtual is instructive, as it deals with the phenomenon of

emergence in a variety of contexts. Massumi argues our experience is the result of

recursive processes producing emergence. He reviews the fact that we become

cognitively aware of a stimulus a full ½ second after it occurs but that the brain is

actively processing the event during this time. Despite the lag, we consciously

believe our awareness to be simultaneous with the stimulus. Massumi argues, "The

conclusion has to be that the elementary unit of thought is already a complex

duration before it is a discrete perception or cognition. Further, it is a duration

whose end loops back to its beginning. It is a recursive duration" (Parables 195

emphasis in original). Furthermore, the number of stimuli is infinite, though our

cognition of stimuli is limited. Thus, only a few stimuli emerge from this recursive

process into consciousness. The process of recursivity does not stop there, because

"practice becomes perception" (Massumi, Parables 198). "In other words, compound

forms of result feed back to the thought-o-genic level, where they fuse with more

'elementary' or gnat-like components of experience, toward a new emergence"

(Massumi, Parables 198). What experience does emerge into consciousness feeds

back into the "field of emergence" and effects, recursively, what emerges again in

the future into consciousness. Thus, recursivity works on several levels to lead to

emergence.

The space of the road is also a temporary space that is full of potential. The space

of the road in On the Road is inherently temporary for it is only occupied for a limited

amount of time, especially given Dean's penchant for "balling the jack" and achieving

speeds that border on maniacal. That it is a temporary space means that it is always

changing from one moment to the next, and usually in a way that is not predictable. In

this way, it is a space of potential, a space where anything can happen. Bakhtin notes that

potential is a quality of the road chronotope. "The road is especially (but not exclusively) appropriate for portraying events governed by chance" (Bakhtin 244). The chance for chance events is exactly the point of the road, according to Sal, who embarks on a cross-country trip with Dean and Marylou despite knowing they would abandon him in San Francisco. "But why think about that when all the golden land's ahead of you and all kinds of unforeseen events wait lurking to surprise you and make you glad you're alive to see?" (135). The determinacy of events at the static destination is not enough to outweigh the potential of the space of the road, so Sal embarks in search of "unforeseen events."

The road as a space of potential can be maximized by the method of travel. This is the first lesson that Sal learns in his life on the road. He starts off his first trip with the intention of following one highway in a straight line across the country, but this decision leads to his wasting an entire day trying to get a ride and returning to his starting place in New York. "It was my dream that screwed up, the stupid hearthside idea that it would be wonderful to follow one great red line across America instead of trying various roads and routes" (13). From this he learns that it is better to go where the road will take you, "trying various roads and routes," and not to try to dictate how you will go on the road. The perfect method for this is hitchhiking, which, on this first trip across the country, is Sal's primary means of transportation.[109] Each time a car or truck pulls over to pick him up, Sal cannot be certain where the car will be going or what will transpire along the way, it is a method of travel that is sheer potential.[110]

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[109] Primeau refers to Sal as one of the "champion hitchhikers" (82).
[110] Steven Wright's Going Native, the focus of the second half of this chapter, explores the dark underside of this potential. Hitchhikers in his novel are either dangerous criminals or the victims of crime.

Desire is constant, but what is desired is fleeting or imaginary. Sal always desires

control, but the objects he desires out of the mistaken notion that they will lead to control

are constantly changing. Thus, another aspect of the nature of desire is its temporariness,

which is essential if repetition is ever to occur. Stylistically, many of the elements that

contribute to a sense of movement also contribute to a feeling that all is temporary. The

novel's propensity to active verbs and run-on sentences give a sense that everything is

changing; nothing is allowed to become permanently established. In addition, another

component of the novel's style, its repeated use of death imagery, enacts the importance

of the temporary and of potential. Images (and discussions) of death are pervasive in the

novel. In fact, the first image in the novel is one of death. The novel's second line states,

"I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had

something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was

dead" (3). The next line is "With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life

you could call my life on the road" (3). Sandwiched between the mention of his divorce

and the beginning of what the reader knows to be the subject of the book, life "on the

road," it is easy to miss the image of complete desolation conjured by the description of

everything being dead. Nonetheless, the first image of the novel is one of the fleeting

nature of all life. Even death is temporary, however, as it is followed immediately by the

announcement of a new part of Sal's life. Death, then, becomes a symbol of potential, for

it is out of death that new life is born.

Sal's life on the road continues to evoke the temporary nature of all things

through repeated use of death imagery. Hitching through Pennsylvania, Sal briefly

encounters the "Ghost of the Susquehanna" (103). "The last I saw of him was his

bobbing little white bag dissolving in the darkness of the mournful Alleghenies" (105).

Sal does not believe the old hobo to be literally a ghost, but the imagery of his

"dissolving," his whiteness, and the adjective "mournful" strengthen the association with

ghosts, death, and evanescence. Even Sal's dreams contain images of death that are

associated with traveling. Sal relates to Carlo and Dean a dream he has of being pursued

by "the Shrouded Traveler." "Something, someone, some spirit was pursuing all of us

across the desert of life and was bound to catch us before we reached heaven. Naturally,

now that I look back on it, this is only death: death will overtake us before heaven" (124).

The image of the Shrouded Traveler evokes the stereotypical images of Death. The

image is reinforced through the description of the figure as a spirit and the evocation of

the paradoxical "desert" (i.e. barren) "of life." Once again, death becomes necessary in

the formation of potential as the image of death figures as a motive force in Sal's

movement. Death pursues and Sal tries "to avoid" (124). The death instinct and the life

instinct interact to create the movement that is repeated throughout the novel as Sal

continuously crosses and re-crosses the desert, just as Peter Brooks describes the

repetition that results from the interaction of life and death instincts (295). Images of

death abound in the novel, not to mention the constant references to souls, angels, and

heaven that reinforce stylistically the notion of the temporary (and the potential for

change) that is a prerequisite for the repetition of all desire.

> Potential, according to Massumi in __Parables for the Virtual__, is a characteristic of the
>
> virtual, or states of emergence. He differentiates potential from possibility.
>
> Possibility is variation within a normative definition, whereas "Potential is
>
> unprescripted. ... Potential is the immanence of a thing to its still indeterminate

variation, under way ... Immanence is process" (9). Potential is the ability to become

any number of things, the final becoming of which cannot be predetermined.

(Potential is also a process). Massumi illustrates this in one of his "parables" about

a soccer game. Massumi begins by arguing that the codified rules of the game are

not foundational. Rather, "the foundational rules follow and apply themselves to

forces of variation that are endemic to the game and constitute the real conditions

of the game's emergence" (72). The forces of variation are the "field of potential"

(72) and the "potential movement [of the ball] toward the goal" (73). In other

words, "Potential is the space of play - or would be, were it a space. It is a

modification of a space. The space is the literal field, the ground between the goals.

Any and every movement of a player or the ball in that space modifies the

distribution of potential movement over it" (75 emphasis in original). Massumi's first

statement is correct, with modification: potential is the *emergent* space of play. His

own disclaimer simply relegates space to the outdated conception of container,

which has been clearly refuted by Lefebvre, Soja, et al. The point here, however, is

that the field or space of play is full of potential. "The field of potential is exterior

to the elements or terms in play, but it is not inside something other than the

potential it is. It is immanent. ... The field of immanence is not the elements in

mixture. It is their becoming. ... It is this collective becoming that is the condition

of a formation like a sport" (76).[111] Massumi summarizes his argument by saying:

"change is emergent relation, the becoming sensible in empirical conditions of

mixture, of a modulation of potential" (77). The emergence of the sport of soccer

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[111] It is instructive that despite his disclaimer that potential is not spatial he cannot avoid using spatial terms such as "field" immediately after his own disclaimer.

comes out of the space of potential, emergent space. Potential, then, is an

important characteristic of emergent space and the change it enables.

This potential is the result of the activities of individuals in the space of the road

that transforms the space of the road from a conceived space to a lived space, another

necessary component of emergent space.[112] In their conception, the roads that traverse

America are originally the ultimate in conceived space. The full battery of mental

workers required to plan and execute roadways, from politicians to engineers, insures

roads will always exist in conceived space, especially given their function in the United

States as the primary means of circulation of goods in the capitalist system. Sal and

Dean, however, subvert this conception of the space of the road. For them, the road is

not a space for the transportation of goods, nor simply a means to get from point A to

point B. Rather, it is the space of the road itself that is important, not its originally

designated function. Sal and Dean's spatial practice may be unusual, but it is certainly a

"space as directly lived" (Lefebvre 39). It is the very fact that their use is unanticipated

by the "experts" that makes the space of the road in <u>On the Road</u> a lived space.

While it is relatively easy to see how the repetition compulsion creates movement

and temporariness in the text and how these qualities are enacted stylistically, it is less

obvious how style can reflect the concept of lived space. Lefebvre's description of lived

space gives some clue, however, to what this might look like; lived space is "space as

directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of

'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few

writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe" (39,

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[112] See Chapter One for a full discussion of Lefebvre's conception of conceived, perceived, and lived space and the relation of the same to emergent space.

219

emphasis in original). In terms of content, it is clear that Sal's attempts to access spaces through their images and symbols (of the road, the West, the other) indicates his position as a "user" in lived space. Stylistically, however, what is important is the attempt to *describe* and to do no more than describe space as lived by inhabitants. Such an effect is achieved through the novel's "spontaneous prose," including psychological and descriptive realism, imagery, and the use of informal tone through a heavy reliance on quotation/conversation.

Spontaneous prose is Kerouac's attempt to capture on the page experience, both physical and mental, by capturing images from life through free association, which is left largely unrevised.[113] The result is intended to be what Kerouac described as "'UNINTERRUPTED AND UNREVISED FULL CONFESSIONS ABOUT WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE'" (qtd. in Charters 481). The real life described is not just external life, however, but also mental life; "spontaneous ... writing imitates as best it can the flow of the mind" (Kerouac, "First Word" 487). To access this "flow of the mind," Kerouac advises using free association to tap "seas of thought" and discourages revision, which he sees as akin to conscious thought suppressing the unconscious (Kerouac, "Essentials" 484-485). Stylistically, the result is a focus on images, a disregard for "literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition," as demonstrated in the plethora of run-on sentences, and a preference for informal tone and dialogue that captures the "purity of speech" (Kerouac, "Belief" 483; "Essentials" 484).

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[113] Kerouac speaks directly about his method of spontaneous prose in "Belief & Technique For Modern Prose," and "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose." The distinctive style that his method produced is the focus of much critical attention. For a discussion of the historical antecedents of spontaneous prose see George Dardess. For representative essays on Kerouac's style, see Dardess, Albright, and Weinreich, all three of whom agree that Kerouac is seeking "a style and language commensurate with ... experience itself" (Weinreich 4).

In the novel, Dean watches Sal writing and exclaims, "'How to even *begin* to get it all down and without modified restraints and all hung-up on like literary inhibitions and grammatical fears ...'" (7, emphasis and ellipsis in original). Dean proposes, and the novel delivers, a "spontaneous" style that ignores the restraints of grammar, such as a complete sentence with a subject.

In "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," Kerouac advises beginning with an image as "jewel center of interest" and writing "outwards from there" (485). This can be seen in <u>On the Road</u> when Sal describes an experience on the streets of San Francisco. "I passed a fish-'n-chips joint on Market Street, and suddenly the woman in there gave me a terrified look as I passed; she was the proprietress, she apparently thought I was coming in there with a gun to hold up the joint" (172). Sal begins by sketching a scene, describing the affect of the woman and what he imagines to be its cause. He goes on to spend a half page in further descriptive detail (e.g. "The proprietor was a Greek with hairy arms") while he simultaneously describes a feeling he has that "this was my mother of about two hundred years ago in England" (172). From the image he constructs both in the present and the past, Sal goes on to describe his emotional state.

> It made me think of the Big Pop vision in Graetna with Old Bull. And for
>
> just a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy that I always wanted to
>
> reach, which was the complete step across chronological time into
>
> timeless shadows, and wonderment in the bleakness of the mortal real, and
>
> the sensation of death kicking at my heels to move on, with a phantom
>
> dogging its own heels, and myself hurrying to a plank where all the angels
>
> dove off and flew into the holy void of uncreated emptiness, the potent

and inconceivable radiancies shining in bright Mind Essence, innumerable

lotus-lands falling open in the magic mothswarm of heaven. (173)

Many of the elements of spontaneous prose are present in this section. Kerouac begins

with a concrete image, to which he adds a mental image of his life 200 years ago. This

begins a train of free association. He first recalls a vision he had in Graetna and then

quickly moves to describe a feeling of ecstasy in "timeless shadows." The affective

images start to pile up quickly thereafter, seemingly without revision or concern for

grammatical correctness. The run-on sentence includes images of death, phantoms,

angels, brightness, and heaven. All of which is tied to his affective state of mind, which

is described as "ecstasy" and "wonderment." The sentence includes three conjunctions

until the rush to unload the thought seems to do away with "and" altogether when it could

easily have been included between "emptiness, the point" and "Essence, innumerable."

The impression that all of this is a direct representation of Sal's mental process is

achieved by the lack of a clear logic connecting the imagery. The mental process is

associative, Sal moves from one image to another without conscious forethought, a fact

underscored by the loss of conjunctive reasoning indicated by the missing ands. The

image that sets off this spontaneous prose is spatial. Sal is describing his experience in

San Francisco, on Market Street in front of a fish-'n-chips restaurant. In other words,

spontaneous prose provides a representation of lived space. Language is made to provide

direct access to lived experience.

Another stylistic convention intended to convey the sense of direct access to life

is the seeming "realism" of Sal's descriptions. The novel does not engage in an attempt

to achieve scientific objectivity in its descriptions, everything is filtered through Sal's

subjective interpretation, but there remains an impression that what are being described

are things as they really are. For example, in describing his first visit to Hollywood, Sal

notes:

> Wild Negroes with bop caps and goatees came laughing by; then long-
>
> haired brokendown hipsters straight off Route 66 from New York; then
>
> old desert rats, carrying packs and heading for a park bench at the Plaza;
>
> then Methodist ministers with raveled sleeves, and an occasional Nature
>
> Boy saint in beard and sandals. (86)

There is much exaggeration in this description, and the sorting of the individuals into

specific typologies probably says more about Sal than those who are passing on the

street. At the same time, however, the lengthy description gives the impression that Sal is

attempting to describe everyone who passes by; he is determined not to leave anyone out

so that he presents a complete picture of what is going on in the street. He also mixes

specific details with his generalities so that the reader sees the goatees, beards, sandals,

packs, and long-hair. His association of these details with particular types may even

strengthen the sense of realism; we know the stereotypes so we believe we see what Sal

sees. The reader gains access to the space of Los Angeles that Sal occupies, the lived

space is enacted through the descriptive, realistic style.

Finally, the heavy reliance on conversation contributes to the informal tone,

which is an important aspect of spontaneous prose. The dialogue and tone also give the

impression that the reader is provided direct access to the lives of the characters. For

example, Dean describes to Sal the difference between himself and others while riding in

the back seat of a travel bureau car. "Then he whispered, clutching my sleeve, sweating,

'Now you just dig them in front. They have worries ... Listen! Listen! 'Well now,' he mimicked, "I don't know-maybe we shouldn't get gas in that station'"" (208-209). The informal tone is also established through the prolific use of slang and colloquial speech throughout the novel, such as in the phrase "dig them in front." The repeated exclamation "Listen! Listen!" conveys Dean's ebullience as well as his comfort with his auditor. Similarly, the repeated use of contractions indicates a lack of concern with formality or restraint in speech. The conspiratorial and mocking content, "whispered ... mimicked," is highly informal. The elements of style in this representative sample are meant to give the reader the impression that they have unmediated access to the "real" lives of Dean and Sal. The style of spontaneous prose reflects experience, including the experiences of lived space.

Lived space (or what Soja refers to more broadly as Thirdspace) also contributes to the possibility of emergence. In part, of course, this is because of its incorporation of some of the properties of perceived space, including the "everydayness" of users. However, users in perceived space and users in lived space are using space differently. Users in perceived space use space in its intended manner, making changes through their combined and selective use. In other words, they walk on streets, as spatial planners intended, but by walking on some streets and not others they ultimately change the space of both. Used streets become vibrant, attract businesses, are safer, etc. Streets not in use may become dangerous, despite planners attempts to regulate and encourage use. On the other hand, in lived space, users may be in dominated space, but it is a space "which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making

symbolic use of its objects" (Lefebvre 39). This kind of use is possible in lived space because of the presence of both perceived space and conceived space and also the imaginative processes of the users. According to Soja, the dominated position of the user is also necessary: "Combining the real and the imagined, things and thought on equal terms, or at least not privileging one over the other a priori, these lived spaces of representation are thus the terrain for the generation of 'counterspaces,' spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (68). Emergent space is not always a space of resistance, but lived space is a space of potential, a space where the perceived and conceived come together and are used in a (potentially) transformative way.

Postmodern Space: The Product That is Not a Goal

What results from the emergent space of the road in <u>On the Road</u> is the beginnings of a new, postmodern space. In other words, emergent space is a process and postmodern space is a product. This is not to suggest that the actions of Sal and Dean lead in causal manner to the characteristics of postmodern space. Sal and Dean's repetitive driving is not directly responsible for the growth of suburbs (though the repetitive driving of the daily commuter is one of the main factors in the development of suburbia). What emerges from emergence/emergent space cannot be directly traced to that which came before. Nonetheless, Sal and Dean's actions are a part of the process that is emergent space. The characteristics of postmodern space that emerge in <u>On the Road</u> include a collapse of spatial distance (and time), an increasing homogeneity, and

225

the use of simulacra in the construction of nostalgic spaces.[114] One of the most

commonly cited defining characteristics of postmodern space is the compression of time-

space said to be a result of an increasingly global economy facilitated by technology that

eliminates spatial barriers to communication altogether and drastically reduces spatial

distances through airplane travel.[115] While Harvey dates this development as beginning

in earnest in the early 1970s, the beginning of the time-space compression of late

capitalism can be seen as early as the immediate post-World War II period with the

advent of the interstate highway system. Indeed, it often seems as if Dean's goal in On

the Road is to make the distance from coast to coast as small as possible through speed.

Robert Hipkiss comments that the road and the automobile combine to provide "many

more chances to compress the time and space of different life scenes" in On the Road

(19). Speed creates a new space by compressing spatial distance. Additionally, Dean's

obsession with converting time into an ever present "now" is well documented and

converges with the emphasis on the present and the concomitant loss of continuity of

time often cited as a condition of postmodernity (Harvey 291).[116] Time-space

compression, which is a key aspect of postmodern space, is also a defining characteristic

of the space of the road in America and in On the Road.

One of the results of time-space compression in postmodern space is an increasing

homogeneity of space. The space of the road facilitates this increasing homogeneity of

space via time-space compression. Craig Leavitt notes of the post-war period in the

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[114] A full discussion of postmodern space and its effects on subjectivity occurs in Chapter One through an analysis of Frederic Jameson's Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism and David Harvey's The Condition of Postmodernity.

[115] See Chapter 17, "Time-space compression and the postmodern condition" in Harvey.

[116] On time in the novel, see Alex Albright's "Ammons, Kerouac, and Their New Romantic Scrolls," Erik Mortenseon's "Beating Time: Configurations of Temporality in Jack Kerouac's On the Road," and Ben Giamo's "What IT Is?."

United States, "Interstate freeways sliced across the Great Plains and through the vast

space of the West, bringing with them the homogenized culture of American capital and

conformity ... Sprawling suburban tract housing arose from coast to coast, obliterating

any sense of place" (211). This homogeneity is amply demonstrated in On the Road.

Arriving in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Sal expects to see the space of the west, where "the

great wagon parties ... held council ... before hitting the Oregon and Santa Fe trails"

(19). Instead, he finds that "now it was only cute suburban cottages of one damn kind

and another, all laid out in the dismal gray dawn" (19). The history of Council Bluffs

that Sal had read up on, the specificity of it as a place, has been re-placed by the

increasingly ubiquitous suburb. The homogeneity of the suburb is emphasized by the

lack of specificity in its description; nothing distinguishes the cottages as unique or

belonging in any way to the place. They are simply non-descript, "of one damn kind and

another." The effect generalizes even to the weather, "the dismal gray dawn," which is

itself homogenized in the totalizing, undifferentiated grayness. Later, Dean remarks that

"'I can go anywhere in America and get what I want because it's the same in every

corner'" (120-1). This homogeneity is so acute that it soon becomes difficult to

distinguish one city from another. Sal describes Tucson as "altogether very Californian"

(166). This turns out not to mean much, however, for once in San Francisco Sal remarks;

"I looked down Market Street. I didn't know whether it was that or Canal Street in New

Orleans: it led to water, ambiguous, universal water, just as 42nd Street, New York, leads

to water, and you never know where you are" (172). It is impossible to know where you

are when every space is the same. The substitution of one city for another in the

postmodern space of the global economy does not stop at national borders either.

"Entering Monterrey was like entering Detroit, among great long walls of factories"

(279). Mexico and Michigan would seem to be vastly different spaces, but in the global

industrialized economy, a factory is a factory and a city is a city. The homogeneity of

postmodern space is well developed along the road, despite Sal and Dean's desires to

escape conformity.

Finally, postmodern space is marked by replacing place with nostalgic

representations of space, which results in a proliferation of signs and eclectic quotation of

historical/cultural aesthetics. "The effect ... is to draw a veil over real geography through

construction of images and reconstructions, costume dramas, staged ethnic festivals, etc."

(Harvey 87). This phenomenon is also demonstrated in On the Road when Sal arrives in

Cheyenne during Wild West Week.

> Big crowds of businessmen, fat businessmen in boots and ten-gallon hats,
>
> with their hefty wives in cowgirl attire, bustled and whooped on the
>
> wooden sidewalks of old Cheyenne; farther down were the long stringy
>
> boulevard lights of new downtown Cheyenne, but the celebration was
>
> focusing on Oldtown. Blank guns went off. The saloons were crowded to
>
> the sidewalk. I was amazed, and at the same time I felt it was ridiculous:
>
> in my first shot at the West I was seeing to what absurd devices it had
>
> fallen to keep its proud tradition. (33)

This is the epitome of postmodern space, where the signs and simulacra of "costume

drama" replace "tradition" and "old Cheyenne." To Sal's modernist eyes, this is all

decidedly inauthentic; signifiers and signifieds do not align. "[B]usinessmen, fat

businessmen ... and their hefty wives" don the boots, ten-gallon hats and cowgirl attire

that should belong to the cowboys and cowgirls of the West. The businessmen are the rightful denizens of the "new downtown Cheyenne" but instead they are "on the wooden sidewalks of old Cheyenne," where blanks replace the guns of "its proud tradition." Sal has gone West in search of an authentic space that could serve as an alternative to the spatial-subjective system of the cities of the East Coast. Instead, he finds that postmodern space has already emerged along the roads of the West.

Conclusion: Explode into Space

Sal and Dean head out on the highway looking not just for adventure but for an alternative to the space of the increasingly conformist, commodified culture of post-World War II America. More than just escape, they are pursuing a vision of an authentic, individualistic, masculine, traditional subjectivity. Not only do they fail in their quest, however, but they illuminate the ways in which their desire sets in motion the processes of emergent space, leading to the production of postmodern space in America during this time period. In the ultimate irony, postmodern space represents the advent of a spatial-subjective system that furthers the annihilation of the very subject Sal and Dean desire (see Chapter One). In Chapter Four, Texaco demonstrated how an emergent subject can lead to the production of emergent space. In addition, it was clear in The Intuitionist that a subject can catalyze emergent space through his/her effect on the spatial-subjective system even without this being an overt intention of the subject, as was the case in Texaco. On the Road demonstrates yet another manifestation of emergent space. However, in this case emergent space is produced in the spatial-subjective system not only without the aid of an emergent subject, but rather, in direct contradiction of Sal and

Dean's intentions to reclaim a traditional subjectivity. When seeking change in the spatial-subjective system, therefore, it is not enough to simply act on the wish of a subject to achieve change (regardless of Jameson's claims for cognitive mapping). Change in systems will occur according to systems principles and cannot be determined in advance by a component part of the system.

On the Road Again: *Going Native* and the End of Emergence

Introduction: Postmodern Spaces and Postmodern Subjects, or, "So paranoid ... out here in the 'burbs" (58)

In the second chapter of Steven Wright's <u>Going Native</u>, the drug addict Latisha is startled when her former boyfriend and dealer Reese shows up unexpectedly at her door. After putting away her gun and admitting Reese, he comments, "'So paranoid. What's happened to you out here in the 'burbs?'" (58). Latisha avoids the question and wonders "'How'd you find me?'" to which Reese replies, "'Streets are all connected, baby, you just follow them out'" (59). This exchange demonstrates the novel's concern with the imbrication of space and subjectivity. Reese's initial question implicitly assumes that Latisha's change in personality has been effected by her change in location, from the space of the city to the space of the suburbs.[117] The conjunction of the subject and space is repeated when Latisha asks how Reese found her and his response centers on space. In answering that streets are all connected, it is as if Reese is suggesting Latisha is a street, and her location can therefore be discovered simply by following the connections of all streets. Latisha and Reese soon disappear from the narrative, but the themes that are

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[117] The characterization of the suburbs as a space of paranoia is not unique to the novel. On surveillance, suburbs, and postmodern space, see Mike Davis' <u>City of Quartz</u>, especially chapter four.

raised here become central to the novel, which takes the connection of streets as its premise in following Wylie Jones on his road trip across America and exploring the lives with which he connects in the process. Applied more broadly to postmodern space in general, and beyond that to postmodern culture as a whole, "What's happened to you out here" is the question that motivates the novel as it explores the effect of postmodernism on the individual. Beyond that, the connection, or interaction, between individuals and spaces, particularly spaces of the road, is essential to an understanding of the answer the novel proffers to Reese's initial query. What has happened to the subject of postmodernism is that he or she has become entangled in the perpetuation of the postmodern spatial-subjective system through his or her interactions with postmodern space.

With 37 years between the publication of On the Road and Going Native, there are many differences between the two road narratives. For example, On the Road narrates the emergence of postmodern space, while Going Native portrays a fully realized postmodern spatial-subjective system. Yet Stephen Wright's novel is characterized as "an uncompromising 1990's version of 'On the Road'" (Kakutani C31), despite the fact that the novel's chapters are only very loosely connected to a single plotline and as much of the action takes place off the road as on the road. Perhaps the presence of a "subject" taking to the road to escape in Going Native motivates the comparisons. There is a long tradition of road narratives that focus on the road as a place for change and escape, and some argue that On the Road is the seminal text in this regard.[118] Given this tradition, one can ask whether or not the space of the road in Going Native, and by extension all road narratives, is an emergent space. The answer is no; the space of the road in Going

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[118] See especially Primeau's Romance of the Road.

231

Native is not an emergent space. Going Native begins and ends with postmodern

subjects and postmodern space, despite the presence of the space of the road. Thus, it is

not the space of the road that leads to emergent space. What has changed between On the

Road and Going Native is the interaction between the individual and the space of the

road; in Going Native the processes characteristic of emergent space have been co-opted

or discharged, turning them to the advantage of capital. Without these processes

conducive to change, what remains is a steady-state relation wherein postmodern space

and subjects interact reciprocally to reproduce one another. This demonstrates that what

is crucial to the production of emergent space is not the presence of a particular kind of

space (i.e. the road) but the quality of the interaction between subjects and space.

The qualities of the interaction between subjects and space are substantially

different in Going Native and On the Road. One thing that has not changed between the

two novels, however, is the importance of desire. The difference between the two novels

is in why desire is important. In Going Native capitalism co-opts virtually all aspects of

desire. For example, postmodern space contributes to a desire for control over the self,

but this desire is immediately contained by the insertion of profitable, media images of

the self. Sexual desire is likewise mediatized and converted to profit. Even the processes

of desire that previously characterized the space of the road are either co-opted or

foreclosed by capitalism. Increasingly frustrated at the loss of control over desire, many

turn to violence as a proxy for desire, but violence is also unable to effect change in the

system. As the processes of desire and violence serve capitalism in Going Native,

emergent space is not produced. Instead, the novel illustrates, through the spatial-

subjective system, how postmodern capitalism profits off not just desire, but off of the

very processes that constitute desire.

Homogeneity, Mutability, Profitability

From the beginning of Going Native it is clear that the novel presents a spatial-

subjective system that is thoroughly postmodern, consisting of postmodern subjects and

postmodern space. While critics have amply noted the postmodern identity of the novel's

characters, they have not noted that the novel is also replete with postmodern space. One

of the characteristics of postmodern space is an increasing homogeneity of space. The

paradigm for homogeneity in postmodern space is the suburb, whose birth and

development parallels that of postmodernity.[119] The first two chapters of Going Native

take place in a suburb of Chicago named Wakefield Estates. Like most development

names, Wakefield Estates is a generic name that has seemingly no relation to its

particular location. This suburb could literally be anywhere and go by the same name.

The non-descript nature of the suburb is emphasized in the second paragraph of the

novel, which describes it as an "engineered community of pastel houses and big friendly

trees" (3). The word "engineered" alerts the reader to the highly planned, and

regimented, nature of the community, evoking images of perfectly regular lots with

perfectly regular and regulated houses that all look the same. The similarity of each

house is emphasized by the fact that they are all pastel in color, perhaps of a few different

hues but all matching in type, and all containing "big friendly trees." The homogeneity is

continuously described throughout the chapter, such as when the narrator describes "the

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[119] On the growth and development of suburbia, see Edward Soja's Postmodern Geographies, particularly chapters 7-9.

diverging row of identically shaped and tiled roofs" (11). The second chapter continues

this motif of the non-differentiated suburb in its opening line, "Three blocks away, on a

street like any other street, in a house like any other house" (35). All of the streets and all

of the houses are like all of the other streets and all of the other houses, making

Wakefield Estates a paradigm of postmodern planning. Whether this homogeneity is the

effect of an attempt to meet consumer desires, as suggested in Venturi, Scott Brown, and

Izenour's Learning from Las Vegas (155), or the direct manifestation of the

standardization of postmodern culture for the benefit of late capitalism, as suggested in

Harvey's The Condition of Postmodernity (77), the result is the same.

When space is homogenized, subjects come under enormous pressure to conform

(or, as in White Noise, they seek to differentiate themselves from others). When Rho,

Wylie's wife, has an aberrant thought about sex, the narrator notes, "there's always

someone looking at her …out here in the unprotected pseudoprivacy of God knows how

many prying eyes. In the suburbs the back yard is a stage" (12). Suburban conformity is

enforced through the perfection of the surveillance methods of the panopticon. There is

always someone watching even when there isn't. The presence of the unseen other

interrupts aberrant behavior, even aberrant thought. The connection between the

homogeneity of the space and the inhabitants is made explicit later in the chapter; "The

passing streets are quiet, well tended, as are the lawns, the homes, the people" (21).

Individuals are simply another aspect of the space of the suburbs; streets, lawns, homes,

and people are all alike. They are all quiet and well tended. Homogeneity demands

conformity in space and subject.

As in On the Road, pressures to conform lead to dissatisfaction and desire for self-definition, but in Going Native all available identity constructs are co-opted for profit. The first chapter focuses on Rho and a dinner party she and Wiley share with their close friends Tom and Gerri.[120] The chapter focuses primarily on Rho, who seems to be struggling with a typical suburban ennui, until "She is bathed in a new understanding, this fine evening's unexpected gift to that Cinderella self of hers too long scrubbing the same flagstones clean, and the understanding says to her: your life is your invention" (29). Rho's realization is that there is no inherent self; rather, identity is mutable and can be created. This realization/transformation, however, is preceded by an allusion to Cinderella, who famously changed identities from scullery maid to princess. While Cinderella's is a tale meant to emphasize that she was always really a princess at heart (though requiring a prince to recognize her beauty and charm) the allusion here ironically suggests that invention may be possible but all of the categories of invention are already mediated. The invention of the self as a means of control over self-definition is not under one's control because the available categories are predetermined with profit in mind. Becoming Cinderella, after all, is not an inexpensive proposition, a fact that the Disney Corporation has turned to its advantage. In another chapter, Jessie's boyfriend Garret secures a job dealing blackjack at the Sand Dollar Saloon, where the dealers dress as cowboys. "Garrett loved playing cowboy. Once he put the costume on, the costume put him on: instant machismo in high-heeled lizard boots" (174). Garrett desires the self-definition of the cowboy identity, much like Sal Paradise, and quickly moves from playing to fully occupying (or being occupied by) the identity. Unlike Sal, however,

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[120] Michael Porsche traces the allusions to cartoons in the names and actions of many of the characters to demonstrate their constructed nature, including Wiley's own namesake, Wile E. Coyote. In an interview with Thomas Byers et. al., Wright acknowledges the allusions to the *Roadrunner* (175).

Garrett's identity is constructed for the immediate profit of the casino. The mutability of postmodern identity is designed for capitalism's benefit.

Critics of the novel have emphasized the fragmentation and variability of postmodern identity. For example, Patrick O'Donnell writes of the novel's characters that "they are, mutable and fragmented, clichéd versions of identity under postmodernity. ... decentered sites of inscription and repositories of images."[121] None notes, however, that the replacement of other determinants of identity with media/image generated content is meant to facilitate profit.[122] For example, the second chapter of the novel focuses on Mister CD and his girlfriend, who are crack addict neighbors of Wylie and Rho. When asked who he is, Mister CD can only reply with his media constructed image from a television commercial for his store: "'I'm Mis-ter Cee-Dee,' he sang, 'low-est prices, larg-est in-ven-toe-ree ...'" (47). Identities are constructed to sell product or to create a need to buy product. It is clear, then, that the postmodern self is an image (is imaginary), and one that is highly mutable, but one that is meant to serve capitalism's profit motive.

(Capitalizing) On Desire

Just as desire for self-definition inevitably leads to a variability of identity that, in postmodernism, is converted to profit, sexual desire becomes mediatized and profitable in the novel. Freya, the pornography purveyor par excellence, built her fortune first as a porn actress, capitalizing on the desire of the consumer for her media constructed image, and then by collecting and marketing amateur home videos, capitalizing on the desire of

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[121] See also Kakutani (C31), Mayer (376), and Caesar (283).
[122] Although O'Donnell does refer in passing to the character's "commodified identities."

the "couple next door" captured on film. "Testimony arrived from couples who claimed to be unable to make love without a camera present, others who were becoming aroused in electronics stores" (135). Desire has become so dependent on a viewer, and one willing to pay, that it cannot be consummated without at least the presence of the potential paying customer in the guise of the camera. Freya's husband Rags decries America's tendency to convert sex into materialism. "'This comic book sex you Americans seem to wallow in. ... the ground for your material success'" (146). Rags wants to access the "one truth, actual sex" but finds in America that sex has been translated into the "bright and tasty," consumable "cartoon" version that provides a foundation for profit. Such a commodification of sexual desire should not be surprising because a virtually uncontrollable need to satisfy an ultimately insatiable desire provides the perfect model for consumer capitalism. Indeed, sex and profit have long been linked, but in the postmodern age capitalism moves ever further down the chain of the processes of desire to reap its rewards.

No Services, No Exit: Capitalizing on the Space of the Road

While the first two chapters introduce us to Wylie and the green Ford Galaxie, Going Native does not become a road novel until the third chapter, when life on the road begins.[123] While no motive has been stated for Wylie's disappearance from Wakefield Estates or for the theft of Mister CD's green Ford Galaxie, when Wylie turns up in chapter three driving the car and using Tom Hanna's name, one might assume that he stole the car and took to the road to escape the stultifying sameness of the suburbs. In

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[123] The third chapter begins with a character awakening on the road only to be momentarily paralyzed because "he could recognize neither the place nor himself" (67). Recall the similar moment in On the Road when Sal awakens in Iowa; "I didn't know who I was ... in a cheap hotel room I'd never seen" (17).

other words, Going Native seems here to activate the convention of the road novel as an escape from the everyday spaces and lives of the protagonist.[124] However, taking to the road as a means of escape ultimately proves ineffective. In fact, the space of the road in Going Native cannot provide an escape from the postmodern spatial-subjective system because the characteristic processes of emergent space (and desire) present in On the Road are turned to the benefit of capital or discharged in violence in Going Native.

For example, while movement is necessarily still a part of any road narrative, the quality of the movement in Going Native differs dramatically from the movement in On the Road. Whereas movement in On the Road is about mobility, about constantly being on the move no matter the destination, in Going Native, the endpoints of destination take on primary importance because the endpoints are the most profitable. Most of the characters that go on the road in Wright's novel do so to get somewhere. Not only that, they are usually attempting to get somewhere in order to improve their position in the capitalist system. For example, Aeryl and Laszlo hitch a ride with Wylie not for the adventure of the road but because they want to get to Las Vegas to get married, and then they are going to Los Angeles to become famous. Aeryl explains, "'We'll be in L.A. then, we have plans'" (116). The road here is not about movement for movement's sake but about plans and destinations, money and fame.

That the emphasis of the novel is on points along the road and not the movement enabled by the road is clear because most of the chapters focus on the stationary places and characters that make up exits on the interstate freeway system. Very little of the

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[124] See Primeau's Romance of the Road for a discussion of the convention of escape in road narratives. O'Donnell also recognizes the road as a figure for "escape from the everyday" and Lackey characterizes Going Native as part of an "antidomestic" tradition (28). Kakutani writes "the road, for Wylie, means freedom, independence, the chance to invent himself anew" (C31), missing the point that freedom, independence, and newness are all circumscribed by predetermined constructs in the novel.

action actually takes place on the road itself. Instead, the action of the novel takes place in the destination spots of the road that capital has built to attract travelers. The motel Aeryl wants to escape, for example, was built on the highway in Colorado to capitalize on "the frontier of automotive tourism" (92). Another chapter is set in Las Vegas, the paragon of tourist destinations that originally had little to recommend it besides its being a convenient stop on the road. While the movement of the road is integral to the existence of these points of commerce, the stationary points of commerce are the focus in Going Native, not the unregulated movement of driving. Even when movement seems to be given primacy, it is really in service to cessation: "you had an important destination, as yet unknown, but ceaseless movement would steer you there" (168). The emphasis here seems to be on the ceaseless movement, but it is the destination that is given primary importance. The movement is only necessary (and ceaseless) until it gets you "there," at which point the movement must cease, just as the sentence ceases not with "movement" but with "there." While movement cannot be entirely eliminated from a novel working in the road narrative tradition, Going Native goes as far as possible toward eliminating movement for movement's sake and replacing it with the points of departure and destination where movement can stop long enough to be turned into profit.

Going Native also lacks the recursive movement that is so essential to emergent space. This lack of recursivity in the movement of the novel reinforces the novel's emphasis on departure and destination. Whereas Sal and Dean often make round-trip journeys, moving back and forth across the United States, Wylie only moves from east to west. Furthermore, Sal and Dean make multiple trips back and forth across the country, re-crossing the same and different routes multiple times. Again, Wylie's journey is

239

unidirectional and therefore contains no repetition of routes or spaces visited. The other substantial journey in the novel, Drake and Amanda's journey into the heart of the jungles of Borneo, is technically a round-trip excursion beginning and ending in Los Angeles. However, the narrative begins with the two already in Borneo, and while it ends in Los Angeles, the return trip from the native village is not represented. Thus, the novel describes only one leg of their travels, eliminating any possibility for recursivity. Movement is always away from something and toward somewhere, never circular or repeated. The iteration necessary for emergent space is therefore precluded and the novelty that drives capitalism is emphasized. Nothing is repeated, reused or recycled; every experience is new and available for profit. The interaction between space and individuals creates a movement that perpetuates the existing spatial-subjective system.

The spatial-subjective system in Going Native has also contained the temporary and potential nature of the space of the road, turning it to the advantage of capital or discharging it in violence. As before, the temporary nature of the space of the road is concomitant with the constant movement inherent in road travel. The degree to which Going Native emphasizes the temporary nature of the road is both greater and lesser than in On the Road. On the one hand, Wylie spends even less time in many of the locales in the novel than Sal and Dean, who often linger for days in Denver, New Orleans, San Francisco, etc. On the other hand, the amount of narrative devoted to each stop in Going Native far exceeds the attention On the Road gives to each specific place. The reader, therefore, spends far more time in each location in Wright's novel, undermining the sense that the road journey creates only temporary sojourns in any given place. The "quality" of the temporary has been transformed as well. In On the Road, Sal and Dean's constant

240

movement and lack of roots is in sharp contrast to the dominant culture of the 1950s. On the other hand, Ruth Mayer notes that, "In texts such as O'Nan's and Wright's the notion of in-betweenness … has almost become commonplace. Rather than depicting their protagonists' drifting in terms of a contrast to the boring and complacent establishment, their novels describe the status quo in terms of drifting" (379). This drifting enables the temporary nature of identity in postmodernity. With each new place there is a new identity, and with each new identity there are new opportunities to spend, to "fill out" the self, as Jack Gladney and Jasmine have demonstrated.

The connection between the road, temporariness, and postmodern fragmented identity is made clear as Wylie drives around Los Angeles every day in the last chapter of the novel. "Since his mood, and often his behavior, seemed to vary so from one location to the next, he needed to visit at least three or four of these places in order to feel like a semiwhole person by nightfall, as if his being lay scattered in pieces about the town" (283). Wylie's "being" is fragmented and distributed throughout the city. He spends each day driving from place to place, occupying one or another aspect of his personality for a brief time before moving on. Indeed, the novel goes on to describe exactly how Wylie's behavior changes from place to place as easily and as frequently as the disguises he dons for each performance. Virtually every performance of a temporary identity also involves a transaction. There is the health club for the movie star identity, the bar for the hand model, the gun club for the shooting enthusiast, and so on. What O'Donnell describes as the "permanent temporariness" of postmodern identity, then, is a key component of the "cultural logic of late capitalism" (Jameson). The temporary nature of

an individual's time in the space of the road has been transformed from something that facilitates emergence to something that perpetuates the system of capital.

With the temporary comes potential, which is often a key characteristic of both emergent space and the space of the road, but is contained for the benefit of capital in the spatial-subjective system of Going Native. The potential for almost anything to happen is a key reason for the road trip in On the Road, and Kerouac works hard to portray the space of the road as a space of chance encounter and occurrence. However, the space of the road in narrative is a paradoxical one, as O'Donnell notes. "For the road is always the figure of multiplicity and possibility ... And yet, narratively speaking, the road taken, however circuitous or labyrinthine, is always the only one" (O'Donnell). While most road novels emphasize "the road as route of multiplicity," Going Native portrays "the road as ... route of singularity" (O'Donnell). The potential of the road in Going Native leads to either profit or violence, which in a Marxist view are really one and the same. Some of the examples of profiting off of the space of the road include Aeryl's family motel and Drake's plans to turn his Borneo trip into a screenplay. The most obvious, however, is Perry's pornography, which seeks to profit from the potential space of the roadside motel.[125] Perry surreptitiously films an adjacent motel room and culls the best scenes to sell to Freya's pornography conglomerate. The chance, and temporary (this particular motel rents rooms by the hour) encounters provide ample material for profit. Perry films the potential space and then performs the labor of editing the potential into

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[125] While obviously not a physical part of the road, the motel can be considered a part of the space of the road. The word itself is deeply imbricated with the road, as it is a combination of the words "motor" and "hotel." The Oxford English Dictionary gives only one definition: "A roadside hotel catering primarily for motorists, typically having rooms arranged in low blocks with parking directly outside" ("Motel," def. 1). The road, motorists, and parking are essential aspects of this definition, emphasizing that the space of the road is inherent to the concept of the motel.

profitable packets, which are then distributed through the media network. As such, Perry's activities are a perfect example of Brian Massumi's description of postmodern capitalism in Parables for the Virtual, where he writes, "what the mass-media transmit is not fundamentally image content but event-potential" (269). Thus, capital usurps "the very expression of potential" (88). What Perry films is the potential of the chance encounter. The appeal of his videos as commodities is not their quality - a professional film has much higher quality - but the "event-potential" of the space of the road. Potential, therefore, has become a part of the capital system, just as has temporariness. When thus incorporated into the system, the likelihood of emergence is reduced because potential is anticipated and contained rather than being free to create something new.

Perry's filming business also demonstrates the other option for potential in Going Native, discharge through violence. Increasingly frustrated with the commodification of desire, Wylie displaces his desire onto violence. When Perry returns to his motel room from Freya's party he hears "the fucking behind the wall" (153). He begins filming Wylie en flagrante, but falls to the floor, alerting Wylie to his activities. His desire thus interrupted, Wylie turns immediately to violence; his "long painted arm with the big big gun swung inevitably toward" Perry (154). While engaged in the sexual act, Wylie is operating under the sway of the most basic libidinal impulses, but his immediate object is thwarted by Perry. Needing release, the libidinal impulses take Perry as their object and violence takes the place of sexual desire. Appropriately, the phallic imagery is displaced onto the instrument of violence as the "long painted arm" and the "big big gun" stand in for Wylie in a state of arousal. One discharge is replaced by another as Wylie fires on Perry. Denied sexual satisfaction, violence becomes the immediate outlet for Wylie's

libidinal desire. The pairing of violence and sexual desire becomes so enmeshed for Wylie that they occur in tandem. As he calmly murders the guests at Drake and Amanda's dinner party, he demands that Kara (presumably the woman he marries in Las Vegas) perform one of the killings. To overcome her resistance he tells her to open his pants. "'Do it!' 'It's wet. You're wet.' 'Yes. I want you to share in this experience. ...after tonight no couple will have ever been any closer'" (273). For Wylie, sexual desire and violence become one and the same and he envisions that the most effective way to consummate a relationship is through sharing a violent act. Interestingly, this occurs in the context of Wylie and Kara's robbery, which might be read as a direct attack on capitalism. The aim of desire, and by proxy, violence, remains an assertion of control as Wylie seeks to undermine the system that has been co-opting individual control throughout.

However, violence is no more productive of control or change than desire is because violence is equally subject to capture. For example, the commingling of potential and violence is explicitly tied to the space of the road by Aeryl, who has spent her life at its side. Looking out the motel window, the narrator describes what she sees; "Beyond the cracked asphalt of the parking lot down the grassy slope at right angles to Route 9 stretched six straightaway lanes of unrebuffed speed as familiar as the back of her hand and equally hypnotic, the fundamental lure of moving objects ... the ever-present, ever-thrilling possibility of accident, a splatter of color upon the surrounding monotone" (113). Despite having grown up with this space and being as familiar with it as she is with her own body, the space of the road still offers the excitement of "possibility" or potential. The possibility, though, is only of a violent accident, one grave

enough to produce blood. Potential is a characteristic of desire and the space of the road. Given the close relationship between desire and violence, it is not surprising that the potential of the road can also manifest in violent action. This potential is capitalized just as effectively when manifested in violence as when manifested in desire, as indicated in the constant allusions to movies featuring scenes similar to those for which Aeryl watches. For example, the novel begins with Rho describing Wylie's viewing habits as "all fitting into the current shoot/chase/crash cycle" (8) and Emory is working on a screenplay featuring "Cars, guns, blood, and explosions" (100). Violence becomes a proxy for desire when desire is thwarted. Their comorbidity makes both equally vulnerable to capitalization, however, and violence becomes no more effective at overturning the established order than desire in the postmodern age.

The capture of desire and violence on the road is indicative of the fact that the space of the road in <u>Going Native</u> emphasizes conceived space rather than emphasizing the lived space so essential to emergent space. The emphasis on conceived space maximizes profit for a few by minimizing variation in access to services. Early road narratives had a sense of novelty because they were novel; fewer routes had been explored and the lack of a national interstate system meant that, for the most part, motorists were on their own in devising routes across the country. Since the advent of the interstate highway system, however, cross-country routes provide for less exploration and variation. Miles pass before there is even an opportunity to exit the space of the road, and official interstate rest stops make it possible to have most motoring needs met without leaving the extended space of the road at all. Furthermore, even if one does exit the interstate, it is often difficult to tell one exit from the next since interstate freeways

bring "with them the homogenized culture of American capital and conformity" (Leavitt 211). This standardization emphasizes the space of the road as conceived space because it is all very carefully planned to serve the primary function of the road, the transportation of goods and business travelers in the most efficient manner possible. The point of the interstate highway system is not the trip but getting there. To the extent that the road and its immediate surroundings can generate a profit as a part of that process, all the better. Not only, therefore, are all of the routes already mapped out, but the map includes the same features throughout: gas, food, lodging: Mobil, McDonald's, Motel 6. When these are not to be found at an exit, signs make it clear that there is no point in getting off the highway for there are no services.

The attempt to regulate any unauthorized use of the space of the road further indicates that the interstate highway system is increasingly a conceived space. Those who are not on the road for commercial purposes or who do not utilize the officially designated commercial establishments, such as the ever rarer hitchhiker, are described in the novel as "at the borders of a nation's commerce" (68). Hitchhikers epitomize the perceived/lived space of the road in that they use it for their own purposes and subvert the conception of the road of those who conceived it. Hitchhiking, therefore, is explicitly prohibited at the on-ramp of most interstates, and the agents of the state for whose benefit the road has been erected enforce the prohibition. This regulation of the space of the road is portrayed in Going Native when the State Highway Patrol rousts the hitchhiker known as Billy. The officer instructs Billy clearly; "'we expect that you and your yo-yo will be gone from our highway. Don't disappoint us'" (70). The police are very clear that the highway is not open to all manners of use, hitchhiking is expressly prohibited. In fact,

the highway belongs to the state, the police make clear it is their highway, and the motorists' presence is only tolerated as long as they obey the state's rules. Of course, the police regulated the road in On the Road as well, but hitchhiking in Kerouac's novel was never seen as a problem. The police were primarily interested in Sal and Dean's flagrant safety violations, but were not concerned with their subversive use of the road. In the increasingly regulated space of the interstate highway, however, all unauthorized use of the road is foreclosed.

The Postmodern Road: Epcot Come to Borneo

The result of the foreclosure of the characteristic processes of emergent space (and desire) that had been prevalent in the space of the road in On the Road is that there is no change in the spatial-subjective system introduced at the beginning of Going Native. In other words, the space of the road remains a postmodern space, just as the space of the suburb that opened the novel. The most marked characteristics of the postmodern space of the road in the novel are the collapse of time and distance and the saturation of space with simulacra. The collapse of time and distance is a feature of the newly emergent postmodern space in On the Road, but it is accelerated in the more fully developed postmodern space of Going Native. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of the collapse of time and space in the novel is to be found in what is not present in the text. There is a striking lack of time spent on the road in this road narrative. Each chapter ends in one location while the following chapter begins in another location. The space of the road that Wylie traverses to bring the narrative to the new location is effaced. The novel does not represent the time and distance traveled; it is as if they did not exist. The effect

is that this representation of space gives the appearance of the collapse of space and time

so characteristic of postmodern space.[126]

The description of Drake and Amanda's travels in Borneo repeats this sense of the

collapse of space and time through the content of the narrative.[127] Seeking to escape the

quintessential postmodern space of Los Angeles, which the two call home, Drake and

Amanda are on a trek in the jungles of Borneo in search of an indigenous head-hunting

tribe. Their journey takes days on a river barge proceeding far past the recreated village

where most tourists disembark, and then days more of hiking through dense jungle. The

lengthy description of this arduous journey makes it appear as if they are indeed about as

far from the Western world as one can be, when suddenly they "encountered a jolly troop

of Australian girl scouts marching down the narrow path" (231). Indeed, "the deeper in

they got, the more crowded the terrain. The jungle was crawling with foot traffic,"

including Germans working for a pharmaceutical company and Kenyahs passing in

silence (231). Seeking extreme distance from the world in general and the Western world

in particular, there is nowhere Amanda and Drake can go and not find what they want to

escape because the distance between Germany, Australia, the United States, and deepest,

darkest Borneo has entirely collapsed. The lack of distance between Hollywood and the

jungle village of Borneo is confirmed when Drake and Amanda finally arrive only to be

greeted by a tribe wearing rock band t-shirts, watching movies on their "Sony Trinitron

and Philips ... VCR" (239), and already having seen the movie *Terminator*. This is truly

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[126] For more on the collapse of time and space in postmodernism, see David Harvey, especially chapter 17.
[127] Strictly speaking, Drake and Amanda's journey is not a road trip since they travel primarily by boat and on foot. As will become clear, however, the spaces they traverse are postmodern spaces, reinforcing the idea that no matter the method of travel, postmodern space is ubiquitous.

a postmodern global economy where technology has eliminated the spatial barriers to commerce and culture.

Another aspect of the postmodern space of the road in Going Native is the prevalence of simulacra. According to Jean Baudrillard, the current age of simulacra is one wherein simulation "bears no relation to any reality whatever" (11).[128] Instead, simulacra precede the supposed reality that is to be simulated. "The very definition of the real becomes: *that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction*" (Baudrillard 146 emphasis in original). Baudrillard refers to this as hyperreality, noting that the prevalence of simulacra "means the collapse of reality into hyperrealism, in the minute duplication of the real, preferably on the basis of another reproductive medium" (141). To put it another way, Baudrillard writes, "the hyperreal transcends representation ... because it is entirely in simulation" (147). In other words, in hyperreality, there is no reality, only simulation, which is often actually already a reproduction of simulation. Thus, "reality itself ... has been confused with its own image" (Baudrillard 152), it is a simulation of simulation.

In Going Native the conceived space of the interstate highway and its emphasis on profitability and efficiency mean that the motorist consumer needs to have everything presented to him/her within the space of the road. Simulacra, then, are the perfect solution because they can conform to the contingencies of the interstate highway in a way that the interstate highway cannot conform to the contingencies of reality (for example, it

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[128] Baudrillard actually identifies three "orders" of simulacra stretching from the Renaissance to the current age, which he characterizes as comprised of "third-order simulacra" (see "The Orders of Simulacra" in Simulations, especially 83-102). Third-order simulacra correspond to the time period of postmodernism (though Baudrillard does not use the term). When most critics use the term simulacra they are referencing this third-order simulacra that is widely seen as a defining characteristic of postmodernism. For simplicity's sake, I will continue this usage of the term simulacra to indicate Baudrillard's third-order simulacra.

is not convenient to drive to the real countries of the world, but it is easy to drive to Epcot

Center or the Las Vegas Strip).[129] The simulacra are increasingly the only reality the

consumer motorist experiences. Thus, "The office of the Yellowbird Motel in Cool

Creek, Colorado, was rigged in the standard beads, bones, and bullets motif of a

Hollywood trading post" (91). This successful roadside motel creates a simulacrum of

the West for the motorist, who, barely exiting the Interstate, hasn't time to actually drive

the West. In fact, the motel's reality isn't based on the reality of the West at all, but

rather on the "Hollywood trading post," forming a simulacrum of a simulacrum, which is

characteristic of third-order simulacra. It is no coincidence that Wylie's road trip also

finds him in Las Vegas, which vies with Los Angeles as the emblem of postmodern space

as well as simulacra. A place where neon palms sway in the breeze even when real palms

don't (i.e. more real than real) (183), the novel describes "the naked incandescence of

Glitter Gulch, the heart of a city at the heart of the country" (161). Glitter Gulch, aka the

Las Vegas Strip, is wall to wall simulacra and is described as the heart of the country; it

is also a road.[130] O'Donnell notes of the spaces along the road in Going Native: "The

desert motels, Vegas wedding chapels, malls, domestic sites, and truck stops of *Going*

Native offer fulsome commentary on contemporary America's amazing capacity to

cannibalize cultural materials in the manufacture of paradoxical simulacra that

standardize diversity." All of these are quintessential postmodern spaces (even the truck

stop, which offers the appearance of choice and convenience but is always the same from

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[129] O'Donnell suggests that, in Going Native, "the road becomes a means of immediacy and conveyance that signifies the dominance of ... reality as simulacrum."
[130] On the relation between the road, the automobile, and the production of space in Las Vegas, see Venturi et. al.'s Learning from Las Vegas, especially 34-35.

place to place), all are spaces on the road in this novel, and all are taken to be simulacra.[131]

Ironically, the most pronounced simulacra of the novel are found in Borneo in the spaces of the journey of Amanda and Drake. Rather than escaping the postmodern space of Los Angeles, they find that "simulacra ... are to be found everywhere in the jungle, culture at the heart of nature, and nature itself a matter of redundancy, a repository of copy and repetition" (O'Donnell). Simulacra are not limited to spatial characteristics, of course, but proliferate in all aspects of culture, such as the native art. "The art, though once so highly valued throughout the world, had degenerated to the point of worthlessness, 'second-rate copies of copies, mass-produced, then artificially aged for gullible tourists'" (203). The art is no longer "authentic," but has been replaced, not just by copies, but in true simulacral fashion, by copies of copies.

As with the Las Vegas strip and the interstate motor-inn, simulacra have infested space in Borneo as well. "The boat docked at a place called Tanjung Panjoy, an idyllic picture-postcard simulacrum of an authentic tribal village, the centerpiece on Jimmy Sung's Travel Tours into Primitive World, wealthy gangs of disoriented Westerners run up and down the river for a quick sampling of archaic man" (209). Epcot come to Borneo, Jimmy Sung profits on an idyllic recreation. This village, however, is even more of a simulacrum than Disney because the "disoriented Westerners" really believe the representation is the real "archaic man." Piling irony on top of irony, the novel continues to unmask this space:

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[131] Terry Ceasar also comments on the prevalence in the novel of "simulated worlds, either writ small in the form of motels or ranches, or writ large as Las Vegas or Hollywood" wherein "society consists of the spectacle of society" (282).

Today's Kenyahs lived in separate buildings, neat secluded rows of

boxlike suburban homes, one house one family, in accordance with the

current government's coercive modernization campaign, full entrée into

the high-tech, mass-consumption order of the future requiring the

dismemberment of the social body into smaller and smaller pieces more

and more dependent upon the structures of control. Community was

systematically broken down into isolated individuals, and then the

individuals themselves into contending fragments of confusion and desire,

modular selves, interchangeable units for the new, interchangeable people

of the masses' millennium. (209-210)

Not only is the "authentic tribal village" a simulacrum, but the Kenyahs actually live in a

suburb. Amanda and Drake have traveled half-way around the world to visit a suburb

they might have found half-an-hour away in California. Beyond this, it is acknowledged

that entry into the modern world, that is, the "mass-consumption" world of global capital,

requires a (post)modern space. Furthermore, this postmodern space results in "isolated

individuals, and then ... contending fragments of confusion and desire." Postmodern

space produces a postmodern, fragmented subject, whose "desire" is under the "control"

of "the high-tech, mass-consumption order of the future." At the heart of darkness, then,

is the simulacrum, the suburb, and postmodern space.

Gridlock: The Spatial-Subjective System in Steady-State

The space of the road is not an emergent space in Going Native. In fact, the space

of the road is a postmodern space, just as the space of the suburb that begins the novel is

252

a postmodern space. Since the interaction between individuals and the road in this novel does not produce an emergent space, it does not produce a change in the spatial-subjective system. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the novel ends where it began: not in Wakefield Estates, but in a suburb nonetheless.[132] The space of Los Angeles and its suburbs is a postmodern space, characterized by homogeneity and the loss of distinction between space and image.[133]

The homogeneity is to be found not just in the endless repetition of suburban developments of which Los Angeles was a pioneer, but also on the freeways. Every spatial characteristic of Los Angeles finds its purest expression on its freeways, making it the perfect location for the postmodern road narrative to conclude. Early one morning, Wylie heads for "work," which, it turns out, consists largely of driving around town and assuming a new identity at each different stop. The novel describes his morning commute: "Out of the house and onto the road, a solitary in his cage, he joined the other solitaries locked and buckled into their cages, hundreds, thousands of them, all streaming determinedly along in a credible masquerade of purpose and conviction" (282). Homogeneity in the space of the freeway is represented through the anonymity of thousands of solitaries. Describing each car as a cage eliminates the substantial variation of make and model of which Angelenos are so proud, de-mystifying the automobile and returning it to its essence, a confining, even penalizing, space of conformity. Everyone is

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[132] Ruth Mayer notes of Wylie's progress: "He ended up where he set out from" (Mayer 377). This result is emphasized in the similarity between Rho's dream in the first chapter of a California beach house where a shirtless man she thinks might be Wylie stares at the ocean while a gun rests on the coffee table (8-9) and the last chapter which opens with Wylie at a California beach house, shirtless, staring at the ocean, while the magazine "Guns & Ammo" rests on the coffee table (275-276). The repetition does not produce change, however, for the postmodern spatial-subjective system remains in steady-state.

[133] In fact, Los Angeles leads even Las Vegas as the paradigm of postmodern space in spatial theory. See for example Mike Davis' City of Quartz, Edward Soja's Postmodern Geographies and Thirdspace, and Frederic Jameson's Postmodernism.

solitary, everyone is locked and buckled, everyone is performing the same actions, seemingly with the same motivation; everyone is the same. The carceral imagery (cage, locked, buckled) calls to mind Davis' characterization of Los Angeles as a carceral city. This notion is further supported when the novel describes Wylie's first stop: "The building itself resembled one of those suspiciously low-key corporate headquarters defacing suburbs from coast to coast in the popular defensive architectural style of contemporary nondescript" (283). The homogeneity of "nondescript" "suburbs from coast to coast" and the carceral "defensive architectural style" are characterized here as constitutive of postmodern space, which is described as "contemporary" (read postmodern) and "popular" (read postmodern via Venturi). The carceral imagery evokes the true purpose of the homogeneity of postmodern space: keeping individuals in thrall to the system of late capitalism.

Another characteristic of the postmodern space of Los Angeles described in the novel is the collapse of the distinction between space and media image. Baudrillard notes that "all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation" (25). The most filmed city in the world, Baudrillard calls it "nothing more than an immense script and a perpetual motion picture" (26), virtually every square inch of Los Angeles has made an appearance on the big screen, more often than not doing double duty as simulacrum because, while recognizably Los Angeles to those who have seen the real, on film these locations are portrayed as New York, Chicago, London, Tokyo, etc. The media space becomes the reality to those who have not visited Los Angeles. When these tourists do arrive, they

discover that what they took as the reality portrayed on film is often a faux front set and what they took to be a set is actually real, but really not New York.

This collapse of distinction between film image and space is also enacted when filming images occurs, as it always does, in space. Returning from his "work," Wylie finds, "rounding the last turn before home, … startling chaos … that blocked the road and transformed his dull backwater neighborhood into the scene of a natural disaster" (291). His street is blocked, he cannot return home, because a film crew is making a movie. "A set of dolly tracks ran down the edge of his driveway into the street" (292). The mechanisms of the image machine are laid on top of the space of the road, and the quiet suburban street becomes the site where an actor falls from a fatal gunshot wound (in the movie). Thus, this space is both the real space of the road and the imaged space of the film, simultaneously. The film space is actually more powerful however, for while the real road continues to exist, it functions more as a simulacrum than as a road. Wylie cannot drive on this road to reach his home. It is as impassable to him now as it is when projected on the big screen, even though in both cases it is the road to his house.

The quintessentially postmodern space(s) of Los Angeles at the end of the novel demonstrate the spatial-subjective system in steady-state. In other words, the interaction between individuals and space leads to the reproduction of postmodern subjects and spaces, rather than to change in the spatial-subjective system as in the interactions characteristic of emergent space in On the Road. For example, the freeway contributes to the production of a subject who is isolated, solitary and anonymous because each individual travels alone in his/her cage and is unable to form a connection, have contact, or communicate with the other similarly constructed individuals in their automobiles. At

the same time, this space of the freeway is produced by the hundreds and thousands who

converge/merge upon it every day. Its production through daily usage, not to mention the

constant political pressure these same individuals exert for the maintenance of old and

construction of new freeways, is paradoxically increasing congestion, which is itself a

result of the urban flight that produced postmodern suburbs and the commute that

necessitates freeways. Individuals demand this postmodern space, create it by taking to

the road, and then are isolated, depersonalized, and fragmented through their participation

in this space. The result is an utter lack of change in the spatial-subjective system:

gridlock.

　　　　Similarly, The Adonis Health and Racquet Club, the building described as "in the

popular defensive architectural style of contemporary nondescript," is prototypically

postmodern in form and function. The health club is a postmodern space produced by

individuals serving the cult of the body (a cult with considerable economic benefits to the

health industry), which has grown exponentially in popularity throughout postmodernity.

Simultaneously, the health club's physical space, its architecture, is constructed in

response to its popular appeal (building what the public wants being one of the primary

tenets of postmodern architecture). Thus, this space is produced in response to individual

desires in the postmodern age, but at the same time it produces these self-same

postmodern subjects. The emphasis on the body highlights the mutability of the

postmodern subject. In this postmodern space, the body is the self, and both can change

(for a low monthly fee). In fact, the space of the health club is intended to accomplish

just this sort of identity change; "the club's motto in lurid rainbow script: DESIGN

YOUR SELF!" (283). The seemingly radical mutability of identity/subjectivity implied

by the command to change is not radical, however, for really only one change is promoted. Everyone must design his or her self, as long as the model for his or her design is Adonis (as the name of the health club points out). Thus, the space of the health club engages in that most postmodern of activities, the standardization of diversity (O'Donnell). Furthermore, the space of the health club, like the space of the freeway, interacts reciprocally with subjects in the mutual reproduction of the postmodern spatial-subjective system.

The interaction between the individual and media spaces also perpetuates the postmodern spatial-subjective system. Standing on his street waiting to be allowed to pass the film set, Wylie is approached by the First Assistant Director who wants to put him in a movie. The A.D. asks, "'Ever done any acting before?'" and Wylie responds "'Just the normal day-to-day stuff'" (294). Of course, Wylie's day-to-day stuff, as documented in the novel, involves the constant assumption and discarding of identities; he truly does play multiple roles in his travels through postmodern space. For example, when Wylie enters his second stop on his tour of Los Angeles, "Gemstone Books and Rarities," he instantly takes on the role of Philip Marlowe in The Big Sleep, acting out a scene from the novel with the clerk (who obligingly plays her part perfectly) (Porsche 233). The bookstore becomes a postmodern space, a simulacrum of a simulacrum simulating the scene from literature, which is itself a simulation. While it appears to be the actions of Wylie and the clerk that create this simulation, it is really impossible to sort out causality here since the space exists prior to the characters' actions and in fact may elicit the requisite actions needed to complete the simulation. "Every image, every media message, but also any functional environmental object, is a test – that is to say, in the full

rigor of the term, liberating response mechanisms according to stereotypes and analytic models" (Baudrillard 120). Third-order simulacra, according to Baudrillard, are based on a model that determines in advance the simulation as reality. The bookstore is a simulacrum, a "functional environmental object," and it produces the very "response mechanisms" that determine the simulation; Wylie and the clerk perform the identities from The Big Sleep because the model of the simulacrum requires the performance. They read the spatial cues and respond accordingly. Baudrillard describes this phenomenon: "We live less like users than readers and selectors, reading cells. But nevertheless: by the same token you also are constantly selected and tested by the medium itself" (121). Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship with space and subject producing one another as postmodern simulacra. Porsche notes that Wylie, "having reached his final destination, the California shore, ... is less sure of his identity than ever before; in fact, he has become a poststructuralist object – a mere referent filled with signifiers" (234). The space of California's coast, his final destination, sees his final assumption of the ultimate postmodern subjectivity: "a mere referent filled with signifiers." As such, he is now the perfect vessel for film and now has the opportunity to contribute this talent to the construction of postmodern space through the ultimate simulacra of film, all because the postmodern space of the road places him in the right place at the right time.

The novel ends with Wylie again in the green Ford Galaxie, but now the car is parked in the garage.

> Here, in the dark confinement of this garage, the Galaxie was moving on
>
> beneath him. Beyond the windscreen the darkness that had appeared to be

so inflexible, so monolithic, was moving, too, it teemed, it swarmed with

minute specks of light ... the eternity of noise rushing trapped between

channels. There was no self, there was no identity ...There was no you.

There was only the Viewer, slumped forever in his sour seat, the bald

shells of his eyes boiling in pictures, a biblical flood of them ... he's

happy, he's being entertained. (305)

Again, the novel combines space with media image. While Wylie is clearly seated in his

car, the car is described as if it were a movie or television screen, the windshield

providing the glass upon which moving images composed of specks of light flicker past

as if between channels.[134] In fact, the paragraph proceeds to strengthen the metaphor as

the passenger becomes the Viewer and the specks of light become a flood of pictures.

The distinction between space and media is obsolete. The result of this postmodern space

is the loss of a conception of an independent subject; "There was no self, there was no

identity ...There was no you." This subject has been replaced by the Viewer, whom

O'Donnell describes as the perfect postmodern subject: "In his final avatar, Wylie has

become the Viewer, the passive repository of the data stream, wholly immersed in its

tide; sitting in his Galaxie, he experiences the idealized state of being-in-simulacra." As

always, however, it is a reciprocal relationship, for without the Viewer there are no

images. Without the Viewer being entertained, there is no (profit to the) Culture

Industry. The cultural logic of late capitalism constructs the Viewer through postmodern

space because the Viewer is required in order to construct the postmodern space as a

profitable one.

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[134] Kris Lackey notes that "road writers have often adopted cinematic or televisual metaphors, which cast
the driver as a spectator viewing the landscape on the windshield screen" (71-72). For her discussion of
this metaphor, see 71-73.

Conclusion (Going Native): Proliferating Postmodern Profit Centers

There is little dispute that <u>Going Native</u> is a postmodern novel in style, form, and subject matter.[135] The novel delineates the contribution of contemporary media culture to the fragmentation of identity and suggests that capitalism profits from the fragmentation of identity. <u>Going Native</u> illustrates the extent to which this profit-making is accomplished through the interaction of individuals and the systems of society. While it has long been understood that capitalism profits from displaced desire, what is unique about <u>Going Native</u> is the suggestion that capitalism not only co-opts displaced desire, but it has concocted a method for profiting off of the very processes of desire. Thus, not only can a profit be made by putting a price on the object that an individual takes as the object of desire, but a profit can be made regardless of what the displaced object happens to be by profiting on the movement, potential, repetition, and violence that characterize desire. Moving further upstream, capitalism diversifies and multiplies its profit centers in postmodernism. The same action of co-opting the processes of desire facilitates the reproduction of capitalism by foreclosing the very processes that bear the potential for emergence in the system.

Conclusion (Chapter Four): The Process, By Elimination

The two novels under consideration in this chapter are both road narratives. They both focus on three variables that are key components in the spatial-subjective system: subjects, space, and the interaction between the two. In <u>On the Road</u>, it becomes clear

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[135] A discussion of the novel's unique style and form would take the argument too far afield of its central claims. Briefly, I would suggest that the novel's style enacts the violence that results from frustrated desire while the novel's fragmented form mirrors the fragmentation of postmodern identity.

that the subject does not dictate the process of change in the spatial-subjective system, as Sal's attempts to access a traditional subject repeatedly fail. Two variables remain as candidates for catalyst in producing emergent space, the space of the road and the interaction between individuals and space. Both On the Road and Going Native emphasize the space of the road, but change does not occur in the postmodern spatial-subjective system in Going Native. The interaction between individuals and space is the last variable, and it clearly has an effect on the status of the spatial-subjective system in both novels. As a consequence, it becomes clear that the study of past emergent spaces is not sufficient to guarantee the production of future emergent spaces. We cannot simply identify an emergent space, be it an elevator, an urban squatter development, or the road, and put it to work to change the space of postmodernism. At best, we can merely recognize the characteristic processes of emergent space (see Chapter One), encourage the development of these conditions in ever new spaces, and know that, even should we succeed, we cannot control in advance what might result from emergence attendant upon emergent space.

CONCLUSION

In The Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell argues that a criminal, "far from being someone who acts for fundamental, intrinsic reasons and who lives in his own world - is actually someone acutely sensitive to his environment … and who is prompted to commit crimes based on his perception of the world around him" (150). In other words, spatial cues, such as the presence of graffiti on the subway in the example Gladwell delineates, greatly influence criminal behavior. However, Gladwell's analysis of the "power of context" (133) in the subway example fails to account for how the graffiti got there in the first place. On the other hand, in Discipline and Punish, Foucault demonstrates how spatial organizations are used to categorize and define individuals. Concerned as he is with the "microphysics of power," Foucault examines the social forces that produce prisons, but not how these forces are themselves composed of subjective influences. Both fail to see that space and subjectivity exist in a reciprocal relation, each contributing to the (re)production of the other. The analysis presented here, however, goes beyond ascribing to space a role in the production of individual behavior, as in Gladwell, or in the production of social categories, as in Foucault. The interaction of space and an individual is a contributing factor in the production of subjectivity. Equally important, the interaction of space and the subject has a profound effect on the production of space.

The primary purpose of this study has been to demonstrate the existence of a spatial-subjective system and that the interaction between subjects and space functions according to systems principles. While this is not the first analysis of literature to consider subjectivity, a spatial perspective, or even systems theory, it is the first to combine the three to better understand how literature envisions that individuals interact

262

with space and how it sees change occurring in those interactions on a societal scale. Accordingly, the goal of the first chapter was to demonstrate the spatial-subjective system in its most common state. In the three novels of the first chapter, the spatial-subjective system exists in a steady state. In other words, the mutual (re)production of space and subjectivity proceeds indefinitely, to the benefit of various power configurations. Taking a systems approach to these novels also produced unique readings of the novels themselves. In Jasmine, for example, critics tend to either overestimate Jasmine's ability to change herself and her environment or to underestimate the novel's nuanced presentation of capitalism and patriarchy in the late twentieth century. Focusing on the spatial-subjective system demonstrates the complex interaction between subjects, space, race, gender, class, capitalism, and patriarchy, and how these interactions change over time and space. The result is neither a static subject nor a static space, but a constantly adapting relationship that nonetheless continues to benefit late capitalism and patriarchy. While other critics might recognize the impact of multiple factors on the determination of subjectivity in Jasmine, they tend to overlook the complexity and flexibility of the interactions of these multiple factors, and thus the way the overall system continuously adapts to facilitate the reproduction of the very power structures that benefit from the steady-state. In other words, lacking a systems approach, the result is a misplaced optimism about the ability of subjects to create change. While Jasmine and Easy in Devil in a Blue Dress are able to violate some of the categories used to define them, they are less transformative than most critics believe for they continue to be produced by and reproduce the spatial-subjective system in steady-state for the benefit of the extant power systems.

Given that critics often overestimate the possibilities for change, the third and fourth chapters explore how change *does* occur in the spatial-subjective system. The goal here was to demonstrate the existence of different mechanisms for the production of emergent space, which is the necessary condition for change in the spatial-subjective system. Again, novel readings of the texts resulted from the methodology, demonstrating the importance of a systemic understanding of subjectivity and the interaction between subjects and space in the production of change. For example, critics of <u>On the Road</u> tend to focus on the content of Sal's pursuits (what IT is) or the effects of his beliefs (undermining or reinforcing the dominant culture). The novel's primary focus is really the process of Sal's pursuits, however. Sal's interaction with space enacts the processes of desire, which in turn contribute to the processes of emergence. While each novel in chapters three and four demonstrated a different relation between subject and space in the production of emergent space, the novels also presented different phases of emergence. In <u>The Intuitionist</u>, emergent space is produced, but change remains imminent in the spatial-subjective system at the conclusion of the novel. In <u>Texaco</u>, emergent space leads to change on a local level, but whether the larger spatial-subjective system will be affected remains ambiguous. In <u>On the Road</u>, emergent space finally leads to wholesale change in the spatial-subjective system as the novel portrays the emergence of postmodern space.

Concluding the fourth chapter with <u>Going Native</u>, which demonstrates the co-optation of the processes of emergence that produced postmodern space and the return of the spatial-subjective system to a steady state, demonstrates an important characteristic of change in systems. The results of emergence cannot be predicted in advance. Thus,

change in the spatial-subjective system cannot be controlled for the purposes of creating a utopia. Sal and Dean desired a certain kind of space, and the processes of their desire were essential to the production of change, but the result of the change in no way resembled the space they wanted to find. Postmodern space is every bit as constraining of subjectivity as earlier spatial-subjective systems, if not more so. Pairing <u>Going Native</u> with <u>On the Road</u> also demonstrates that what emerges may very well foreclose prior avenues for producing emergent space. Change will not come the same way twice.

Recognizing the characteristics of the spatial-subjective system has important implications. First, change in systems will occur according to systems principles, via the process of emergence. This is fundamental because it means that those who want to work for change need to promote the conditions for emergence/emergent space. Anything else is likely to fall short and may very well strengthen the system one wants to change. An important corollary of the systems approach is that both space and subjectivity are, at least in part, socially constructed. It follows that the spatial-subjective system is influenced by and interacts with multiple social determinants, such as socially constructed notions of race/ethnicity, gender, class, legal systems, patriarchal power, capitalism, etc. While the focus of this dissertation is on the "categories" of space and the subject, no approach to either can ignore the multiple, systemic determinants of each. Nor can one approach any of the other "categories" without taking account of their multiple determinants. In other words, one cannot simply focus attention on the "category" of race but must seek to understand how race is a flexible construct affected by its interaction with space, gender, class, the law, and other systems of power. In fact, "race" will mean different things and have different effects depending on the particular

context, and on the interaction of race with other systems. Such an understanding of subjectivity suggests that the analysis of literature through the application of structural, categorical, binary understandings of terms such as race, class, and gender is not sufficient. This is not to say that race, class, and gender are no longer important. Rather, race, class, and gender are important precisely because they are constituent structures of complex, open systems, and they must be considered as such alongside other systemic factors (such as space). Postmodern fiction, then, is not concerned primarily with questioning the viability of essentialist notions of the subject. Rather, postmodern fiction is engaged in a complex consideration of systemic notions of subjectivity and the subject's relationship with social systems such as space.

If postmodern fiction is concerned with systemic subjectivity and social systems, then it is important to take a systems approach to the analysis of literature. In terms of content, this may mean identifying and analyzing the relevant systems that form the narrative. The works selected here are ones that foreground the interaction between subjects and space that is characteristic of the spatial-subjective system. However, focusing on a relevant system, such as the spatial-subjective system, does not mean being closed to other aspects of a work. The spatial-subjective system interacts with other social systems in addition to the complex and multiply determined independent systems of space and subjectivity. Rather than closing off these other avenues, a systems approach to literature should open these areas to thought, and be open to questions coming in from other areas of knowledge. In terms of methodology, openness to all areas of knowledge and all approaches is also vital. Deconstruction, new historicism, new

criticism, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, any approach that is suited to the analysis of a particular system or text ought to be available to the literary critic.

A systems approach to the analysis of literature may also inform how we understand literature as literature. For example, the analysis of the representation of the spatial-subjective system in contemporary American novels illustrates that the mechanisms of the spatial-subjective system are often mirrored in the narrative devices of the novels themselves. For example, in On the Road the processes of desire that define the interaction between Sal Paradise and the spaces of the road are enacted in the novel's style. Similarly, in both Jasmine and Going Native narrative form is a key component of the presentation of postmodern space. The parallels between the spatial-subjective system and these narratives are more than homologies. In fact, all narrative operates according to systems principles. Narrative is a meaning making system. More than that, narrative is a complex, adaptive meaning making system. Narrative makes meaning through the interaction of its constituent parts. Language, plot, character, setting, all combine to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (and meaning that is adaptive through time and space). It falls to the literary critic to understand the various systems within narrative, to demonstrate how (and what) meaning(s) are made. This is not purely an academic exercise, for if narrative makes meaning, it impacts how we understand, interact, and organize our world. Literature has real effects in the world (in how we perceive space, for example), as does how we understand literature. That is the ultimate conclusion. Literature effects and reflects our world, just as our world effects and reflects literature.

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