

Politics of Appropriating Social Space

The Balloon Factory and Beyond

Jeremy Kerbel

2004

Contents

Prologue	4
Introduction	7
Methodology	9
Chapter 1: Theories of space and social movements	19
Chapter 2: Space and social movement mobilisation	37
Chapter 3: The problems with appropriating space	54
Chapter 4: Realising the potential of appropriated spaces	69
Conclusion	83
Bibliography	89

Prologue: The Balloon Factory

Walk up King Street today and you can still catch glimpses of Newtown's radical counter-culture and working class history – if you look hard. On the walls in between the ultra-trendy music shops, designer hair salons and overpriced cafes, political posters and graffiti appear every now and again (although on closer inspection some of those stencils are actually viral marketing for the latest 'urban' clothing brand). And when 'Gloria Jeans' opened up on King Street (the first of the multinational coffee chains to appear in Newtown), it got plastered with anti-corporate stickers. The winding rows of leafy terraces behind King Street are home to quite a few students, punks, greenies, socialists and unemployed – the people whose lives 'don't add up' as Howard warned in his anti-terrorism kit. Of course it seems like these households are always getting evicted to make way for renovation and resale to some yuppie who loves the Newtown 'bohemian village feel'. Every now and again a whole row of terraces gets knocked down and 'developed' into yet another block of apartments – an efficient way to raise and multiply the number of rents collected. Like hundreds of similar neighbourhoods in cities around the world Newtown is going through a furious (and extremely profitable) process of gentrification; its working-class roots and subversive culture are being sterilized and repackaged, commodified and co-opted in a bourgeois re-territorialisation of the inner-city.

If you keep walking up King Street past the police sniffer dogs at Newtown station and towards St Peters, you'll see one of the aforementioned apartment blocks being built. 622 King Street will be as square and bland as the others. But if you'd been standing outside 622 King Street on the evening of Thursday 11th September 2003, you would have seen instead a slightly run-down two storey building, painted with hundreds of coloured balloons on an electric blue background. A vast sign advertising 'Balloon Inflation' would loom above you but a smaller notice on one of the shop's windows reads 'We have moved to Enmore'. In fact, the building you're looking at has been empty for over a year – the previous tenants (a balloon decoration company and a fruit shop) were evicted to make way for a 'development' which has not yet arrived. Curiously, in spite of this fact, the door to the building is open.

If you step inside you will be breaking Section 4 of the *Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901* (NSW) – which makes it illegal for you to enter private property without the consent of the owner. But something interesting is obviously happening inside the building: there is music and light and groups

of people are coming and going and hanging around outside – they’re mostly young, feral-looking and a bit anxious but clearly having fun. It’s obviously not a club or a pub (no neon advertising or burly bouncers to be seen), so what is this place? Since neither the cops nor the owner seem to be around, and you’re the sort of person who’s interested in things that smack of illegality and sedition, you decide to go inside.

As you stepped through the door you might well have encountered me – Jeremy – or at least I hope it would’ve been me because I loved giving newcomers the guided tour. I’d probably be quite chatty and excited considering this night was the biggest event we’d had yet. You’d find yourself in a small hall, crowded with people. One wall is painted with a red and blue hand making the thumbs up sign, with the word ‘SQUAT’ painted underneath. You’re in a squatted social centre! From the hall I’d take you through a door to the left into a 10 metre long area partially divided into three oddly shaped rooms. The first room is the foyer: one side is painted with strange alien-like creatures throwing balloons, opposite this is the info-wall, which is packed with notices about upcoming events, housekeeping and squatting legal facts. The second room is the lounge (at the moment): people are sitting around chatting and drinking on a random assortment of old couches saved from the tip or donated by neighbours. The third room is the biggest – tonight it’s crammed full of people listening and dancing to hip hop, spoken word and electro performances by an set of local and Indigenous artists.

After showing you the three front rooms I would have taken you through a door in the second room (you can ignore the sign from earlier retail days reading ‘STAFF ONLY!’) and into the storage and workshop areas. The storage room has one mural of a unicorn and one of a boy with long eyelashes holding balloons; ‘Welcome to the Balloon Factory Social Centre’ is painted next to him. All of these artworks are by ‘uncollectable’ street artists and graffiti writers; and they’ve all been painted/pasted up in the three weeks since the squat opened. Then as I take you upstairs we’d start to talk about what was possible for this building. Some people wanted to make the workshop into a bike repair co-op, others were more interested in starting a free community garden in the overgrown yard, still others wanted to soundproof the basement and have all-night doofs. Everyone comes up with some new idea – it’s impossible not to feel inspired by the sense of control and ownership you get from being in a real community space like this.

As you climb the stairs giant images of Queen Elizabeth’s smiling face blend into a grinning Saddam Hussein, but when you arrive at the second storey you enter two comfortable rooms overlooking King street. These two rooms were the nicest place to be in the afternoon, when the sun would come streaming in and you could have a cup of tea and chat for hours, without the pay-your-

\$3-and-move-along feel of all the uber-chic cafes up and down the rest of King Street. Also upstairs is a kitchen, and a corridor which leads out onto the rooftop – a flat area with a view out over the city towards Redfern. The view took on a whole new sense of potential in that context: imagine what it would be like if *all* the city's buildings were like this one. Soon, someone will pay \$250 a week for that view.

On that night in September around two hundred people visited the Balloon Factory Social Centre for the hip hop gig. They heard and made music; they hung out and met new friends; they got inspired by what's possible. But after three weeks of occupation, we were evicted. With the aid of the police, the owner repossessed the building, trashed the electricity system and smashed up all the toilets so that the place was unusable.

Of course the group of squatters who set up this social centre are quite familiar with eviction. This ever-fluctuating group has no permanent members, but comes together in force when necessary – as the Social Centre Autonomous Network (SCAN). SCAN was set up in 2000 after the successes of the Broadway squats (between the shopping centre and UTS), where more than twenty squatters lived for over a year. During that time the squats had hundreds of gigs, free food nights and political meetings. And one shopfront was turned into a free art gallery (see www.squatspace.com). After the eviction of the Broadway squats in July 2001, SCAN was formed to create 'living acts of self management', 'democratically run communities' and 'spaces beyond the boredom of work and consumption': to create squatted social centres (see <http://scan.dorja.com/scan/>). SCAN first attempted to achieve this at the abandoned Trocadero in Newtown, but the occupation was crushed after only one day. The second occupation was more successful: the Grand Midnight Star (an old wedding reception centre), was reclaimed as a social centre for over ten months in 2002. Again, this beautiful space hosted numerous parties, meetings and other events, although the building's location in suburban Homebush proved to be a problem for inner-city-based activists. The Midnight Star was eventually evicted when the tabloid press 'exposed' its terrifying debauchery as part of their scare-mongering around the anti-WTO protests. After this, SCAN came together once again to create the Balloon Factory – six months of preparation and three weeks of occupation.

While it existed the Balloon Factory meant something – people talked and thought and lived something momentous. Over five hundred people visited and participated in the space in some way. As well as the art 'empty show', there were political discussions about Reclaim the Streets and about how change is made. There was 'Crowbars by Candlelight' – a 'direct action dating game' and an eviction party. There was banner painting, barricading, furniture collection and hours spent just hanging out – 'the time off we never have' as Daniel put it. And the very existence of the social centre

materialised loads of inspirational and intriguing ideas. Mickey Quick described the social centre as an ‘island of hope’, Sarah said, ‘its our way of creating meaningful lives’ and Jemima argued, ‘our ultimate goal is that we want the world back in our control, but if we’re just taking a small piece that’s a good start’.

As well as new opportunities, the social centre produced new difficulties every day: Who gets to have keys? What’s the door policy? Should we broadcast our existence to the general public? How do we deal with thugs/police threatening violence? And certain problems kept re-asserting themselves: What does it mean to call this an ‘open space’? How do we make it a ‘safe space’? How do we implement participatory democracy? What is our relationship to ‘the community’? Many of these questions were never definitively answered – both because we ran out of time and because other activities (like mending the door or having fun) always seemed more pressing than ‘abstract’ discussion.

Afterwards everyone seemed to agree on two things: we learnt heaps, and it was exhausting. For me, the problems and the insights raised in those three weeks demanded further exploration: What made the project so inspiring? And in contrast, why was there a lingering feeling of failure? This thesis has developed in response to the unresolved puzzles, the half-formed evaluations, and of course the anger, joy and sadness (as well as frustration and boredom) I experienced so intensely because of the squat. Even though I only got properly involved in SCAN after the Midnight Star was evicted, I have been visiting and participating on the fringes of SCAN’s projects since the Broadway squats. I was very involved in organising and sustaining the Balloon Factory occupation (in fact I often spent *too* long in the space!) And I took lots of notes, photos and taped interviews with SCAN members. This material provided the grist and inspiration for my thesis. While the thesis is not a study of the Balloon Factory, it is an attempt to answer the questions raised by that occupation. To properly answer these questions I have needed to delve into spatial theory and the study of social movements, and expand my focus beyond the Balloon Factory to a broader investigation of the politics of appropriating space. My purpose is not simply to analyse SCAN’s practice, but to contribute to a reflexive dialogue with those who have created social and political spaces, and those who wish to do so in the future.

Introduction

The spaces appropriated by social movements are of major importance to both the theory and practice of anti-capitalist struggle. However these spaces are often unexamined and taken for granted by dissidents and theorists alike. Those who do pay attention to appropriated spaces still tend to treat them as inert tools or as fetishized forms. The politics of producing space is all too often overlooked. There is also a propensity to separate and rank space, time and social relations. There are relatively few studies which deal with appropriated spaces *and* social movements. Numerous investigations of movements, organisations, events, ideologies and the like treat spaces as secondary; while studies of spatial forms are often detached from politics and processes of change. These problems are not only theoretical: the spaces appropriated by activists are often socially isolated, elitist, uncomfortable and boring, or self-indulgent and irrelevant. It is these problems in theory and practice which I hope to address.

Any attempt to address the problems of appropriating space must engage with spatial theory and the political economy of space. I will therefore begin this thesis with a review of the ‘spatial turn’ in social theory; I will reject the ‘bare space’ perspective and its treatment of space as an inert container for social activity. This first chapter will then sketch out a framework for analysing the politics of space, based on the Marxist perspectives of Lefebvre and Harvey, but supplemented with an anarchist rejoinder. So Chapter 1 provides a broad foundation on which to base my investigation of space and social movements, which begins in Chapter 2. Because space is often taken for granted or misunderstood, Chapter 2 offers a survey of the spatial practice of social movements and of the positive attributes commonly ascribed to appropriated spaces. This survey foregrounds the spatial practice of appropriation, so that it can be analysed in more detail in the rest of the thesis. In Chapter 3, I will expose the problems and weaknesses raised by the previous chapter’s survey of appropriation: problems related to reifying and naturalising ‘space’ and ‘time’, and practices which are elitist, self-indulgent and lack political substance. These problems are *not* inevitable weaknesses of human nature as the mainstream press would assert, nor can they be entirely ascribed to uncontrollable externalities (such as police behaviour or the property market) as activists are inclined to do. Rather, these problems are bound up with the political process of appropriating space, and therefore they are

solvable. In Chapter 4 I will suggest strategies for developing a solution to these problems and for bridging the schisms between space, time and social relations, between class and community, and between present means and future ends. The difficulty is to construct solutions based in the politics of appropriation – rather than lapsing back into an appeal to some idealised temporal process or spatial form.

The appropriation of space is a practice with considerable significance for social struggle. Not only does this significance need to be exposed and appreciated, but it must also be critically analysed. Appropriated spaces can only realise their potential if theorists and activists engage with the politics of producing space. This process of realising the potential of appropriation is made all the more difficult by the mental and social divisions between space and time, form and struggle, anarchism and Marxism. But through this thesis I hope to contribute to this process of developing appropriation and its theory.

Before I move into the thesis proper I will explain my research methodology and examine some of the challenges of studying social movements. This discussion is necessary in order to lay the methodological groundwork for the thesis, but also because it introduces the philosophical apparatus – such as the techniques of reflexivity and dialectics – with which I will analyse appropriated space. I will delve into action research, participant observation, and partisan research methodologies in order to develop a response to the challenges inherent to any research of social movement practices.

Methodology

‘I claim a high level of validity for my findings *because of*, not in spite of, my own involvement... I do not claim that the research product is in any way definitive, but I do believe it is better than that produced by an outsider could have been.’ (emphasis in original)

(Roseneil 1993: 192)

Aims and methodological challenges

When I began this project I was actively involved in SCAN and I wished to produce research that would be useful to this and similar activist groups. By ‘useful’ I meant research which would be relevant and helpful; research which would facilitate successful reflection and action by the research participants – SCAN – and by other groups with similar aims. However, I also realised that the research would not be useful if it were significant *only* to SCAN, so I expanded the focus of my research to encompass an investigation of spatial theory and social movement practice in general. This has led to a more theory-based thesis, but one which also attempts an exercise in translation: first of academic theories of space for an activist audience, and second of the politics of appropriation for an academic audience. Therefore, my aims involve connecting understanding and action, theory and its application: I aim for praxis. And this is why I have attempted to offer ways to develop not only the theory but also the practice of appropriating space. Of course, an honours thesis can be only a very small part of the dialectic of consciousness and transformation, but demanding the impossible is always a good place to start.

These general aims immediately raise a variety of challenges and questions which set the agenda for my research methodology. These issues include participation, power, the relationship between action and theory and the application of research findings. But perhaps the most important concern is the notoriously knotty relationship between research, politics and ‘truth’. This problem makes the production of ‘relevant’ and ‘helpful’ research especially difficult in regards to groups with an active and explicit transformative agenda . Social movements and their member groupings do *not* benefit from research which is mere propaganda. Nor have they much use for research which claims ‘objectivity’ or ‘value neutrality’ but is politically blind and therefore ends up supporting the status

quo. Activist groups do need research which is ‘true’ to reality – so that it can provide a foundation for action and a way of evaluating that action. But the concept ‘truth’ is both tainted and treacherous, and it is widely agreed that no research can present an unmediated truth. A major mediating factor is the very lens which enables us to examine ‘reality’ at all – the research methodology. It is a lens which is inevitably blurry and stained with biases. Nevertheless, dissidents demand that this lens be able to see below the surface of things, that it be able to see the micro-social and macro-social simultaneously, and that it be able to do all this without distorting the image! Thus, when researching social movements, the methodology is required to be truthful and partisan at the same time. In the following sections I will search for a methodological response to this demand.

Methodology:

Action Research, Participant Observation and Partisan Research

When I first began to develop my methodology, I drew most heavily on ‘action research’, because of its explicit focus on the empowerment of the research participants, and because of claims that action research ‘is tied directly to political action’ (Neuman 2000: 25). I was impressed by the consideration of power, consciousness, and change within the action research process. I sought to adopt Lewin’s ‘spiral’ of action and reflection (Kemmis 1982), with some success – albeit on an individual level. I also tried to realise the ideal of equal participation in and control over the research by the involved participants or ‘co-researchers’ (Wadsworth 1993). To do this, I discussed the aims, process and outcomes of the research with SCAN members in a variety of settings and different times; I sought to facilitate collective control over ‘setting the agenda’, ‘participation in the data collection and analysis’ and ‘the use of outcomes’ (Rajesh and Tandon, cited in McTaggart 1997: 29). However, I had limited success in this – principally because SCAN itself is continually involved in its own loose process of action and reflection, to which my constrained honours thesis could only ever be an adjunct. In other words, SCAN already produces its own ‘action research’; I quickly realised that it was patronising to ask SCAN members to ‘participate’ in a separate project which would inevitably remain *my* honours thesis.

Furthermore, I quickly became aware of a number of defects within the action research tradition. Many so-called ‘action research’ projects are either disappointments by their own standards, or even blatant rhetorical frauds: action research methodology can too easily serve ends which are parochial,

patronising, reformist and functionalist.¹ I came to agree with Thomas' assertion that action research 'rarely challenges existing power relations, but rather serves a mediating function between the powerful and the less powerful' (Thomas 1993: 27). Moreover, action research methodology assumes that the 'current problematic action' is located *within* the community of participants; something is not functioning smoothly so the researcher sets out to fix it – with supposedly enthusiastic participation by practitioners (Wadsworth 1993). This actually translates to an unacknowledged rejection of a broader transformative agenda. In this way, action research mimics ethnomethodology and interpretive ethnography which have been criticised for adopting 'narrowly bounded' frames of causality (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 94). As a consequence, the studies produced *describe* micro-realities, or analyse the expression of broader society within a micro-case, but ignore global historico-political processes (Burawoy 1991a; Marcus and Fischer 1986). This insularity is antithetical to my research aims, and to the politics of the social movements I am studying.

Another source I drew on to construct my methodology was participant observation. Certain participant observation principles present a remedy to some of the problems exposed above, in that they explicitly situate research in broader political processes and 'seek to avoid the separation of components from the larger context to which these matters may be related' (Jorgensen 1989: 19). Participant observation methodology also allows for a constant redefinition and reformulation of perspectives – this is what makes it 'most suitable to the study of social change' (Vidich 1969: 85). Participant observation is also especially appropriate to studying dissident groups (because their internal workings are usually covert to some extent – in order to avoid repression). In fact, it would have been impossible to research a squatter organisation such as SCAN without some degree of researcher participation; the real questions revolve around the nature of that participation.

My approach to the nature of the researcher's 'participation' departs from those researchers who view the participant role merely as a necessary tool for minimising disruption: 'Taking the role of participant provides the researcher with a means of conducting fairly *unobtrusive* observations' (emphasis in original) (Jorgensen 1989: 16). This immediately indicates the core problem in

¹ One example of 'action research' which demonstrates these problems is the project carried out by Peter Lazes at Xerox in the US (Whyte, Greenwood, and Lazes 1991). Apparently this project aimed to 'bring workers and managers together to diagnose and solve organizational problems', 'without opening up Pandora's box' (Argyris and Schön 1991: 87). The project was described using the rhetoric of participation and empowerment, but ultimately seems to have served the interests of the Xerox *management* who gained a more efficient production plant with minimal concessions to the workers. The researcher was complicit in the vast power imbalance of the workplace: workers had no choice but to participate in the 'action research' because management had communicated that they otherwise intended to solve the plant's inefficiency with mass layoffs. The research thus required and reinforced existing hierarchies and contained an implicit functionalism where the ultimate goal was merely 'organisational reform' – rather than 'opening' the 'Pandora's box' of class conflict.

participant observation methodology: the question of where to place the emphasis in the scales of subjectivity–objectivity, participation–observation, sympathy–detachment and bias–truth. This question underlies the frequently reiterated (and tellingly imperialist) warning against ‘going native’ – an accusation which is meant to tar the researcher immediately, regardless of the method, context or ‘natives’.² Ultimately, this reveals an underlying positivism where any involved participation or ‘sympathy’ for the researched is defined as bad, in contrast with an imaginary ‘value-neutrality’ which actually corresponds to acceptance of the dominant bourgeois value system. Part of the problem is the confusion of values/politics, bias/untruthfulness and epistemological position – in other words the conflation of the scales mentioned above. In fact, detachment does not necessarily equate to ‘truth’; trying to equally balance participation and observation is not always the best strategy; and a working-class politico-epistemological position is no more ‘biased’ than a bourgeois one. In order to define the nature of the researcher’s participation, political position and ‘truthfulness’ must both be addressed, but not *confused* as they are in much participant observation theory.

In regards to political position/values, I believe it is necessary to adopt a critically reflexive position, and disclose our values/politics. It is obvious that all researchers have a set of values and a political identity (we are subjectified), and unless we are conscious of this identity (and seek to actively construct it ourselves) it will merely serve the interests of the status quo. Therefore, it is necessary to ‘place oneself as researcher on the same critical plane as the researched’ (Roseneil 1993: 181), so that the relevant question is not ‘Did the researcher “go native” or remain “objective”?’, but rather ‘What was the researcher’s political position?’, and ‘Which of the researcher’s values were shared with (or different to) the values of the researched?’, and ‘Did the researcher reflect critically on her or his values and on her or his participation?’. In order to negotiate our participation in the field and the subsequent analysis of results, we researchers must admit our values and reflexively construct defined politico-epistemological positions.³

The above injunction is not, however, meant to be an argument for relativism; I still consider ‘truthfulness’ (some would use the word ‘objectivity’ here) a useful and necessary ideal, and one which

² Punch, for example, warns against ‘going native’ and illustrates with the case of a researcher who adopted racist behaviour in order to ‘participate’ with a group of racist police officers – as if this were no different to ‘going native’ amongst say, charity workers (Punch 1986: 17).

³ For the sake of this reflexivity, let me present my own identity (or a version thereof anyway): I am a 24 year old male, a social inquiry student, mostly white, mostly straight and of middle class background. I’ve been an activist for about five years and have participated in struggles over tertiary education, refugees, corporate globalisation (S11, M1, anti-WTO etc), and war. My politics are broadly communist, anarchist, anti-racist, pro-feminist and green. As an activist ‘insider’ I have sought, like Roseneil, to ‘Make the familiar strange’ (Roseneil 1993: 192). But I have also had the advantage of a ‘native’ who is already ‘literate’ in the culture being researched.

should be distinct from values/politics. Of course the two components ‘truthfulness’ and ‘political position’ are connected, but instead of being conflated, this connection should be dialectical: the qualities are distinct and in some sense contradictory, but productively interrelated. Part of this relationship is acknowledging that a commitment to truthfulness is an important value for any researcher (and any activist). Hammersley advocates a ‘commitment to the value of truth’, and claims this is exactly what is meant by the principle of ‘value neutrality’ proposed by Weber (Hammersley 1995: 40). However I would seek to adopt this commitment *as well as* reflexivity, and an open political stance (Hammersley believes these to be mutually exclusive). In my view, a reflexive political stance actually helps the researcher to interrogate her or his own values and to avoid uncritically advocating a particular set of values (which Hammersley sees as the aim of value neutrality).

The relationship between truth and political position which I am attempting to construct has thus returned to my original aim of ‘producing relevant and helpful research for a group with an explicit transformative agenda’. Practitioners demand ‘usable knowledge’ and according to some researchers, this poses a dilemma of ‘rigor or relevance’ (Argyris and Schön 1991: 85). However, for activist groups (and I suspect for most practitioners) this is a spurious choice: research must be relevant *and* rigorous, because it must be ‘truthful’ – that is congruent with reality – in order to be useful. And that truthfulness (inevitably mediated as it is) can only be approached by a methodology which is conscious of that mediation and of its political position – a methodology which is partisan but reflexive.

Consequently, my methodology tends towards those of researchers who advocate ‘complete-member’ research (Roseneil 1993), ‘critical ethnography’ (Thomas 1983; 1993), and ‘partisan research’ (Green 1993). These researchers are all candid and reflexive about their politics, although they have a variety of political positions including feminist, Marxist, ‘critical’ and others. In each case, the researcher’s values/politics are not ignored or repressed, but rather discussed and then utilised to ‘delve below’ ideological codes (Thomas 1983: 487) and to give research ‘emancipatory goals’ (Thomas 1993). Another concern amongst these ‘partisan’ researchers is to link each particular research case to broader issues of political economy (Marcus and Fisher 1986: 93). Likewise the purpose of this sort of research is not ‘the better functioning of any element in the structure’ (as in much action research), rather its focus is the failure of the social totality to meet human needs and ideals (Horkheimer in Hammersley 1995). These researchers thus offer strategies for using a reflexive and political position to expand and enhance one’s methodology. But this approach also produces its own unique challenges, such as the need to create research which is congruent with one’s political priorities. It is a

constant struggle to avoid the processes used by the powerful to accommodate, accumulate and appropriate research (Humphries 1994: 197-202). Partisan research methodology also demands that any resolutions presented must be located in political struggle, and be sensitive to the ways the research could be used by others (such as the police) to increase surveillance/control of the oppressed. Despite these difficulties, this sort of politically aware research is the most promising approach to the study of social movements.

Furthermore, partisan approaches to methodology also value ‘truthfulness’ (albeit in slightly different ways). For example, in her excellent discussion of Greenham Common (which incidentally could be considered an ‘appropriated space’) Roseneil asserts, ‘I have been determined to tell “the truth” about Greenham as I have seen it’ (1993: 192). Moreover, as she asserts in the quote with which I began this introduction, Roseneil argues that her ‘insider research’ methodology was integrally connected to the ‘high level of validity’ of her findings (1993: 192). Similarly, Green argues that ‘truth’ is a worthwhile goal (1993: 108). However she also asserts that attention to the historical, political and economic context of the case and to causal explanations is more important than the insights of ‘insider research’ in achieving this goal; in this she differs from Roseneil (Green 1993: 108-109). The commitment to truthfulness also demands that the researcher actively construct an epistemological grounding for partisan research.⁴ While they may approach truthfulness in slightly different ways, these partisan approaches all reveal a productive relationship between politically positioned research and truthfulness.

So, my methodology draws on action research and participant observation, but is ultimately most congruent with partisan research. Action research usefully raises the issues of power, participation (of the researched), consciousness and change, however it is also subject to a patronising parochialism and functionalist reformism. Participant observation methodology draws attention to each case’s broader context and is particularly appropriate for studying activist groups. The principles of participant

⁴ Some sort of epistemological grounding is needed from which the researcher can claim to be ‘able to gain genuine knowledge of social reality rather than being deceived by appearances like everyone else’ (Hammersley 1995: 30). There are various responses to this epistemological need: Hegelian Marxism posits a meta-narrative of transcendent knowledge based in the unfolding of history; scientific Marxism makes positivistic appeals to scientific method. Alternatively, Marxism and feminism (and other theories) attempt to find epistemological grounding in the material *standpoint* of the working-class and women respectively – which gives these groups potential access to an understanding unavailable to other classes. Habermas offers a logic of communicative acts; some ‘critical’ theory appeals to participatory democracy (Thomas 1993); while postmodernism denies any possibility of epistemological grounding at all (Hammersley 1995: 30-38). My own preference would be to use standpoint epistemology as an starting point (surely knowledge must always originate from a social position of some sort?), and in particular the standpoint (or material conditions) of the most disadvantaged in society (as suggested by Sivanandan in Humphries 1994: 188). Certainly, in my project the social standpoints of the working class, of women, of indigenous people and of squatters will be of particular importance for grounding a theory of knowledge about appropriated spaces.

observation also highlight the questions of bias, values, politics and truthfulness. I found answers to these questions in the methodological approaches of partisan, ‘insider activist’ or ‘critical’ researchers. Ultimately, I respond to the dilemma of truth and politics with a commitment to the goal of truthfulness, but also by taking the political context into account and adopting a reflexive political position.

Techniques:

Reflexivity, dialectics, and distribution

Two general techniques which I will use for research analysis have already emerged in the above discussion: reflexivity and dialectics.

- **Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is not just reflection (thought) but thought which is ‘bent back’ and affects the thinker (Steier 1991: 2). Reflexivity is a way for a researcher to examine her or his assumptions without being reduced to incapacitation (provided the focus moves outward, not ever-inward); it is also a way to avoid abusing power and to avoid being subjectified by power. Being reflexive is also one way (perhaps the best) to salvage some sort of validity for research – a way to approach truthfulness. The technique of reflexivity addresses Honneth’s concern that ‘only with the awareness of all its deficiencies can one today productively continue the theoretical tradition originated by Horkheimer’ (Honneth in Hammersley 1995: 35). For an activist, reflexivity is also a way to act *and* think critically about that action – it is way to avoid mundane activity and consequently a reason to engage in research. So for me, using the technique of reflexivity entails a process of:

Action (political struggle)

Reflecting on that action (research)

Analysing my research

Reflecting on that analysis (with its politics/values)

Affecting the analysis, myself and the situation studied (action).

Reflexivity is also a technique which is relevant to my actual subject matter. In her definition of social movements, Burgmann suggests that a social movement expresses a collective reflexivity which is even

more significant than individual reflexivity (Burgmann 2003: 5). This is particularly relevant to appropriated spaces which, in their visibility and materiality, allow the movement to recognise itself (Krasivj 1996: 4), and subsequently analyse itself in a sustained reflexivity.

- **Dialectics**

Reflexivity is an essentially dialectical thought process, and the dialectic in general offers a useful model for thinking about many aspects of research and social change. The word ‘dialectic’ comes from the Greek word for ‘dialogue’ – the essential mechanism for human interaction, education, activism, research and for making social change (Freire 1996). Dialogue involves both speaking and listening, difference and consensus – bound together in the archetypal dialectic. In the dialectical process, opposites are contradictory, interpenetrating *and* unified. Consequently, the dialectic is associated with, and is a way of describing, the process of change:

‘Dialectics proposes that in order to understand a phenomenon, we treat it as a set of relations between elements which are different and in some sense opposed, yet at the same time interdependent. It is this instability which gives it an inherent tendency to change.’ (Winter 1996: 21)

This idea is immensely helpful to my project, not only because I am concerned with social change, but because concepts/phenomena such as ‘space’, ‘time’, ‘community’ and ‘research’ itself, reveal a new depth and potential if treated as Winter suggests.

Dialectics can also help to handle the bias/truth (or subject/object) separation with which I have been grappling. Based on Hegel and Sartre, Winter asserts that consciousness itself is dialectical (perception plus consciousness of perception), and that knowledge must be developed through a dialectical relationship between subject and object (1987: 11). This suggests that the tensions between subject and object are not to be resolved, but embraced. This can also be connected to the process of class struggle: through consciousness the object of history (that is, the proletariat) becomes the subject or maker of history (Lukács 1970: 20). This consciousness cannot be imposed from outside, but develops through a dialectical unity of theory and practice – praxis. The dialectical aspect of praxis means that a powerful unity is created, but without erasing the differences between practical experience and theoretical thought, struggle and reflection, action and research. So, it may be true that ‘The priorities of research and politics are very different’ (Hammersley 1995: 42). But through dialectical thinking contradictions such as that between politics and research can become productive, and can function in unity, while difference nevertheless remains. One might also assert (in response to Hammersley’s ‘rationality’) that ‘social science’ is neither science nor merely social description (postmodernism).

Instead, the ‘social’ and the ‘scientific’ must be engaged dialectically. Thus, thinking in dialectical terms is a useful technique for trying to turn my research into praxis.

- **Distribution and application of the research product**

The aim of translation (for activists and academics) which I asserted at the start of this essay has been complicated by the issues of participation, truthfulness, political position and social change. Nevertheless the task of communicating with a wider audience, and with activists in particular is still of primary importance to me. However, this task is made virtually impossible by the form of an honours thesis. In the first place, it seems ridiculous to try to transcribe a project on free space onto the space of the page: a space which is rigidly prescribed, stratified and machine-mapped, as Nandrea puts it (1999: 111). Moreover, the academic environment demands a narrowness and conformity which usually nullifies any political potential the thesis may possess (not to mention slotting the thesis-commodity into a self-perpetuating and pro-capitalist grading hierarchy). This environment constantly urges my research to become an ethnographic description of a ‘deviant’ subculture aimed at an audience of academics; an alienated exchange of commodified labour for a share of institutional power in the capitalist university.

But I will not accept this recuperation without a fight. Not only will I attempt to make the most of the thesis form – as constrained as it is – but I also intend to extract other products from my research. One of these collaborative ‘products’ has already appeared and disappeared: the Balloon Factory. After I have completed my thesis I will focus on other creations and modes of distribution: I’m going to make a zine aimed at an activist audience, and write a variety of articles – which I hope to publish on the web and in print. But as textual creations are only part of the spiral of action and reflection, I will act: I remain and will continue to remain actively involved in SCAN and other political projects. In this way I hope to transform my research into its intended form: praxis.

Conclusion

In this methodological section I have sketched out a response to the challenges of studying social movements and their appropriated spaces. These challenges revolve around the difficulties of producing research which is useful to activist groups, attempting to translate between theory and political practice, and the complex problem of truthfulness in research. In response to these challenges I examined action research, participant observation and partisan research. Each informs my methodology to some extent, but partisan research is the most useful because of its commitment to truthfulness within a reflexive political framework. Finally I looked at reflexivity, dialectics and the distribution of the research product, in order to introduce these techniques for dealing with the politics of research and of praxis.

The position I have reached also explains the form my thesis has taken: as a partisan researcher I will aim to analyse, support and develop the practice of appropriation, however I will not do this through an ethnographical account nor through a case study. Instead I will analyse spatial theory and the practice of social movements in an attempt to discover ways to improve that practice. The Balloon Factory experience lies beneath the whole thesis and re-emerges explicitly in the conclusion, but I have chosen not to undertake a descriptive case study because this would not be useful to SCAN and similar activist groups. Dissidents do not need their activity described in detail; instead we need frameworks for analysing and evaluating that activity. This is what I have focussed on constructing. The commitment to truthfulness and political usefulness has led me to approach the Balloon Factory occupation as inspiration and a puzzle, rather than as fodder for a pre-determined line of argument. The thesis which follows is for SCAN, and consequently it is not a description of SCAN.

Chapter 1

Theories of space and social movements

‘In my first meeting with Lefebvre in 1978 I clumsily asked him, “Are you an anarchist?” He responded politely, “No. Not now.” “Well then,” I said, “what are you now?” He smiled. “A Marxist of course... so that we can all be anarchists some time in the future.”

(Soja 1996: 33)

Introduction

The intersection between spatial theory and the study of social movements is a field with rich possibilities; it also furnishes the context for this thesis. However, this field is difficult to map firstly because it was ignored for many years, and secondly because it has drawn an explosion of interest in recent times. A review of spatial theory in its entirety would not only be unwieldy, it would also be of limited relevance to the study of social movements and projects of urban appropriation. Instead, I will begin this chapter with a general sketch of the ‘spatial turn’ in social theory. This will supply a suitable context for my subsequent examination of two central theorists of space: Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey. I have chosen to focus on these theorists not only because they are key figures in spatial theory, but also because they offer the most relevant approaches for understanding the anti-capitalist social movements which are my focus. Their theories locate the notion of space within a broader theory of political economy. However, on the other side of the theory/practice divide, Marxists such as Lefebvre and Harvey are less significant; most of the activists who set up the Balloon Factory Social Centre look to *anarchism* to inform their political practice. Therefore, the final section of this chapter will explore the insights which anarchist thought offers into spatial and social movement theory. Because anarchism is a fairly disjointed tradition, and because it has not produced a defined spatial theory or theorist of space, I will present this final section as a set of anarchist ‘interjections’ into the theory of space and social movements. The three philosophical reference points of Lefebvre, Harvey and the anarchist approach, form the framework for my analysis of the theory and practice of urban space appropriation. In fact, I would argue that any analysis of today’s anti-capitalist social

movements should refer to both Marxist and anarchist tendencies; certainly the projects I wish to study (and hence my analysis) fall into the contested territory between anarchism and Marxism.

From bare space to the spatial turn

For many years, most social theorists treated ‘space’ as an inert container for social activity.⁵ In social movement theory, this meant that space was seen as a passive setting for the ‘real’ objects of interest: actors, cycles of contention, resource mobilisation, developing consciousness, revolution and the like – all of which were conceptualised in non-spatial terms. Tilly describes this sort of approach to space as ‘bare space analysis’ (although I am using the term a bit more broadly than he does) (2000: 140).

Using Mills’ terminology, Agnew and Duncan describe the bare space paradigm as an essential feature of sociology (defined as distinct from geography and history):

‘The geographical imagination is a concrete and descriptive one, concerned with determining the nature of and classifying places and the links between them. The sociological imagination aspires to the explanation of human behaviour and activities in terms of social process abstractly and often nationally construed’ (1989: 1)

In this sociological epistemology, concepts like ‘community’ and ‘society’ and ‘the nation’ were treated as natural and non-spatial units of analysis for social theory (Giddens cited in Friedland and Boden 1994: 5). The bare space approach to social science de-prioritises and naturalises space.

There has also been a long-standing affinity for the bare space paradigm in Marxist theory. Even today, many Marxists work on the assumption that space is static and conservative, as opposed to time – which is connected to change and the making of history. This is associated with the orthodox understanding of the dialectic:

‘time is the privileged category of the dialectician, because it excludes and subordinates where space tolerates and coordinates’ (Feuerbach cited in Kohn 2003: 20)

From the conventional Marxist perspective, the dialectic is temporal and is the definitive model for understanding revolution. This understanding of history and change leads many Marxists to subordinate space to time in the theory of social struggle. Foucault admonishes,

⁵ ‘Space’ is a difficult concept with a contested definition; this first chapter represents my attempt to develop an understanding of it. However, it is important to note at the start that I am basically using the term ‘space’ to refer to a social artefact which is produced by (but is not reducible to nor determining of) a set of social relations. ‘Space’ is more than the set of objects in the universe – it also involves relationships, conceptions, representations and practices. (Consider the spaces of the city, the region and the nation.) I also wish to follow Lefebvre in avoiding a simple distinction between ‘space’ and ‘place’: space has a materiality to it which cannot be claimed exclusively by the more local and specific term ‘place’.

‘Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic.’ (cited in Soja 1994: 127)

This dichotomy relegates space to the position of undialectical inferior. Similarly, class struggle has been conceptualised in non-spatial terms; social movement mobilisation is explained in non-spatial ways – a particular region’s militancy will be understood according to class involvement for example (Tilly 2000: 140). There was, and still is for some Marxists, a strong appeal in the bare space paradigm.

In social movement theory and in sociology in general, the bare space paradigm proves to be inadequate. While it does draw attention to important non-spatial phenomena, it denies the complexity of space (Tilly 2000: 141). The bare space framework ignores the causal and motivating roles that space can play in collective action, and it is blind to spatial creativity and spatial constraint. Treating space as a neutral locus denies the importance of space to political economy, culture and the construction of meaning. In this paradigm there is also a complete dissociation of space from power, and therefore bare space analysis cannot recognise the ways that space functions as a mode of social control (Wilton and Cranford, 2002: 376-377). Most importantly for social movements, the bare space framework is blind to the role that space can play in anti-capitalist resistance and emancipatory struggle.

In recent decades there has been a ‘spatial turn’ in social theory (Soja 1996; 2000). Space has become ‘a medium through which to rethink the organization and meaning of modernity’ (Friedland and Boden, 1994:1). Rather than being understood as a bare container, space has come to be seen as a socially produced artefact which is complex, textured, symbolically charged, and enables/constrains action. This has had a considerable impact on social theory and historical studies (Soja 1996: 3). Theorists are increasingly attentive not only to the importance of space but also to the interconnectedness of space, time and society. This has had a variety of effects on the study and practice of social movements. Some social movement theorists, particularly those from the ‘political process’ or ‘resource mobilisation’ school, have approached space as a resource and a constraint for social movements. These accounts see space as ‘structuring’ contention and repression; as an ‘opportunity’ for contesting meaning in ‘spatial claim making’; and as a ‘sphere of contention’ (see for example Sewell 2001; Staeheli 1994; Tarrow 2001; Tilly 2000). A somewhat different version of the spatial turn is found in ‘new social movement theory’. These theorists approach space as a fundamental medium, object and product of collective action. Society is spatially reinterpreted as ‘programme society’, ‘network society’ or ‘information society’; the task for movements is to invent

new spatio-cultural codes and subjectivities/identities which transcend existing constructions of space and place (see for example Castells 1997; Feldman 2002; Melucci 1996; Touraine 1974). The spatial turn has also been developed in neo-Marxist theory and anarchist theory (as I will discuss below). Feminism was also central to the spatial turn through its critique of public/private space, the sexism of space and geography, the geography of the body, and the role of place (Blunt and Wills 2000; Massey 1994).

Clearly, there are a variety of tendencies within the spatial turn which can enhance and expand the study of social movements in different ways. However, there are also tendencies within the spatial turn which (I believe) confuse and undermine the investigation of social movements. One troublesome effect of the spatial turn is the current vogue among theorists to use the term 'space' as an abstract metaphor (often for discourse).⁶ Another problem is the tendency to reify space into an all-powerful dominating force: for some writers, space is an all-powerful force of control and Bentham's panopticon is its ultimate expression (examples of theorists who tend in this direction are de Certeau 1984; Ferrell 2001; and Foucault 1977). The spatial turn in social theory is also associated with 'postmodernism' – although spatial analysis is by no means exclusive to postmodernists. Most spatial theorists agree that there has been a change in the ways that we experience space and time, but those

⁶ Many theorists today use the word 'space' to refer to a discourse, an artistic style, an organisation, a social movement or something else entirely. This stretching of the vehicle concept 'space' to signify something quite different from the literal referent, can illuminate our understanding of the signified and expand knowledge in new directions. For example, describing the discourse of 'terrorism' as a 'space' might help us to conceptualise it as a constructed phenomena into which different actors and objects are inserted at different times. (This sort of analysis of metaphor is presented by Culler 2001 and Katz 1996, for example.) However, the metaphorical use of 'space' is often entirely ornamental and whimsical. And worse still, the metaphor can obscure real differences between the signified (discourse) and the literal referent of the term (physical spaces like buildings, fields, cities, nations and the rest). Obviously, all words are metaphorical to some extent and 'space' is particularly liable to slip between common and abstract referents; perhaps when we use the word 'space' to refer to a building it is still metaphorical. But there *is* a difference between a discourse and a building. And if we pretend that the metaphor is the same as the reality then we have lost part of the meaning of 'space'. For example, 'public space' for Alberto Melucci denotes 'task forces, committees, and other temporary forms of representation' (noted in Wilton and Cranford 2002: 378). This sort of abstraction of the term 'space' to refer to non-spatial phenomena denies the term's groundedness. For me, this groundedness is one of the most exciting features of spatial analysis: space can connect abstract notions like community with concrete things like the shape of a building. The irreducible physicality of space is extremely powerful. And yet at the same time, 'space' has a broader significance than the purely physical. Margaret Kohn captures this duality:

'Whereas geographers had traditionally used the term to denote a purely physical location, contemporary theorists have taken the opposite extreme and evacuated any sense of rootedness, sometimes using the word "space" as a synonym for discourse. Instead, we need a mediating position that acknowledges that space is a product of social practices but one that has particular properties precisely because of its embodiment in specific types of places. Such a mediating position neither reduces space to a purely physical category nor evacuates its material dimension.' (2003: 15)

Kohn argues for a mediating position between 'space' used as abstract metaphor and as purely physical category. I largely agree, although I think a *combination* of the material and the conceptual components is preferable to a 'mediating position'. Consequently, I use the term 'space' to refer to areas, structures, and types of places that have a physical component, but also a broader social significance – such as houses, offices, shopping centres, social centres, cities and the like. I do *not* use the term to refer to discourses, emotions, identities, and the like. Using the term 'space' as an abstract metaphor can erase the powerful physical component of the referent; this trivialisation of space should be avoided.

who describe the present era as postmodern conceptualise this change in terms of spatial categories coming to dominate those of time (Jameson cited in Harvey 1989: 201). Postmodern analyses of space tend to privilege issues of individuality, identity, form, culture, discourse and openness; this usually correlates with a rejection of the concepts of capitalism, class, historical teleology, revolution and universalism. Some of these postmodern analyses of space are extremely useful for understanding certain aspects of social movements – such as the construction of identity. However they also often function to politically undermine the emancipatory and anti-capitalist objectives of social movements.

In order to further develop an appreciation of the importance of spatial theory to the study of social movements, I will now focus in detail on Lefebvre, Harvey and the spatial insights of anarchism. These three perspectives veer away from the problematic modes of analysis I mentioned above. On the other hand, any contemporary analysis of space must engage at some point with postmodern theorists, and I will indeed refer a number of times to Soja in the coming discussion. But ultimately, I consider concepts such as capitalism, class and revolution to have continued relevance to the theory and reality of society, and not surprisingly the perspectives below coincide with this anti-capitalist framework.

Henri Lefebvre: space, production and difference

Lefebvre is perhaps the most influential theorist of social space, and is often credited with initiating the spatial turn in social theory. His theory of space is most fully elaborated in *The Production of Space* (first published in French in 1974, first English translation in 1991) – a richly detailed but often obscure philosophical exploration of the social processes of space in the West, from antiquity to the ‘neocapitalist’ present. The aspects of Lefebvre’s theory which will be of particular relevance to the coming thesis are his dissection of ‘space’ as a process of production and his elaboration of space’s emancipatory potential. This potential is associated with appropriation, class struggle and lived experience.

Lefebvre’s philosophy is premised on the idea that (social) space is the product of a social process. This process (which might also be thought of as set of social relationships) is divided by the French theorist into three categories: the ‘perceived’, the ‘conceived’ and the ‘lived’. Or in spatial terms: ‘spatial practice’, ‘representations of space’, and ‘representational spaces’ (1991: 38-40). The first category

(the perceived) relates to the formal spatial routines of life – such as the daily commute from home to office, for example. The second (the conceived) concerns the dominating conceptual representations of space in our society – such as urban planning, neighbourhood boundaries and (I would add) hegemonic notions of the ‘nation’ and ‘globalisation’. The third category (the lived) refers to creative, symbolic and intensely felt ‘representational spaces’ (or ‘spaces of representation’), which are dominated in capitalist society – works of art, the imagination, and spaces experienced emotionally by ordinary people may fall into this category. Representational space is also connected to the ‘clandestine or underground side of social life’ according to Lefebvre (1991: 33). Together these three interlocking ‘layers’ or ‘moments’ constitute the social production of space.

Lefebvre argues that the production of space is *concealed* by a ‘double illusion’ of space as ‘transparent’, and space as ‘natural’ (1991: 27-30). This double illusion is bound up with the fetishization of language and thought in Western philosophy. He condemns

‘the basic sophistry whereby the philosophico-epistemological notion of space is fetishized and the mental realm comes to envelop the social and physical ones’ (1991: 5)

He associates this prioritisation of the mental with Derrida and Barthes, but also with patriarchal capitalist space more generally. And he asserts that applying codes derived from literary texts to space can only produce description, or a reduction of that space to a ‘message’ and its inhabitation to a ‘reading’ (1991: 7). On the other hand Soja argues that Lefebvre also wishes to transcend the Marxist privileging of the material lived world over the conceived world of ideas (Soja 1996: 36).⁷ Thus unifying the mental and the social, the world of thought and everyday life was a prime concern for Lefebvre:

‘Linking the abstract and the everyday is critical to much of Lefebvre’s work. He contends that ideology requires a relationship binding knowledge to practice and, therefore, ideologies which are effective cannot be distinguished from practice’ (Oakley 1998: 216)

So for Lefebvre, spatial theory should not separate the abstract from the everyday; instead it should be a multi-dimensional critique, and a form of spatial praxis which is able to develop a new sort of space in a better society – a space where lived and conceived moments can coexist harmoniously.

Let me spend a moment reviewing Lefebvre’s understanding of capitalism, to place his suggestions for a new sort of space in context. Capitalism, for Lefebvre, is comprised of three elements, terms or moments – namely land, labour and capital, or in other words rent, wages and profit (1991: 228). This

⁷ While this is certainly one of Lefebvre’s concerns, Soja over-emphasises this point; in fact Lefebvre directs the brunt of his attack against the privileging of philosophical and linguistic abstraction (which in this case was embodied by a nascent poststructuralism). In the final analysis, the French theorist was a Marxist and advocated a brand of materialism.

triad is of growing importance because capitalism must forever expand (over-ground, underground, and above-ground) if it is to survive (1991: 325). Lefebvre connects this capitalist expansion (which also involves the consumption and re-consumption of space) with ‘abstract space’, which he describes thus:

‘The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there.’ (1991: 49)

Capitalism functions through abstract space, which erases difference in its violent expansion. Abstract space is also the space of the state, and is marked by contradictions such as the simultaneous erasure of difference and requirement for permanent centres of decision and action – ‘agglomerations’ such as cities (1991: 51 and 388). Another contradiction is the ‘new scarcities’ created by capitalist commodification of space: air, light, water and land are now produced, and so become scarce (1991: 329). This commodification also divorces spaces from their use-value and homogenises them for the purpose of exchange; space no longer satisfies human needs – or rather, spatial needs are reproduced so as to maximise profit (1991: 337-339). Lefebvre describes capitalist space as ‘dominated space’ and connects this to technology, closure, repression and emptiness (1991:164-165). Lefebvre offers a multidimensional critique of capitalist space – as abstract, violent, commodified, repressive and dominated.

While Lefebvre reveals the oppressiveness of capitalist space, in response to this he also incorporates a certain ambivalence and emancipatory potential into his conception of space:

‘in addition to being a means of production it [space] is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such it escapes in part from those who would make use of it. The social and political (state) forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely’ (Lefebvre 1991: 26)

The relationship between space and power is complex; space is not solely a tool of capitalist domination. Power achieves its concreteness through space (1991: 281) – and this is true of both state and oppositional power. Lefebvre contrasts ‘dominated space’ with ‘appropriated space’ – the latter is ‘modified to serve the needs of a group’ (1991: 165). (I will return to Lefebvre’s understanding of ‘appropriation’ in the next chapter.) There is also a germ of hope within Lefebvre’s conception of abstract space:

‘abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space. I shall call that new space ‘differential space’, because inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences. It will also restore unity to what abstract space breaks up’ (1991: 52)

This notion of ‘differential space’ recurs often in *The Production of Space*, and although it remains somewhat vague, it does present a spatial form of hope for change and liberation. Lefebvre binds the notion of differential space to the class struggle:

‘Today more than ever, the class struggle is inscribed in space. Indeed, it is that struggle alone which prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences. Only the class struggle has the capacity to differentiate, to generate differences which are not intrinsic to economic growth’ (1991: 55)

For Lefebvre, the class struggle (broadly defined) represents a force for difference, capable of producing a revolution in and of space. Lefebvre also phrased this struggle as the struggle for the ‘right to the city’ – our right to the possibilities latent in the production of space (1996: 173-174). And in conjunction with this struggle Lefebvre reasserts the importance of the ‘collective subject’ – vis-à-vis the individual subject which has come to dominate epistemology along with Cartesian mental space (1991: 4). The transformation of society requires that the collective subject be an actor in the production of space (1991: 422). In connection with the project of a different space, social space ‘contains potentialities’ such as ‘détournement’, ‘counter-spaces’, counter-cultures, and the reappropriation of the lived experience of the body (1991: 349). The potentialities are related to the ‘representational’ or ‘lived’ component of space. Art is also immensely important to Lefebvre and he tentatively delineates the future revolution as:

‘a matter of producing the space of the human species – the collective (generic) work of the species – on the model of what used to be called ‘art’ (1991: 422)

The task of the revolution is to re-make social space as a work of art, rather than the commodified, dominated, capitalist product it is today. However, along with this utopian vision, Lefebvre’s approach to revolution incorporates a more conventional Marxist confrontation with the state. Thus he calls for,

‘grassroots opposition, in the form of counter-plans and counter-projects designed to thwart strategies, plans and programmes imposed from above’ (1991: 383)

This sort of combination of pre-figurative and interventionary politics (counter-projects and confrontation) will become increasingly important to my argument in the following chapters. So, space has certain emancipatory potentials for Lefebvre; the connection between space and power means that space is a vital part and objective of the class struggle. And this struggle is bound up with the possibilities of art, appropriation, lived experience, and the creation of spatial difference.

Lefebvre’s spatial theory has formed a vital basis and a catalyst for much recent spatial theory, but it is not without its problems. One major concern is the way that Lefebvre’s insistence on the importance of space can lead to a certain reification and over-inflation of social space. The French philosopher asserts,

‘the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing space itself. Failing this the relations would remain in the realm of ‘pure’ abstraction’ (1991: 129)

Lefebvre’s point here is that all social relations become concrete in space, that everything occurs in space. Soja argues that this worldview is no less all-encompassing than the more familiar awareness that everything occurs in time (Soja 1996: 46). However, Lefebvre’s theory can still appear to *conflate* the social and the spatial, or worse, to fetishize the spatial – and thereby deny human agency through spatial determinism (Harvey makes this sort of critique of Lefebvre in *Social Justice and the City* 1973). A similar difficulty is presented by the way Lefebvre rarely uses the concept of ‘place’ in his work, preferring not to separate space into the abstract (space) and the concrete (place) as many later theorists attempt to do (Soja 1996: 40). This enriches but can also serve to confuse the meaning of the term ‘space’. Lefebvre’s politics can also be somewhat enigmatic – as he clearly intended them to be. Soja’s anecdote (cited at the head of this chapter) hints that Lefebvre may have had a certain sympathy for the anarchist ideal, even though the French theorist was a committed Marxist. Indeed many of Lefebvre’s arguments (for example about everyday life, the state, political parties, space and time) are very similar to arguments made by anarchists writing both before and after him. The difficulties in Lefebvre’s work relating to reification of space, and political principles certainly make his theory more complex – but they are also part of its depth, and part of the reason why his work is such a rich source for understanding our world.

The Marxist geography of David Harvey

Like Lefebvre, Harvey’s influence on the development of spatial theory (and human geography in general) has been profound. Harvey’s *Social Justice and the City* (1973) is credited with instigating the rapprochement between sociology and geography, and with establishing a Marxist perspective within geography (Marshall G. 1998: 287, Soja 2000: 105-106). In this text Harvey wrote,

‘the only adequate conceptual framework for understanding the city is one which encompasses and builds upon both the sociological and the geographical imaginations. We must relate social behaviour to the way in which the city assumes a certain geography, a certain spatial form. We must recognize that once a particular form is created it tends to institutionalise and, in some respects, to determine the future development of social process.’ (1973: 27)

He thus connects geography and social processes, but also maintains the distinction between the two (unlike Lefebvre). These two phenomena, which correspond to space and time, have remained central to Harvey’s work up to the present. Lefebvre’s theories are clearly a prime inspiration for Harvey, but

the two thinkers also differ markedly. Harvey uses Lefebvre's analysis but in a tighter Marxist framework, and also establishes distinct concerns such as the importance of utopianism and of social movements. He also investigates capitalist space in detail and with the prospects for proletarian agency in mind. For all these reasons, Harvey's theories of space and time will form an important part of my framework in the coming chapters.

Harvey's theory of capitalist space highlights injustice, conflict, and spatial contradictions such as uneven development. Harvey reveals how the 'normal workings' of the capitalist city result in a geographically unequal distribution of resources (1973). This realisation led Harvey to adopt a Marxist critique of the social relations of production and the class-structured specific geography of capitalism (Soja 2000: 108). This geography is necessarily marked by 'uneven development', constant expansion and spatial re-organisation (1989: 23). These are some of the 'spatial fixes' which the bourgeoisie must deploy in the never-ending crises of capitalist accumulation. And these tactics require a constant creation, destruction and re-creation of space – even though this produces paradoxes and contradictions (1989: 23).⁸ Like Lefebvre, Harvey sees social, politico-economic and spatial relations as interrelated. However, in contrast to Lefebvre, Harvey is concerned to maintain a certain degree of separation between the social, spatial and economic. And Harvey ultimately sees the mode of production as shaping social relations (not the other way around); although he does argue that the capitalist mode of production has survived through its production of space (2000: 31). Likewise, Harvey argues that 'command over space becomes an ever more important weapon in class struggle' (1989: 294). And usually, it is the capitalist class which holds this command over the practices, forms and meanings of space, in conjunction with a command over time and money. However these rules and meanings can sometimes be contested and/or subverted (Harvey 1989: 226). In particular, there are openings for struggle and experimentation in the contradictions of capitalist space (such as those around uneven development, security and violence, poverty and promises of free market well-being, globalisation and de/re-territorialisation) (1998: 75-79). Importantly, Harvey's critique of capitalist space also rejects the proposition that society has entered a 'postmodern' era.⁹ So

⁸ Perhaps the central contradiction of capitalist space for Harvey, is this: the annihilation of spatial barriers (for example through 'globalisation') actually increases the importance of and thus necessitates variations between places (such as differences in wage levels) (1989: 294). The result of this contradiction has been,

'the production of fragmentation, insecurity, and ephemeral uneven development within a highly unified global space economy of capital flows' (1989: 296)

The paradoxical combination of uneven development with spatial homogenisation and 'time-space compression' is a necessity for capitalist accumulation.

⁹ Harvey agrees that there have been major changes – such as the emergence of flexible modes of accumulation, new cultural forms and a 'new round of time-space compression';

'But these changes, when set against the basic rules of capitalistic accumulation, appear more as shifts in surface appearance rather than as signs of the emergence of some entirely new postcapitalist or even postindustrial

for Harvey, capitalist space is based on injustice and a host of contradictions such as uneven development – which also provide opportunities for struggle.

Clearly, Harvey's analysis of space and social change is founded on a theorisation of class struggle. Harvey argues that bourgeois power relies on superior control over geographical forms; some spatial forms inhibit social change while others facilitate it (2000: 31 and 1989: 207). In addition, the bourgeoisie must constantly prevent the working class from taking advantage of the contradictions in capitalist space, particularly through denying power to spaces where oppositional movements have the most potential (such as at the local level of place). Harvey argues that it is in this context that the class struggle assumes its global role of preventing capitalist abstract space from taking over. Like Lefebvre, Harvey sees a capacity in proletarian struggle for producing spatial differences which can undermine capitalist power. But he also stresses that this production of spatial difference must not be mere local particularism. Difference based on local interest, even when it expresses opposition to the status quo, can not threaten the capitalist system (1989: 302). Rather, Harvey argues, we need to negotiate the dialectic of unity and difference in a way that facilitates global anti-capitalist struggle. This means struggling for more than control over a particular place for a limited time. Harvey, like many Marxists, believes that place-bound movements will always be crushed by spatialised capital. Instead, movements must operate both locally and globally:

‘until the working class movement learns to confront [the] bourgeois power to command and produce space, to shape a new geography of production and social relations, it will always play from a position of weakness’ (2000: 48)

However, Harvey does not entirely subordinate place to global space:

‘those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance’ (1989: 234)

Place is still important, even if he gives priority to the global struggle. The difficult necessity is to operate on *both* scales. Thus Harvey's understanding of the relationship between place and space contrasts strongly with the theories of Lefebvre, postmodernism and anarchism: Lefebvre makes little

society’ (1989: vii)

Harvey argues that while there has been a transition in the regime of accumulation, production for profit remains the basic organising principle of economic life. He also views the schism between ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ theory as relating to the former's privileging of time over space, and the latter's privileging of space over time (1989: 205). The solution to this, Harvey suggests, is to take both sorts of theory on board and avoid unduly privileging space or time. This solution, and many other aspects of Harvey's work, reveal his attempt to bridge the gap between Marxist and postmodern theory. For example, he asserts the importance of culture in what Soja calls a ‘radical modernist cultural politics’ (Soja 2000: 108). But at the same time, Harvey wishes to avoid separating culture from political economy (Harvey 2000: 74). For some critics, Harvey's selective use of Marxist, postmodern, and other critical theories results in an unfortunate lack of epistemological grounding and an abstract definition of critical social research (Hammersley 1995: 35-36). Nevertheless, Harvey's critique of capitalist space remains convincing, and rooted in what he calls ‘historical-geographical’ materialism – rather than postmodernism.

distinction between the two concepts, while anarchists and postmodernists prioritise place over space. Ultimately, Harvey presents a spatialised Marxist analysis of social change, and argues for the production of difference through a global working class struggle for space.

In connection with this global geography of struggle, Harvey argues for the need to connect the production of space with a ‘radical insurgent politics’. He argues,

‘the re-making and re-imagining of ‘community’ will work in progressive directions only if it is connected en route to a more generalized radical insurgent politics. That means a radical project (however defined) must exist.’ (2000: 240)

It is this radical politics which ensures that productions of space like ‘community’ do not degenerate into a regressive exclusivity. While Harvey considers class politics of some sort to be necessary to this project, he also insists that insurgents should engage with other sorts of politics – even if they do not appear proletarian at first (2000: 82).

Harvey’s conception of radical insurgent politics is bound up with what he calls ‘spatio-temporal utopianism’. He sees some sort of utopianism as essential to proletarian struggle today:

‘There is a time and a place in the ceaseless human endeavour to change the world, when alternative visions, no matter how fantastic, provide the grist for shaping powerful political forces for change. I believe we are at precisely such a moment.’ (2000: 195)

The hope and inspiration provided by utopianism is vital to struggle. And, for Harvey, utopian plans offer an example of what Lefebvre terms representational spaces (1989: 221). However, Harvey also launches a tough critique of two sorts of degenerate utopianisms – of spatial form and of temporal process. ‘Utopianisms of spatial form’ (such as More’s *Utopia*) imagine harmony by controlling or excluding temporal processes such as social change. Harvey examines various materialisations of spatial utopias – from ‘new urbanist’ communities to socialist communes – which begin with a critical and oppositional focus, but degenerate into compliance with the status quo (2000: 173). He explains this degeneration in terms of the temporal process taking control of spatial form once more:

‘Utopias of spatial form are typically meant to stabilize and control the processes that must be mobilized to build them. In the very act of realization therefore, the historical process takes control of the spatial form that is supposed to control it.’ (2000: 173)

But this critique of spatial utopianism goes hand in hand with a critique of ‘utopianisms of social process’. For Harvey, ‘utopianisms of social process’ are those schemas which promise happiness through temporal processes. Included in this category are the teleologies of Hegel and Marx, as well as the ideology of free-market liberalism. Harvey argues that (like spatial utopianism) the

materialisation of temporal utopias produces tragic outcomes. He explains this in relation to the temporal utopianism of neoliberalism:

‘any materialization of free market utopianism requires that the process come to ground someplace, that it construct some sort of space within which it can function.’ And ultimately this ‘produces an intensification of uneven geographical development in standards of living and life prospects. Rich regions grow richer leaving poor regions ever poorer’ (Harvey 2000: 177 and 178)

Since both temporal and spatial utopianisms are fatally flawed, Harvey advocates building a utopianism that is explicitly spatio-temporal. This entails the construction of utopian alternatives which are rooted in both spatial forms and temporal processes (2000: 185). He also sees this sort of utopianism as a *critical* utopianism, vis-à-vis Foucault’s ‘heterotopias’ (Harvey 2000: 185). Harvey argues that we must not evade the closure that comes with defining an alternative, and he accuses Lefebvre of just such a ‘romanticisation’ of unfulfilled openness (2000: 183). To elaborate his conception of spatio-temporal utopianism, Harvey also deploys the analogy of the architect – who works in space and time (2000: 200). These ideas will be of key importance to my argument in Chapter 4.

Harvey’s profound influence on spatial, social and geographical theory is based not only on his analysis of capitalist space and its inherent injustices and contradiction, but also on his contribution to the spatial theorisation of the politics of social movements. Of course, his work is not without its weaknesses: for example, he focuses predominantly on imaginative and literary illustrations of spatio-temporal utopianism – even though he argues for its materialisation. And his concern with defining an alternative leads to an emphasis on closure which tends towards the authoritarian. Also, his conceptions of difference and uneven development can sometimes be frustratingly ambivalent – the same term refers at different times to both capitalist and anti-capitalist activities. This ambivalence relates to a common difficulty in Harvey’s work: his admirable but problematic attempts to bridge Marxist and postmodern approaches. In Harvey’s writings the working class can also appear to be quite passive – constantly reacting to capitalist production of space rather than driving that production (as autonomist Marxists would suggest). Harvey has also been criticised for ignoring feminist perspectives of space, and while the body does occupy an important position in some of his writings, gender does not loom very large in his work (Soja 2000: 108). Nevertheless, Harvey’s significant involvement in the development of spatial theory has produced a host of insights which are invaluable for understanding space and social movements.

Coda: anarchist interjections

The theories of Lefebvre and Harvey provide a solid foundation for an anti-capitalist analysis of the spatiality of social movements. However an analysis based entirely on these Marxist theorists would misrepresent the basic sentiment of the projects which inspired my study in the first place, since most of the activists involved in SCAN and similar experiments draw inspiration from feminist, queer, anti-racist, and above all anarchist political thought. Unfortunately I am unable to explore the spatial repercussions of all these political tendencies, even though each has a great deal to offer. So I will focus on anarchism, because it is most often implicated in the sort of projects I am examining, and it represents a valuable counterpoint to the Marxist analysis I have assembled thus far. Some theorists also consider anarchism to be a fitting extension of Marxism; historically anarchism has often been a version of Marxism – opposed to Leninism but not necessarily ‘Marxism’. Furthermore, even though anarchism is somewhat incoherent, and has not produced a defined theory of space, it does present a variety of insights and critiques which are a useful and necessary addition to this chapter. In this discussion I will examine the anarchist critiques of hierarchy, the state and private property, and refer to a variety of anarchist tactics. I will not attempt to cover all the currents of anarchism, but will rather draw out what I consider to be the ideas most relevant to the study of space and social movements.

The relevance of anarchism to spatial theory is significant but also ambiguous. Anarchism has played only a peripheral role in the academic development of spatial theory (Huston 1997), even though a number of key early anarchist thinkers were also geographers. In 1885 Kropotkin asserted that,

‘[Geography] must teach us, from our earliest childhood, that we are all brethren, whatever our nationality. In our time of wars, of national self-conceit, of national jealousies and hatreds ably nourished by people who pursue their own egoistic, personal or class interests, geography must be...a means of dissipating those prejudices and of creating other feelings more worthy of humanity’ (cited in Lynn 2000: 10)

Kropotkin also emphasised the connection between geography and issues of social justice in his work on mutual aid (Huston 1997). Furthermore, since that time anarchist practice has consistently concentrated on spatial issues: anarchists have been particularly interested in the questions of land, community, autonomy, the construction of liberated spaces in the present, and the problems with dividing the revolution into temporal stages (Corr c1995, Huston 1997, Spencer 1997). And yet anarchism has had very little impact within the academic fields of geography and spatial theory. In fact, this reflects a wider antagonism between anarchist thought and the academy, which stems in part from the disorderly and incoherent nature of anarchism, and partly from anarchist principles – such

as the prioritisation of practice over theory (Graeber 2004: 332). However, in recent years there has been a growing academic interest in anarchism, precisely because anarchism is of growing importance in the practice of social movements.¹⁰ Graeber asserts,

‘As a political philosophy, anarchism is going through a veritable explosion in recent years. Anarchist or anarchist-inspired movements are growing everywhere; anarchist principles – autonomy, voluntary association, self-organisation, mutual aid, direct democracy – have become the basis for organising within the globalisation movement and beyond’ (2004: 330)

Anarchism’s influence on social movement practice and its enduring concern with spatial issues demand that we take seriously the insights which anarchism offers into space and struggle.

Perhaps the central feature of anarchism is its critique of hierarchy, domination and imposed authority. Anarchism works ‘to destroy authority in all its aspects’ (Kropotkin cited in Marshall P. 1993: 42). This general refusal becomes more specific in the rejection of the state, which anarchists view as a tool of oppression, despotism and slavery (Marshall P. 1993: 18-19). And this is where anarchism and orthodox Marxism diverge most strikingly: while Marxists tend to advocate some sort of capturing of the state and its subsequent control by the proletariat (after which the state will wither away), anarchists argue that this strategy can only lead to the emergence of a new ruling class – a red bourgeoisie (Bakunin 1992: 108). For anarchists, this hypothesis was tragically confirmed by the state-run capitalism of Lenin’s ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ in the Soviet Union (not to mention by Stalin’s despotism). This anarchist critique can enhance spatial theory in so far as hierarchy – taken as a social form – is a crucial aspect of spatial relations in capitalist society. Anarchists such as Ferrell consider issues of control, authority and freedom in space to be of prime concern:

‘In confronting authority in all of its manifestations, anarchists have for centuries fought not just the attempts by outside authorities to control shared public space, but also the insidious encoding of authoritarian arrangements into public life itself. In embracing instead autonomy, spontaneity, and playful uncertainty, anarchists have long sought to unleash these unregulated dynamics in the spaces of everyday life, and to build emergent communities out of their confluence.’ (Ferrell 2001: 20)

The analysis of space in terms of hierarchy, control and contestation of that control is a useful anarchist interjection into spatial theory. The critique of spatial hierarchy also offers a valuable way of connecting spatial theory to environmental struggle. Bookchin’s social ecology critiques the way ‘progress’ has been conceptualised as a domination of nature by humanity; this indicates how a critique of anthropocentric spatial authoritarianism can challenge capitalist forms of ‘progress’ (Best 1998: 6, Bookchin 1991). The anarchist critique of the state also ties in with Lefebvre’s condemnation

¹⁰ The importance of anarchism in the ‘new social movements’ and the ‘newer’ globalisation movement is often noted, although many commentators make this link in an attempt to associate these movements with the traditional stereotypes of anarchism (violence, irrationality, individualism, immaturity and all the rest).

of the state's abstract space. Huston shows how similar are the perspectives of Lefebvre and Kropotkin:

'Kropotkin argues that state-centred political organisation abstracts responsibility for social order from immediate contexts of interaction, and places it in the hands of a distant and centralised authority' (Huston 1997: 124)

Both Lefebvre and Kropotkin condemn the state in spatial terms based on a critique of abstraction. Clearly, the anarchist critique of hierarchy and analysis of the state are of significance in the theory of space.

The critique of hierarchy is associated with another key tenet of anarchism: the rejection of property. Faure writes,

'Authority dresses itself in two principle forms: the political form, that is the State; and the economic form, that is private property' (cited in Marshall, P. 1993: 43)

According to anarchists such as the geographer Elisée Reclus, private property is at the heart of our oppressive social system, and collectivisation of property is both a necessary component and an emancipatory expression of revolution (Fleming 1988: 142-143). Similarly, anarchists argue that land ownership is based on force, and requires the violence of the state as its guarantor (Berkman 1973: 183-184). Land has always occupied a central position in anarchist thought and practice – and has often been the pivot around which an anarchist politics of redistribution revolves (Corr c1995: 2). The struggle for land is intrinsically bound up with the struggle for freedom:

The land is the source of all wealth, the source of all freedom and we want back the land. Without land we are condemned to the servility of employment to earn the necessities of our life; we are condemned to Blind Obedience legally implicit in all job contracts; without land our small caring communities are destroyed; without land we can never be self-sufficient; without land we must doff our caps to the landowners and bosses. Without land there can be no freedom. (Green Anarchism, cited in Corr c1995: 1)

The anarchist correlation of collective access to land, autonomy and freedom has clear implications for spatial theory and social movement practice; and this correlation also helps to explain the presence of anarchist politics not only in urban squatter movements, but also in Indigenous land struggles in the majority world (Corr 1999: 1). The focus on land also leads anarchists to critique and struggle against capitalist enclosure – which is a concern also for autonomist Marxists. 'Enclosure' refers most famously to the process whereby peasant's communal land is seized and privatised, as occurred in England in the eighteenth century. But enclosure can also refer to processes which continue today, such as the privatisation of the environmental and reproductive commons (Midnight Notes Collective 1992: 318-325). And as a spatial and social process, enclosure helps to clarify the relationship between space and capitalist accumulation; capitalism requires ever-intensifying forms of enclosure if it is to survive.

As well as the above critiques, there are certain *practices* associated with anarchism which are relevant to (or already part of) the spatial action of social movements: direct action, prefiguration, community organising and autonomy. Anarchism is in many ways less a theory than an ‘ethics of practice’ (Graeber 2004: 332), and these strategies will become increasingly important in the following chapters, as I delve more explicitly into social movement practice. ‘Direct action’ refers to unmediated methods of collective struggle which have an immediate effect and empower those who use them – strikes, boycotts, sabotage, occupations, and armed resistance are all forms of direct action (Rocker 1989).¹¹ Most forms of direct action have some sort of spatiality about them. Direct action often involves ‘prefigurative’ organising – using means which demonstrate the future world you wish to create (Grubacic 2004: 37). Prefiguration is also associated with the anarchist willingness to attempt to create a real alternative to capitalism in the here and now. The importance of mutual aid, and of the notion of building the new society within the shell of the old leads many anarchists to work on creating real *communities*.¹² In conjunction with the rejection of imposed authority and hierarchy, anarchists in recent times have fought for the right to community self-determination and for the *autonomy* of peoples and struggles. The practice of autonomy tends to have a spatialised component – whether this be in an Indigenous land occupation or the creation of an autonomous women’s room. This is also often connected to the autonomous production of youth (counter)culture.

The anarchist ‘tradition’ may have an ambiguous relationship with academic theory, but it can still contribute a number of relevant insights into the theories of space and social movements. The critiques of hierarchy, the state and private property highlight issues of abstraction, enclosure, spatial control and freedom, and the struggles for land and environment. The practices of direct action, prefiguration, community organising and autonomy also have particular significance to the theory and spatial practice of social movements. Not only are these frequently used tactics often spatialised, but they also indicate certain approaches to creating space and culture which are directly relevant to projects of urban space appropriation. These critiques and tactics also reveal why urban squatting is so often connected with anarchism (at least in the ‘first world’) – squatting is a form of direct action which challenges the state and private property, and it creates a space for prefiguration, community building and countercultural creativity.

¹¹ Direct action is used by many groups, but anarchists have been its most consistent advocates (Goldman 1969: 66).

¹² In practice this often means taking action at the local scale. However, as anarchists like Kropotkin have pointed out, relations of mutual aid are destroyed by abstraction and centralisation, not merely by distance or scale; mutual aid and ‘community’ is possible at a regional or even global scale and many anarchists operate on this assumption (Huston 1997: 126).

Conclusion

In this chapter I staked out the key reference points which orient my analysis of space and social movements. I began with the context of the spatial turn in social theory: the problematic 'bare space' paradigm has been contested by various complex and enriching analyses of space as socially produced. However, some of these analyses are counterproductive in that they treat space as a metaphor or as an all-determining force of domination. I then moved on to two theorists who avoid these problems and offer approaches useful to the study of social movements: Lefebvre and Harvey. These two Marxists both critique capitalist space and see space's emancipatory potential as bound up with class struggle. They situate 'space' in a broad-spectrum theory of political economy and also theorise the potential for proletarian spatial agency. However they differ in the conceptual tools they use, and on questions of openness, space and place, and the relationship of the spatial and the social. The final section of this chapter was devoted to anarchist thought because of its particular relevance to the projects which I will be examining and indeed to the theory of space and social movements in general. I argued that despite the uneasy relationship between anarchism and the academy, the critiques of hierarchy, the state and property could enhance spatial analysis. The anarchist tactics of direct action, prefiguration, community organising and autonomy are also important to the existing and potential spatial practices of social movements. And so after this outline of theory, I now turn to those spatial practices.

Chapter 2

Space and social movement mobilisation

‘Space is not only a modality for producing and disciplining subjects; it is also an expression of human creativity’

(Kohn 2003: 89)

Introduction

In the previous chapter’s sketch of spatial theory, capitalist space emerged as abstract, oppressive and hierarchical. However, there also appeared a variety of contradictions intrinsic to the production of capitalist space; and (in relation to these contradictions) a series of emancipatory spatial possibilities. This raises the question of how these emancipatory possibilities can be exploited by social movements. In this chapter I will analysis specific social movement practices in order to answer this question. I will begin with a snapshot of the emancipatory potential of space, through the lens of four spatial strategies employed by social movements: contestation, disruption, *détournement* and appropriation (see Table 2.1). The rest of the chapter will then delve in greater detail into the fourth strategy – appropriation – which is my main concern in this thesis. The challenge will be first to define appropriation and then to elaborate how it is commonly practised. To do this I will survey four key qualities usually attributed to appropriated space: safety, sociality, openness and autonomy. This will introduce the strategy and uses of appropriation; the problems and criticisms that this survey raises will be addressed in Chapter 3, and possible solutions will be addressed in Chapter 4 (see Table 2.2). Ultimately, I hope to develop here a basis for appreciating the emancipatory promise of space, and introduce the potentially powerful strategy of appropriation.

Spatial opportunities: contestation, disruption, *détournement* and appropriation

Theories that conceptualise space as an intrinsically repressive tool of control and domination suffer from the basic flaw of reifying space. If we accept, as I argued in the previous chapter, that space is socially produced, then it cannot be *essentially* repressive – it can be transformed and it can be a tool of transformation. Lefebvre’s analysis forms the foundation for this argument, but other theorists

Table 2.1 Spatial strategies for social movements
1) Contestation (attacking borders, re-defining public / private spaces)
2) Disruption (blockades, pickets, rallies, occupations, sit-ins)
3) Détournement (re-using capitalist space - Reclaim the Streets)
4) Appropriation (cultural centres, organising centres, squatted social centres)

Table 2.2 Analysing the Appropriation of Space		
Survey of the attributes of appropriation (Chapter 2)	Problems with appropriation (Chapter 3)	Realising the potential of appropriation (Chapter 4)
1) Safety	1) Instrumentalism	1) Connecting space and time
2) Sociality	2) Formalism	2) The spatial and the social
3) Openness	3) Militant particularism	3) Geographies of power
4) Autonomy	4) Romanticising openness	4) Class and community
	5) Spatial utopianism	5) Prefigurative Politics
	6) Need for Politicisation	

develop it. For example, Margaret Kohn explores the emancipatory potential of space in her excellent study of radical spaces in pre-fascist Italy, to which I will refer a number of times. She writes,

‘Although spatial configurations, in their monumentality and materiality, can appear to embody a certain rigidity, they are products of human action and therefore are open to transformation. The space we live in is not a natural environment but rather the sedimentation of a social process’ (Kohn 2003: 89)

And as the quote at the head of this chapter indicates, Kohn views space not only as a modality for discipline, but also as an expression of human creativity. This conception of space – as potentially repressive but also potentially emancipatory – is echoed by Sewell:

‘Spatial structures, like other sorts of structures, are durable and constraining, but they are also subject to transformation as a consequence of the very social action that they shape.’ (2001: 55)

Space is not an essentially static structure forever bound up with repression. It is rather a social process which opens up possibilities for liberation as well as possibilities for domination. Social movements can make use of these emancipatory potentialities of space through contestation, disruption, détournement and appropriation. These four are not neatly divisible, nor are they the only

spatial strategies available to social movements. I have chosen them because they are among the most commonly used, and because they offer a useful entry point to the sorts of spatial possibilities open to dissidents; they also furnish a context for the detailed discussion of appropriation in the following chapters.

‘Contestation’ is the strategy of directly challenging dominant spatial practices and representations: a dramatic example of this was the assault by refugees and protestors on the fence of Woomera detention centre in March 2002. The fence – a material and symbolic border between the first and third worlds – was temporarily breached. Consequently, this was a spatial contestation in the physical *and* in the representational sense. Movements which defend public assets (such as public education, healthcare and the like) against privatisation could also be understood as a form of spatial contestation. These movements dispute changing representations of public and private space. Similarly, the feminist assertion that ‘the personal is political’, and the demand for women to have power in ‘public’ spaces (which are in practice male dominated), can also be read as spatial contestation; this contestation becomes materially spatialised in a Reclaim the Night march, for example. Another example of contestation is offered by the ‘anti-corporate globalisation’ movement which disputes the capitalist representation of globalisation, and offers its own spatial practice (‘Globalise Justice!’) as an alternative (Klein 2001: 497). Again, this contestation of spatial representation becomes concrete in specific spatial practices at particular places – for example a blockade of a WEF summit. The last three examples reveal how spatial contestation can be about re-definition of meaning in connection with space, as well as action in physical space. Movements can re-define issues and identities – for example as ‘transnational’ in order to reach beyond the inside/outside dichotomy often imposed by ‘national’ governments (Goodman 1998: 191). In all these examples, contestation of dominant space is a potent social movement strategy.

‘Disruption’ involves reorganising, dramatising or upsetting the usual routines and meanings of dominant spaces (Tilly 2000:138; Wilton and Cranford 2002: 389). Many of the most common ‘repertoires of contention’ are in fact routines of spatial disruption: strikes, rallies, public meetings, demonstrations, sit-ins, blockades and barricades are all spatial forms (Sewell 2001: 63-64). Wilton and Cranford provide an example of spatial disruption in their description of a conflict between workers and management at the University of Southern California: the Latino and African American workers disturbed the spatial order of the campus by visibly occupying sections of the campus where they were not usually seen (2002: 381). A more comical example was the ‘Billionaires for Bush (or

Gore)' campaign which interrupted hundreds of election rallies in the United States in 2000. In this instance, a hegemonic spatial routine (the manufactured mass rally for a presidential candidate), was disrupted with an ironic spatial performance – a parody of vote-buying by activists dressed as 'billionaires' (Boyd 2002). Disruption of dominant spatial routines and meanings is a powerful strategy for social movements.

'Détournement' is a term which was used by the Situationists to refer to the revolutionary 'reuse' of existing elements in a new ensemble (Situationist International 1959). In spatial terms, this strategy is about diverting or occupying an existing space and putting it to a different and unintended use. One example might be a blank wall or abandoned building reclaimed by 'urban redecorators', for graffiti and other sorts of street art. Another example is provided by the 'Reclaim the Streets' party/protests around the world, where people dance on the streets (a space usually reserved for cars and commuting) in order to détourne these nominally 'public' spaces. For a little while, the road is transformed into a space of politics and pleasure – instead of a dangerous space for facilitating efficient business. The example of Reclaim the Streets also reveals how contestation, disruption and détournement can be combined: as well as détournement, RTS *contests* the spatial privileging of cars and roads, and the spatial divisions of production, reproduction and 'leisure'. RTS also *disrupts* the normal spatial routines and flow of traffic in the city, and asserts instead a free, and (partially) unplanned human mobility.

'Appropriation' refers to occupying and transforming a certain space or place, in connection with an emancipatory aim. Some examples which might be described as 'appropriated spaces', include worker organising centres, women's refuges, communes, land occupations and squatted social centres (see definitional discussion below). Appropriation is related to – and to some extent incorporates – contestation, disruption and détournement. However, it develops in directions which the other strategies cannot. Appropriation moves beyond the focus on dominant spatial mechanisms; it can nourish social movements and cultural/political alternatives; it engages directly with and produces unique qualities of space; and it offers transformative possibilities in the present moment. I believe that appropriating space reveals a particularly exciting spatial opportunity for social movements, because it develops the capacity to create space. In the remainder of this chapter, and in the coming chapters, I will explore appropriation in detail.

Defining ‘appropriated space’

My definition of appropriation is based primarily on the way the term is used by three theorists: Sewell, Lefebvre and Kohn. Sewell’s use of the term is a good starting point because it seems to be the most non-figurative: he uses the word in the dictionary sense of taking something forcefully without permission. But he also uses it adjacent to the term ‘creation’ in reference to ‘safe spaces’ (Sewell 2001: 69). Conversely, creativity is integrated into Lefebvre’s definition of appropriation: he asserts that an appropriated space resembles ‘a work of art’ (1991: 165). Lefebvre explains appropriated space through a contrast with ‘dominated space’ in which he asserts that appropriated space is ‘modified to serve the needs and possibilities of a group’ (1991: 165). For Lefebvre, appropriated space is connected to the body (lived experience), to time/rhythm, to counter-culture and counter-spaces (1991: 205, 356 and 349). And in connection with art and the body, Lefebvre sees appropriating space as revolutionary: appropriation ‘inaugurates the project of a different space’ and thus the project of revolutionary social change (1991: 349).

Kohn bases her understanding of appropriation on Lefebvre, but also expands the term’s meaning. She criticises the part of Lefebvre’s definition which refers to serving the ‘needs’ of a group: it could be said that an army barracks or a shopping centre ‘serves the needs’ of a group after all. The crucial difference lies in whose needs are served (Kohn 2003: 89). Appropriated spaces are produced by ordinary people for our liberation and in relation to our context; dominated spaces fulfil the needs of consumers and citizens, whose needs are constructed in a limited way – often *by* those very spaces (Kohn 2003: 90). Kohn then augments her understanding of appropriation with Foucault’s notion of ‘heterotopias’ – ‘counter arrangements’ of social space, but also incorporates the notion of political resistance. She ultimately offers the concept of ‘the heterotopia of resistance’, and states:

‘The houses of the people built in Europe at the turn of the century were heterotopias of resistance, real spaces, countersites constructed to materialize an alternate reality’ (2003: 91)

These ‘Houses of the People’ were connected to (and built by) mutual aid societies, worker co-operatives and socialist organisations in Italy, France and other European countries in the early 1900s. They served as non-partisan social, economic and political hubs which facilitated the exchange of necessities for survival as well as the construction of radical working class communities (Kohn 2003). They are a useful historical example of appropriated space.

While my own definition of ‘appropriation’ is based on the three accounts above, there are many other relevant theories. For example, appropriated spaces might also be called interstitial spaces of

‘radical openness’ (hooks 1990), or perhaps ‘project identities’ (Castells 1997). Then again, activists such as those who set up the Balloon Factory, are more likely to use the term ‘reclaimed space’ than ‘appropriated space’ (I have chosen the latter for the sake of clarity – the word ‘reclaim’ has a much broader usage and often refers to non-spatial projects). Also relevant to my conception of appropriation is Bey’s notion of the ‘Temporary Autonomous Zone’ (Bey 1991). However, I do not wish to incorporate Bey’s glorification of ‘openness’ and ‘temporariness’ into my definition of appropriation. These different ideas may not form a cohesive definition, but they do introduce the issues at stake in defining appropriation.

My definition of appropriation is also necessarily more specific in focus than those of Lefebvre, Kohn and Sewell. When I refer to ‘appropriation’ the prime model I have in mind is a squatted self-managed social centre – such as those that exist today most numerous in Italy and other European countries. This is thus an urban, western, place-based form of appropriation, which has strong links to counter-hegemonic, emancipatory social movements. Appropriation is therefore (for me) closely bound up with face-to-face interaction, the creation of alternative worlds, and the liberation of the working class, women, people of colour and queers. Appropriated spaces are those places which have been reclaimed in the service of these struggles, and where we can develop and practice new ideas in the cracks of an oppressive society. On the other hand, I hope that my discussion of appropriation will have relevance beyond the specific urban social centre form. Certainly, spaces such as women’s refuges, communes and anti-development land occupations fit fairly comfortably into my conception of appropriated space. However, my discussion may not be at all relevant to Indigenous land occupations for example, even though projects such as the Zapatista occupation, and the Aboriginal tent embassy in Canberra, are of utmost importance and inspiration in the struggle to appropriate space. Indigenous land struggles are inseparable from particular complexities such as processes of identity, nationalism, history, global context, colonialism and intersecting oppressions. I hope that my discussion aids these struggles in some small way, but I point out that my conclusions may be entirely unreliable outside the western, urban context. By asserting this I do not mean to privilege the western or the urban – but rather to avoid the neo-colonial act of subsuming distinct Indigenous struggles within a framework developed in the west.¹³

¹³ There are also other ‘spaces’ such as pirate radio, community websites and subversive artistic or discursive ‘terrains’ which might be called appropriated spaces, but they have specific spatial (or non-spatial) characteristics which place them outside the bounds of my analysis. Particularly since I have already asserted the importance of lived experience and face to face interaction – which exist only in an uncertain form in these sorts of telecommunicative, cultural and discursive ‘spaces’.

A basic survey of appropriating space

Despite slight differences in definition, all the theorists above agree that appropriated spaces are of vital importance to social movements. To put it in Sewell's terms, appropriated space is the *sine qua non* of social movements (2001: 69). Appropriated spaces are also important because they can help us to answer a number of perennial social movement questions, such as: 'How are mass movements built?' 'How can people discover hope for the future, and realise our own capabilities?' 'How do participants facilitate democracy and autonomy *within* the movement?' and 'How do social movements win?' Appropriating space also illuminates a path by which a movement can expand its agenda beyond the purely oppositional/reactive. All of these ideas begin to suggest the importance of appropriating space – an importance which has been ignored by many activists and under-theorised by many academics.¹⁴

In this section I hope to contribute to remedying this neglect of appropriation by presenting a basic survey of the practice of appropriating space. This survey takes the form of four positive 'attributes' which are commonly ascribed to appropriated space: safety, sociality, openness and autonomy. The attributes are the foundation of many theoretical and activist discussions about appropriated space (although each thinker uses a slightly different terminology). However, I do *not* mean to suggest that they offer a complete description of appropriated space; nor am I presenting them as my theorised typology. They do not apply to all appropriated spaces, and they sometimes appear in non-appropriated spaces. Rather, they are the usual tools of analysis, which are employed to represent certain social relationships and processes that are tied to the production of appropriated spaces. These are the most commonly deployed justifications for appropriating space. However, these supposedly positive attributes are also flawed in a variety of ways – both conceptually and in practice. I will address these problems in the next chapter, and my final analysis of appropriation will attempt to move beyond these terms and their problems. Nevertheless, the attributes are a necessary starting

¹⁴ The reasons for this neglect relate in general to the 'bare space' approach and to the conceptualisation of space as essentially oppressive. But it may also be, as Kohn suggests, that the tradition of consciously appropriating spaces (and analysing that appropriation) has been 'marginalized as the result of repression and superseded by its own successes' (Kohn 2003: 11). In other words, the institutions and practices (like unions and rallies) which actually emerged from appropriated spaces have become the prime focus of both activists and academics – to the detriment of appropriated spaces.

point for analysing appropriation, because they review the common modes of understanding and reveal the potential of appropriated spaces.

- **Safety**

The quality of ‘safety’ is often attributed to appropriated space, and for many theorists and activists safety is the *raison d’être* of appropriation. Sewell explains how ‘safe spaces’ are absolutely necessary to social movements:

‘Oppositional movements need to control spaces in order to organize their activities and to recruit activists without being subject to crippling surveillance and repression by the state (or by landlords, employers, or other dominating groups or agencies).’ (Sewell 2001: 69)

And when the state is particularly repressive and hostile,

‘the very survival of the movement depends on the creation or appropriation of safe spaces’ (ibid)

Tilly offers a number of historical examples of safe spaces, such as the proletarian suburb of Southwark in London in the 1830s, and the Parisian Palais Royal of 1788-89, where dissidents could freely meet and give speeches which would normally have brought rapid incarceration (Tilly 2000: 144). This sort of safety for meeting and organising is still vital to social movements today, albeit in altered ways.

Safety in this sense is also connected to safety in the life and death sense (although this does not come across in the accounts of theorists such as Tilly). ‘Housing Works’ was an ACT UP initiative started in the 1980s which housed homeless New Yorkers living with HIV and AIDS. Housing Works spaces prevented innumerable deaths – whether at the hands of public neglect or police brutality (Cyler 2002: 355-359). A similar example is provided by some women’s refuges (such as those squatted in Italy in the 1970s) which have protected individual women from patriarchal violence, and at the same time sheltered feminist activists and nourished the feminist movement. The example of women’s refuges also suggests a more pre-figurative approach to safety: being safe is not only a necessary resource for feminist struggle, it is also a feature of the non-patriarchal world feminists struggle for.

However, there are a number of recurring problems with the conceptualisation of safe space. In the first place, the struggle for space is actually *not* safe, but often risky, violent and dangerous [bell hooks Yearning]. The term ‘safe spaces’ is thus something of a misnomer. But this flaw is not merely terminological; safety tends to be conceptualised as spontaneous in a deeper sense. Theorists such as Sewell and Tilly equate safety with intrinsic or legal limits to police power (Sewell 2001: 69). Tilly

explains safe spaces largely in terms of the ‘geography of policing’ and ‘protection from routine surveillance and repression’ (2000: 142 and 144). Tilly’s account gives the reader the sense that safe spaces are fortuitous structural ‘opportunities’ for contention (2000: 146) – rather than actively produced proletarian tools/prototypes. This is an inadequate explanation for appropriation and for the relationship between social movements and repression. The naturalisation of safety is also a problem in practice when it leads to an uncritical acceptance of secrecy, isolation and particularism on the pretext of safety (all of which are in fact *produced*). Alternatively, the naturalisation of safety can lead dissidents to believe that any appropriated space is automatically safe. Not only does this reify space and underestimate the state’s ability to use violence to defend private property, but it undermines attempts to change our own behaviour – to eliminate homophobia or sexism for example. Nevertheless, safety is a key attribute in most activist and theoretical understandings of appropriation. If we can realise the full potential of safety, then appropriated spaces offer individuals and social movements a possibility for survival and assembly.

- **Sociality (encounter, experience, aggregation and community)**

For many commentators, sociality is the richest feature of appropriated space. Defined as the quality of being social or of forming community, sociality is a broad term which I use to encompass a number of more specific components: such as encounter, solidarity, and the experiential quality of appropriated space. This sort of sociality is also connected to community, culture and de-commodified social relations. And creating this sort of sociality *requires* appropriated space: certain spaces might group people together but still maintain anomie and isolation (a movie theatre for example), while other spaces (such as social centres) are able to transform proximity into solidarity (Kohn 2003: 14). In his paper on Italian social centres, Maggio argues that the ‘central aim’ of the social centres, ‘is to promote the development of sociality’ and de-commodified social relations. (Maggio 1997: 234). Sociality is indeed crucial to understanding appropriated space.

Sociality begins with encounter. Appropriated spaces facilitate meaningful encounters and interactions between the people who enter the space. Dissidents and others who would otherwise remain isolated are able to meet, converse, and exchange ideas. An encounter has a political and transformative potential, but achieving this depends on the space in which it occurs:

‘Depending on context, exposure to strangers can establish and reinforce either relations of solidarity between equals or various degrees of subordination.’ (Kohn 2003: 66)

Thus an appropriated space is necessary for fulfilling the social and transformative potential of encounter. And correspondingly, the rich possibilities of encounter are a valuable attribute of appropriated space. One example which reveals the significance of encounter is offered by a number of key ACT UP activists: they report that they became involved because they stumbled across an ACT UP meeting when they were in the New York Gay and Lesbian Centre for some other reason (Cyler 2002: 354). And numerous participants in the World Social Forum state that the way the Forum arranges interaction between vast numbers of progressive people is one of its most powerful qualities (Sen et al 2004). 'Encounter' also takes on added importance in relation to the notions of communicative and deliberative democracy developed by Habermas and others: encounter and dialogue can provide a model for democratic social life (Habermas 1991). This sort of analysis also places a great deal of importance on the sociality of 'public space'. Appropriated spaces are often positioned as part of the broader public sphere (or as an alternative public sphere), precisely on the basis of the democratic significance of the encounters they produce. The concept of encounter, within the broader process of sociality, thus helps to reveal the powerful potential of appropriated space.

Since my discussion of appropriation focuses on physical spaces, sociality also involves an *experiential* component. Kohn connects encounter to physical experience:

'The concept of the encounter also draws attention to the importance of modes of interaction that are not linguistic or even cognitive. An encounter involves the meeting of two bodies in physical space... The encounter is fundamentally the terrain of the body.' (Kohn 2003: 67)

Kohn also uses the terms 'visceral register' and the 'power of place' to discuss the experiential quality of space (2003: 67 and 88). Similarly, Glover observes that, 'place is the prime context of phenomenological experience' (1998: 23). And Rossiter argues that 'the city is appropriated' by walking, touch and habit, not by the rapt optical contemplation of the tourist (Rossiter 1998: 82). This all relates back to Lefebvre's connecting of space and everyday experience; certain places are a major influence on our thoughts, behaviour and identities. The spaces of everyday life are where capitalist profit and oppression become real, but they are also where we exist most immediately and where we can experience a sense of liberation most intensely. The experiential attribute helps to explain the common combination of radical service provision with the appropriation of space. The Black Panthers' soup kitchens and libraries, anarchist projects like 'Food Not Bombs' and 'Homes Not Jails', and Housing Works (mentioned above) all illustrate this combination of practices. Everyday life, immediate experience and appropriated space can be bound together in a powerful political nexus.

The experiential attribute also links appropriated space to the production of subjectivity. One form this takes is the interrelationship between land, identity and spirituality, which is essential to many people and social movements – from the struggles of Indigenous peoples to ‘The Land is Ours’ occupations in Britain (Featherstone, 1997: 124). The radical subjectivities developed in urban appropriated spaces are part of a similar process. The core producers of appropriated spaces as well as the less frequent users often experience profound epistemological and ontological effects. A number of respondents in Metcalfe’s book on communes in Australia draw attention to the ‘sense of direction, spirituality and belonging’ which they gain from living in and producing these appropriated spaces (Ochre 1995: 153). Similarly, Kohn argues that, ‘the connection between space and subjectivity can also be a tool for change’ (2003: 23). She accepts Foucault’s insight that the subject is the product of the government of bodies, but asserts that in appropriated space the subject has *agency*, vis-à-vis Foucault’s disciplined subject in dominated space (Kohn 2003: 67 and 153-4). Producing and experiencing an appropriated space allows the agency of the (collective) subject to re-emerge.

Another component of sociality is aggregation. Aggregation is a key technique of power: when people, resources and struggles of resistance are gathered together their power is multiplied beyond the sum of parts. Tilly suggests that this process reveals strength and unity to allies and adversaries alike (Tilly, 2000). Kohn offers an example of aggregation in the workers manufacturing and purchasing cooperatives in pre-fascist Italy. These were able to ‘overcome isolation and aggregate dispersed forces’ (2003: 129). She explains that, ‘Particular uses of space aggregate people and resources to facilitate communication, coordination, and control’ (2003: 156). Aggregation can occur in at least four forms: firstly over space at one point in time (a simultaneous ‘global day of action’ for example); secondly at one point in time and space (the Seattle anti-WTO protest); thirdly over time and over space (organisations and subcultures); or finally over time at one point in space (a social centre). The last two cross-temporal forms of aggregation can translate into social movement sustainability. In relation to appropriation, this means that people who gather repeatedly at an appropriated place over an extended period of time tend to develop close ties to one another and to the political project of the space. Aggregation is a valuable source of power which social movements can harness through appropriating space.

The final aspect of sociality which I wish to survey is community. By definition sociality involves the formation of community, and most producers and analysts of appropriated space deploy the concept of community at some point. Appropriated spaces frequently carry the term as an appellation:

‘community centre’, ‘community garden’, ‘community free-farm’ etc. The term community is meant to connote various ideal qualities of sociality such as harmony, acceptance, support and participation in a common purpose. And it is in relation to the notion of community that diverse coalitions can unify around a space (Lefebvre 1991: 381). In her analysis of the Houses of the People, Kohn asserts,

‘The physical structure of the house of the people (also sometimes called the house of the socialists, of the union, or of labor) provided a kind of loose coalitional structure that could bring together distinct elements without demanding assimilation.’ (2003: 92)

She describes how the Houses – because they were more than the headquarters of a political party – could bring socialists and non-socialists together into a coalitional unity (Kohn 2003: 101). A space for debate can help to reconcile differences. The term ‘solidarity’ could also be used to represent communitarian qualities such as mutual support, common purpose and unity within diversity. Many theorists point out that social change requires more than merely venting anger – it also requires the transformation of social relationships, and in other words, the construction of solidarity (Brecher et al 2000: 65). According to Kohn, appropriated spaces are vital to the construction of solidarity:

‘Solidarity does not arise directly from contact between people; rather, it depends on how the interactions are framed. This framing is achieved by space. Physical spaces mark off a context in which certain attributes are highlighted and others are obscured.’ (Kohn 2003: 156)

The construction of solidarity can only occur in certain spatial frames, and appropriated spaces present one such frame. For many activists and theorists ‘community’ appears to offer a conceptual tool for understanding this nexus between space and solidarity.

I have discussed sociality as an attribute which is composed of other qualities such as encounter, experience, aggregation, community and solidarity. Each of these has indicated both the power and the complexity of the sociality of appropriated space. Also underlying the discussion have been the weaknesses and problems associated with the conceptualisation and practice of sociality in appropriated spaces: for example, ‘community’ often entails exclusion – when it means anything at all; ‘encounter’ is associated with bourgeois notions of the public sphere; and ‘experience’ raises the danger of identity politics. These problems will be addressed in the next chapter. Nevertheless, sociality is crucial to understanding appropriation, and to revealing its powerful potential.

- **Openness**

Appropriated spaces are often described as ‘open spaces’. Identifying appropriated space as open suggests notions of exchange, freedom, participation and inclusivity. In the first place, openness

connotes porousness: people, objects and discourses are able to move in and out of appropriated spaces. In instrumental terms, this means that campaigns can be emitted or ‘run’ from the appropriated ‘base’ of operations. In more prefigurative terms, appropriated spaces must be open because that is how we’d like all spaces to be: open to everyone. Describing an appropriated space as ‘open’ also implies that it is recognisable and available to dissidents and their allies, and that it is also therefore an effective resource and an inspiring example. In this sense, openness represents an extension of solidarity to those *outside* the appropriated space.

Openness is also often used to differentiate appropriated spaces from political parties/associations. The former are open to different people and ideas, while the latter are based around ideological unity. A number of theorists offer glowing accounts of ‘open spaces’ vis-à-vis organisations. For example, in his poetic theorisation of the ‘Temporary Autonomous Zone’, Bey sees openness as crucial and essentially subversive (Bey 1991: 103). Another example can be found in Whitaker’s analysis of the World Social Forum, where he describes spaces as ‘open, free, horizontal structures’ in contrast to ‘pyramidal’ organisations and movements (2004: 112). He also argues that,

‘As an open space, the Forum has the possibility of ensuring respect for diversity, unlike if it were a movement’
(Whitaker 2004: 114)

Openness signifies the capacity of appropriated spaces to promote difference with unity – the ‘diverse coalitions’ mentioned above.

However, even this cursory survey makes it clear that openness evokes a host of problems and contentions. To begin with, openness and accessibility frequently clash with other attributes such as safety. There is also great variation in the openness of different appropriated spaces, and relative praise/condemnation of openness by different theorists. And certain political spaces (such as the World Social Forum) are simultaneously criticised for being *too* open and not open *enough* (see International Liaison Committee for a Workers International 2004; Sen 2004; Whitaker 2004). Furthermore, the glorification of openness presented by Whitaker and others rests on dubious assumptions, such as the conflation of proximity and sociality:

‘In the theorisation of the Forum as ‘open space’, the basic but undeclared assumption is that if people come together in a large open space, they will necessarily interact’ (Sen 2004: 214)

Whitaker’s dismissal of movements as essentially hierarchical is also flawed; and in the first place his distinction between a movement and a space is un-theorised.

But the biggest difficulty raised by attributing ‘openness’ to appropriated spaces, is the relationship between openness and opposition. If appropriated spaces are ‘open’ to bourgeois power or worse (racism? fascism?), then they are no longer of any value to emancipatory social movements. And ultimately, appropriated spaces are *not* open to all people or ideas. Instead, appropriated spaces are ‘open’ in opposition to the closure found in dominant spaces. Santiago illustrates this thought process:

‘In that open space will come the words that we all need to define that “another world”. Openness is both a strategy and a goal in a world increasingly constricting to the alternatives it offers to human beings to live a truly human, happy life.’ (Santiago 2004: xv)

But this line of reasoning begs a number of questions: Isn’t ‘openness’ just being used as a synonym for an ‘alternative’? Is ‘open space’ a euphemism, used shyly to avoid calling an appropriated space ‘working class’, ‘feminist’, ‘anti-racist’ or ‘queer’? And if we avoid these political claims, then what basis is there for excluding sexism, racism, homophobia and the ruling class from appropriated space? Many theorists and activists ignore these questions, but I believe that they are of the utmost importance and urgency to understanding and performing the appropriation of space; I will return to them shortly.

- **Autonomy**

The fourth and final attribute of appropriated space that I will discuss is ‘autonomy’. Autonomy has become a popular concept in social movements in recent years: dissidents talk about ‘autonomous struggle’ (of women, people of colour and queers), ‘autonomous spaces’ and some activists identify as ‘autonomists’, although often the precise meaning of each of these terms is unclear. The interest in autonomy appears to have various origins: feminist, anti-racist, queer and anti-colonial struggles have all drawn attention to autonomy, as have anarchist and autonomist Marxist theorists (Cleaver 1979). New Social Movement analysts and post-structuralists also highlight issues such as identity and agency, which are related to ‘autonomy’ (Melucci 1995; Touraine 1974). Appropriated spaces are often connected with autonomy. For example, a flier for the ‘State of Emergency’ activist conference, which took place in a squatted warehouse in Melbourne in 2004 asserts,

‘We squat to resist private property, to create an autonomous space, organised without bureaucracy.’ (State of Emergency Organising Collective).

But ‘autonomy’ also has a variety of meanings. For social movement dissidents, autonomy usually seems to involve the notion of political self-determination, but it also refers to participatory production of (individual and collective) identity, agency and culture. Dissidents also assert ‘autonomy’ from the state and from political parties. Sometimes autonomy refers to a complete rejection of any

form of engagement with the state. In this sense, autonomy is connected with anarchism and the fight for ‘ever-wider spaces of autonomy’ as opposed to the fight for state power (Grubacic 2004: 35). There is a close relationship between many of these ideas and appropriated spaces.¹⁵

The importance of autonomy in appropriated spaces is often related to culture. Along with sociality, Maggio says that the Italian social centres aim to build ‘autonomous identity’, and to, ‘produce and exchange culture outside the capitalist market’ (1997: 234). This connection between autonomy, identity and culture is also important to Alessandro Romano, a founder of the Forte Prenestino Social Centre. Romano describes how the social centres campaign for ‘social uses and autonomy’ in run down areas of cities (1997: 239), and also asserts that:

‘The production of culture is a basic requirement. We need to search for new values, criticise existing social models, fight prejudice and stereotypes, create original viewpoints and individual perspectives, look at things differently. Culture is essential nourishment for the mind.’ (1997: 241)

This reveals the commonly made connection between autonomy, culture and creativity. Another classification for this group of qualities is ‘Do-It-Yourself Culture’ (McKay 1998). Autonomy can also be approached instrumentally: autonomous action (such as squatting) can be a pragmatic strategy in a context where the state does not provide services (such as housing); autonomous production of culture can be a resource for nurturing subcultures of resistance. This last point is illustrated by Kohn’s account of the emergence of fascism in Italy in the 1920s: many years before the fascists outlawed and destroyed workers *organisations*, they destroyed the *spaces* such as the workers cooperatives and the Houses of the People. Kohn concludes,

‘The reason [for this destruction] seems to stem from the recognition that it was these places that nourished democratic culture and solidarity. In a sense, the spaces of resistance were the roots from which the organizations grew’ (Kohn 2003: 127)

This indicates the importance of autonomous cultures of resistance, based in appropriated spaces.

Autonomy is also highly symbolic. The powerful symbolism of a successfully appropriated space is undeniable, and this rests largely on the way it promotes and enacts self-determination. Both participants and the authorities are aware of the symbolic power of appropriated space. Kohn offers an excellent example in the monumental Maison du Peuple of Victor Horta, in Brussels. She notes that monumental spaces are not uncommon, but it is rare for workers to feel ownership over such a

¹⁵ I must note that some of the spaces that I have termed ‘appropriated spaces’ are *not* ‘autonomous spaces’. ‘Autonomous space’ usually refers to a place reserved for and controlled by a certain group (such as women, people of colour or queers) who face a specific form of oppression in all other spaces – including non-autonomous appropriated spaces. On the other hand, many of these ‘autonomous spaces’ could be understood as a special type of appropriated space.

place – and that this symbolism ‘inspired a sense of entitlement that is a precondition to rule’ (Kohn 2003: 25). Romano also asserts:

‘The centres stand for freedom; for the right to exist and to experiment with different ways of providing for basic needs... The right to exist and to let other people see you exist is essential. Visibility is seen as a threat by the establishment. These are real examples that ‘break the rules’. They show that this self-managed alternative lifestyle is possible, useful and often good fun!’ (Romano 1997: 239)

A working manifestation of autonomy is certainly a potent symbol. This is also related to the way that autonomy evokes *agency*. To the extent that appropriation is a form of direct action, it can dramatically reveal a way to exercise agency vis-à-vis an apparently rigid structure – space. The autonomous agency required for the appropriation of space indicates a path from people-as-objects to people-as-subjects. Kohn contends that,

‘During the day, workers were quite literally “objects,” inputs in the production process with only an instrumental value. At the cooperative or the house of the people they could finally be subjects, co-creators of an alternate world. (2003: 153)

The exercise of autonomy through the appropriation of space, reveals the (often hidden) agency that people possess in relation to social structure.

Autonomy is thus an important part of appropriating space – not only in the sense of political self-determination, but also in relation to the production of culture, its symbolic value and the exercise of agency. However, this attribute is not without its problems (as I will discuss below). One problem in particular, is the tendency for autonomy to translate to *localism*. And this can lead to an acceptance of capitalist productions of space – for example in the promotion of local entrepreneurialism. Autonomy without solidarity can also lead to the isolation and thus neutralisation of social movements – particularly if they are confined to the local scale.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the emancipatory potentials of space, and the social movement strategies of contestation, disruption and *détournement*. I then moved on to focus in detail on a fourth strategy – the appropriation of space – which I defined as taking and modifying space in order to serve a group’s emancipatory struggle. After this I offered a basic survey of the most common conceptual tools used by activists and theorists to justify and analyse the appropriation of space: the attributes of safety, sociality, openness and autonomy. ‘Safety’ refers to the way appropriated space

protects dissidents and makes contention possible. 'Sociality' brackets together a set of transformative social processes including encounter, experience, aggregation, and community. 'Openness' is attributed to appropriated spaces to evoke a sense of accessibility, inclusivity and diversity. 'Autonomy' is a political, cultural and symbolic attribute that reveals how appropriated spaces nourish subcultures of resistance and spark transformative agency. Together these attributes begin to reveal the powerful possibilities associated with appropriating space. Unfortunately, they also raise an assortment of problems – conceptually and in practice. In this survey, I have deliberately avoided presenting appropriation as some ideal social movement strategy. Rather I have tried to survey the way appropriation is generally approached, and the political potential which it contains (but does not always fulfil). The rest of this thesis will attempt to move towards a better understanding and practice of appropriation; first through an investigation of its problems, and then through a set of principles for developing its potential.

Chapter 3

The problems with appropriating space

‘The offensive character of immediate action contrasted with an ultimately defensive strategy, the struggle for spaces and subsidies, for autonomous islands in the global city. The consequences of this strategy were most clearly exposed after the long struggle for the autonomous youth centre (AJZ), the movement’s greatest victory and also its most bitter defeat. At the end of June 1980, the city government - to whom the riots had come as a complete surprise - succumbed to the demands of the movement and offered a factory building behind the main railway station along with financial support for refurbishment. The AJZ was the base and focus for the movement. It was not only the stage for agitated and tumultuous plenary meetings, for legendary moments of ecstasy and despair, but also a spectacle for the bourgeois public. In September 1980, the AJZ was closed by official order but opened again in April 1981, under the pressure of heavy demonstrations. For a short summer, it was possible to reanimate the AJZ until - drowning in agony and drug misery - it finally collapsed and was given up by the movement itself as a result of insurmountable problems arising from within and without: the AJZ had become a territorial trap. In March 1982, the public authorities announced the building’s demolition.’

(Schmid 1997: 220)

Introduction

The above account of an autonomous youth centre in Zurich, begins to suggest the sorts of problems that afflict appropriated spaces. These and other problems emerge from just below the surface of the previous chapter’s survey: questions of defensiveness and isolation; practices which are exclusionary and parochial; conceptual flaws such as the naturalisation of spatial attributes and political problems like identity politics or the reproduction of bourgeois privilege. In this chapter I will examine these problems in six sections: instrumentalism, formalism, militant particularism, openness, spatial utopianism and politicisation. These are not discrete categories, but rather overlapping focuses and ways of understanding the problems associated with appropriating space. ‘Instrumentalism’ is the tendency to use space as a tool for achieving some abstract political goal. ‘Formalism’ is the opposite tendency – that which treats the form of an appropriated space as the main focus of political action. ‘Militant particularism’ refers to the isolation and localism of many anti-capitalist struggles. The romanticisation of ‘openness’ can lead to a reproduction of bourgeois privilege and a refusal to define any alternative to capitalist space. ‘Spatial utopianism’ integrates a number of the above problems

into one critique which relates them to temporal processes and class struggle. Finally, the section on ‘politicisation’ addresses the problem of approaching appropriation with an apolitical attitude.

This chapter thus attempts to construct a productive critique of the problems associated with the appropriation of space. I do not consider these problems to be inevitable weaknesses of human nature (as the mainstream press represented them in the ‘expose’ of the *Midnight Star*). Nor can they be dismissed as deriving entirely from externalities such as police behaviour (as many activists are wont to do). Instead, these are problems in social movement theory and practice – which can be addressed (and have been, in certain appropriated spaces). They may be difficulties that often accompany appropriation, but they are not inevitable or irreparable. The solutions which I will explore (in Chapter 4) involve contextualising and politicising spatial appropriation, and bridging some of its tendencies in order to create ‘geographies of power’ and a ‘prefigurative politics’.

The critique I will offer below draws heavily on Harvey’s analysis, and the terms ‘militant particularism’ and ‘spatial utopianism’ come directly from his work. In general this section offers a neo-Marxist critique of appropriation, but the anarchist perspective is still present and will fully emerge again in the next chapter. The Marxist tradition offers one of the most persuasive critiques of practices such as appropriation, and therefore anarchist-influenced dissidents must engage with it if we wish to improve our activity.

The instrumentalist tendency

One set of problems which afflicts appropriated spaces can be understood as a tendency towards ‘instrumentalism’. This tendency is present to some extent in most appropriated spaces (as well as many other social movement spaces which fall outside my definition of appropriation).

Instrumentalism involves conceptualising and producing the space as a tool or resource. Many social movement theorists of the ‘resource mobilisation’ school understand appropriated space in instrumental terms: ‘safe spaces’ are seen as enabling contention and as an opportunity for making claims, but not as an end in themselves (Sewell 2001: 64; Tilly 2000: 146). Other social phenomena are thus positioned as the tool’s materials and objects; appropriated space is a resource for producing some other intervention into capitalist society. Many social movement organisations also adopt an instrumentalist approach to their spaces – trade union offices, political party headquarters, university student associations and women’s health centres for example. A draft proposal for a workers’

organising centre in Sydney, launched by a small group of activists in 2003, describes the space in terms of a *resource* for assisting workers to organise in their industry – particularly through producing a newsletter at the Centre and then distributing it at their workplaces (The Centre for Workers’ Control 2003: 4). However, I should point out that my discussion of instrumentalism is conceptual rather than empirical – no real space is ever completely instrumentalist. In practice, even the most consciously instrumental space tends to become more than a tool, as the attributes of appropriated space come into play: safety, sociality, openness and autonomy traverse and distort the gulf between the instrumentalist and formalist tendencies.

Nevertheless, there are a number of significant problems with appropriating space instrumentally. For a start, the focus on using space as a resource does not fit well with the creativity which Lefebvre admires about appropriation, nor with the emancipatory potential which Kohn ascribes to appropriated spaces. In fact, using space instrumentally is very similar to dominating space, which Lefebvre sees as the brutal and oppressive ‘realization of a master’s project’ – the precise opposite of appropriated space (1991: 165). Lefebvre’s key example of dominated space – a motorway – could equally be used as the example of an instrumentalist approach to space. A related problem with instrumentalism is that it tends to be based on a superficial understanding of space as a natural and abstract container – the ‘bare space’ paradigm. Instrumentalism reifies space by conceptualising it as a resource rather than a social product. This understanding of space undermines the possibility for producing space in emancipatory or creative ways.

Perhaps the most infamous problem associated with instrumentalism is the willingness to ‘break eggs in order to make the omelette’. The chilling utilitarian assertion that the ‘ends justify the means’ appears in many kinds of politics which focus on an idealised future goal to the exclusion of present form. Many spaces of terror(ism), including those constructed by Robespierre, Stalin and George Bush II, have been justified in instrumental terms. These spaces are produced through practices and conceptions which are basically fascist, but they are rationalised with reference to an instrumental ideal – whether this be ‘socialism in one country’ or ‘keeping America safe from terrorists’. Even the most well-meaning instrumentalism can lead to incongruous and authoritarian methods, hierarchical practices, or simply boredom. Often, the messiness, ugliness and tedious lifelessness of an activist space is not a consequence of poverty, but of a disregard for spatial form. The instrumentalist tendency can destroy appropriated spaces – if not through tyranny or hypocrisy, then through neglect.

The 'formalist' tendency

I use the term 'formalist' to identify another problematic approach to appropriation: the tendency to fetishize a certain spatial form, and to see that form as an end in itself. Conceiving, representing and experiencing appropriated space is the prime objective. The instrumentalist and formalist tendencies are therefore opposed in principle: instrumentalism focuses on ends to the exclusion of means, formalism focuses on means to the exclusion of ends. What I call 'formalism' is sometimes indicated by the terms 'lifestylism', 'voluntarism' and 'Do-It-Yourself Culture' – but the attitude I wish to examine is broader than these terms suggest. This tendency is about finding emancipation and satisfaction *in the present*, and through what others see as the means to a political goal. Communes and the 'back-to-the-land' lifestyle are often created and justified through a formalist approach (see for example, Ochre 1995: 149). Formalism views appropriated spaces and their attributes as valuable in and of themselves: they are experimental, inspiring and fun. New Social Movement theorists and anarchists are particularly likely to tend towards formalism. The anarchist theorist Ferrell for example, understands Critical Mass Bike rides as 'spaces of possibility' and argues that, 'a Critical Mass ride carves out spaces of safety and pleasure that otherwise wouldn't exist' (2001: 115). Ferrell also advocates a politics of 'playful pleasure' which ties in with formalism:

'For those fighting the closure of public space, playful pleasure constitutes both the terms of the engagement on which they are willing to fight, and also the sense of possibility, the imagination of an open city for which they fight.' (2001: 235)

In this account, pleasure and the spatial forms which produce pleasure are the focus of activity. Bey also tends towards formalism in his conceptualisation of the Temporary Autonomous Zone. He writes that 'the TAZ is a microcosm of that "anarchist dream" of a free culture' (Bey 1991: 101). Bey is highly critical of those who approach revolution as some future goal, instead the TAZ appears in his work as both revolutionary means and end (1991: 100). Realizing this spatial form in the present is the only meaningful endeavour.

The tendency which I have identified above rarely exists in a pure or discrete form in actual appropriated spaces. But it is useful to consider the tendency in isolation because this clarifies a certain set of problems which distinguish formalism from the 'prefigurative' approach (which I will discuss in the next chapter). To begin with, fetishizing a certain spatial form can divide dissidents from the social movement context. Spatial forms such as the rally, the bookshop or the squatted social centre are only appropriate to certain social contexts – and in other contexts they will not serve the needs of the struggle. Another problem is that the 'politics of fun' can often translate to an apolitical and

individualistic approach to pleasure. Ferrell, for example, sees revolutionary potential in the ‘experiential resistance’ of skateboarders and base jumpers who convert illegal, high risk activities into an ‘infrastructure of extreme excitement’ (2001: 81). But he does not explain how one person parachuting off a tall building or putting a couch in the middle of the street (examples which he analyses at length) will actually make social change – even if these actions are illegal. Another problem with the politics of fun is that numerous capitalist spaces are produced for ‘fun’: ‘pleasure’ is for sale at Disneyland and Darling Harbour, at Sega World and at ‘Space’ nightclub. In these spaces an uncritical pursuit of pleasure leads many ordinary people to accept capitalist exploitation in exchange for a moment’s ‘fun’. Consequently, producing spatial forms purely because they are fun results in appropriated spaces which have little to distinguish them from capitalist spaces – except for their illegality. This critique also applies to the sort of identity politics which may accompany formalism. When the production of radical subjectivity is seen as an end in itself, the personal loses its transgressive political edge. Or as Harvey puts it, the personal is deeply political, but this does not mean that *anything* personal makes for good politics (Harvey 2000: 235). Spatial form, fun, and personal identity are all political, and must be addressed by social movements; but addressing them is not enough to make revolution. Just because a spatial form, identity or mode of fun is disobedient or illegal, does not mean it will produce social change. And if an appropriated space supports a vibrant subculture, but focuses on spatial form with no regard for social change then it becomes politically myopic.¹⁶ This is because in the extreme formalist position the means turn into the ends – appropriation becomes its own *raison d’être*.

¹⁶ Phillipp Klaus illustrates this problem in his description of the (sub)cultural centre ‘Zentralstrasse 150’ in Zurich:

Culture is not the same anymore. At Zentralstrasse 150, creativity was not used to shock the establishment with incredible happenings, to claim space and rights, to fight injustice, transnational corporations and class arrogance, or to establish a different society, but in the first place to create and live culture, to survive financially, to find shelter in interim use, to make a living from a mini-enterprise, and to have fun doing all this; and if necessary to associate with others to find a path into an uncertain future.’ (1997: 98-99)

Klaus’s account depicts a vibrant subculture, but one which is divorced from its originally transformative political agenda; it is only about ‘living’ a cultural form. The spatial forms of a cultural centre or a subculture are not intrinsically radical. The focus on and production of these forms as an end in itself does not guarantee appropriated spaces which are oppositional, radical or connected to social change in any way. This is also the problem with ‘DIY culture’ – it is not necessarily emancipatory, or even political. In his discussion of Italian social centres, Maggio notes that there is a ‘refusal of politics’ by many users (1997: 235). He argues that in this case the refusal does not express a lack of will to take action. But in other appropriated spaces this apoliticism *does* translate into a reluctance to act. A number of SCAN members criticised the way the Midnight Star Social Centre had prioritised social events and neglected political activities like discussions, mutual aid and skill-shares, had been neglected at the Midnight Star Social Centre. Ultimately, the formalist tendency can lead dissidents to lose sight of long-term political goals altogether.

Militant Particularism

‘Militant particularism’ is a way of understanding a set of problems which frequently attend the appropriation of space: isolation, exclusivity, parochialism and the like. In the previous chapter, these problems emerged most strongly in around the issue of ‘community’. Activists often speak about appropriated spaces as ‘community focussed’, or ‘community based’, as if these were obvious and easily realised notions, and sometimes it seems as if the mere presence of the word ‘community’ is meant to invoke an air of legitimacy. The term may once have had a radical edge, but this has changed:

‘Community is a term so overlaid with meaning, and so often deployed, it is sometimes tempting to abandon it as effectively meaningless. Certainly, in policy terms, the radicalisation it heralded in the passionate 70s when community was “a verb, a process” (Kelly, 1984) has shifted to the extent that “community is now one of the most benign nouns of policy discourse” (Fensham, 1994: 189)’ (Barnett 1998: 63)

But describing ‘community’ as a ‘benign’ term ignores the way that the political right uses the discourse of community to enforce unity and crush dissent. And this process is not only discursive: the spatial and social construction of communities tends to have elitist and parochial outcomes. This is clearly visible in the innumerable examples of conservative communitarianism: the proliferating number of ‘gated communities’; the ‘not-in-my-backyard’ politics of certain residents’ action groups; fascist gangs; and government rhetoric about ‘quality of life’ in ‘urban villages’ (Eigo 2002).

It is undeniable that bourgeois definitions of ‘community’ are elitist, parochial and oppressive. However, the real concern (for my discussion) is that the same problems of ‘community’ can affect spaces appropriated by activists. Squatted social centres and the like can become introspective, isolated, dissident ‘ghettoes’, as their critics frequently point out. And this is where the theory of ‘militant particularism’ can be useful. Harvey adopts this concept from Raymond Williams in order to refer to the way that many anti-capitalist struggles remain rooted in place-specific concerns and aspirations (Harvey 2000: 55). He also links this trap in the class struggle to the uneven geography of capitalism (2000:71). And Harvey points out that there are innumerable pockets of anti-capitalist struggle around the world, from right wing militias in the Michigan woods to striking workers in Paris. But the trouble is,

‘this opposition, though militant, often remains particularist (sometimes extremely so) and often threatens to coalesce around exclusionary and populist-nationalist political movements.’ (2000: 71)

This sort of isolating and parochial militancy is unable to seriously challenge the capitalist system, and is often translates to insularity, exclusivity, and pro-capitalist localism

The theory of militant particularism helps to explain these problems and encourages us to work on solutions. This is because the theory of militant particularism locates these issues in the framework of class struggle, allowing us to understand them as political problems. This understanding refutes the common belief that these issues are unavoidable weaknesses of ‘human nature’ which must therefore be accepted. Realising that they are socio-political creations opens up the possibility for changing them; collectively and politically we can find solutions to the problems associated with militant particularism.

Militant particularism is obviously bound up with localism, place and scale. Both activists and theorists often look for solutions to the violence and uncertainty of capitalist globalisation in the local scale. For example, Hamm argues that cities should,

‘delink from global trends wherever possible, and turn their attention towards the interests of the local and regional populations’ (Hamm 1997: 155).

To some, the local level also appears to offer increased opportunities for democratisation: ‘A city is a chance to build a democracy of proximity’ assert Borja and Castells (1997: 246). More instrumentally, Lefkowitz asserts that the local scale is where social movements have leverage; we must act where we are and thus where our defiance matters (Lefkowitz 2002: 77). The tendency towards localism is often associated with autonomy and anarchism, even though anarchists such as Kropotkin stressed that the abstraction of social relations in the nation-state is the problem – not the scale at which they occur (Huston 1997: 126). Nevertheless, localism is a popular refuge which is also serious limitation to anti-capitalist struggle. The basic issue is that the ‘local’ scale is no less of an oppressive, capitalist production of space than the ‘global’, and that localised struggles can be too easily neutralised and crushed. The theory of militant particularism explains localism in terms of the class struggle:

‘workers’ movements have been better at commanding power in places and territories than in controlling spatialities with the result that the capitalist class has used its superior powers of spatial manoeuvre to defeat place-bound proletarian/socialist revolutions’ (Harvey 2000: 38)

According to Harvey, workers movements are often defeated by capital because working class power is limited to places and the local scale, while capitalists control global space. This critique locates what I have termed ‘appropriated spaces’ in the inferior category of place-bound struggle.¹⁷

¹⁷ This critique can be traced back to Marx’s fierce criticism of the utopian ventures which sought to found communist colonies in the Americas. In his response to one such project proposed by Etienne Cabet, Marx argued that,

‘a few hundred or thousand people cannot establish and continue a communal living situation without it taking on an absolutely exclusive and sectarian nature’ (Marx cited in Marin 1990: 277)

Marx asserted that the appropriation of some faraway space could never bring about a communist society – in that space or in Europe. Instead, Marx pleaded with communists to stay in Europe and unite in international struggle for revolution (Marx in Marin 1990: 274). Even though the appropriated spaces I am examining remain in the ‘centre’ as Marx wished, they are still susceptible to the sectarianism which he associated with colonies. Harvey’s theorisation of militant particularism helps to explain how this parochialism can occur in an urban context.

Militant particularism is not confined to a certain agenda or politics; it is a rejection of political engagement. It can be present in both the instrumentalist and the formalist tendencies. For example, an instrumentalist workers' organising centre may remain isolated from the working class struggle as a whole, just as a formalist commune might model ecological sustainability but be completely detached from the broader environmental movement. Any appropriated space may remain isolated and closed – regardless of politics. And this is the basic problem: isolation/particularism is a refusal of political engagement with wider society and hence tends to the conservative. The solution to this (according to Harvey and others) is to bring struggles into some sort of institutional relation to each other, and connect them to a broader radical politics (2000: 244 and 240). Schmid reaches similar conclusions in his analysis of the 'autonomous youth centre' in Zurich (with which I began this chapter). He sees the demand for spaces as a 'territorial trap' (Agnew's term) and contrasts the fight for 'islands' within the city with the struggle for the whole city. For Schmid, as for Harvey, the lesson to be drawn from the experience of militant particularism in appropriated spaces is that interstitial spaces must be *connected* (Schmid 1997: 224). This analysis moves my discussion of appropriated space towards the question of politicisation and 'geographies of power' (to be addressed below). Theorists such as Harvey and Schmid understand the problems of parochialism, isolation and exclusion in terms of the (a)political and localised agenda of a space – which results in a limited militant particularism. These problems must therefore be addressed politically and trans-spatially.

Romanticising openness

Dissidents who create appropriated spaces are often aware that ghetto-ism/particularism is a constant danger. They also wish appropriated spaces to be an alternative zone where all are welcome and equal (vis-à-vis capitalist society). Both of these contribute to the emphasis on openness. The difficulty is that 'openness' can be just as problematic, and indeed conservative, as particularism. In practice, romanticising 'openness' can translate to a refusal of definition, and thus an acceptance of damaging behaviour such as violence, drug abuse or prejudice (sexism, racism and the like). Describing a space as 'open' can also disguise and justify bourgeois privilege, as it does in the notion of the 'public sphere'.

These problems with openness can be seen in a number of activist and academic accounts of appropriated space. Lefebvre, for example falls back on a romanticisation of openness. He frames the alternative to closed capitalist space in terms of an open ‘potentiality’ and ‘difference’ (1991: 349).

Harvey complains:

‘For him [Lefebvre], the production of space must always remain as an endlessly open possibility. The effect, unfortunately, is to leave the actual spaces of any alternative frustratingly undefined.’ (Harvey 2000: 183)

Lefebvre’s resort to undefined openness means that we are left without any idea of what an alternative to capitalist space could be. For Harvey the underlying problem is that, ‘to materialize a space is to engage with closure’ and evading this problem of closure is to ‘embrace an agonistic romanticisation of perpetually unfulfilled longing and desire’ (2000: 183). Harvey applies a similar critique to Foucault’s concept of ‘heterotopia’, which is consistent with the postmodernist ideals of difference, fluidity and openness, but does not offer any actual alternative to the dominant social order:

‘The cemetery and the concentration camp, the factory, the shopping malls and Disneylands, Jonestown, the militia camps, the open plan office, New Harmony, ‘privatopia’, and ‘ecotopia’ are all sites of alternative ways of doing things and therefore in some sense ‘heterotopic.’ What appears at first sight as so open by virtue of its multiplicity suddenly appears either as banal (an eclectic mess of heterogeneous and different spaces within which anything ‘different’ – however defined – might go on) or as a more sinister fragmentation of spaces that are closed, exclusionary, and even threatening’ (Harvey 2000: 185)

Thus, romanticising openness can actually lead back to banality or even closed conservatism. This is because ‘openness’ can simply mean rejecting the possibility of imagining or creating a real alternative. Bey’s poetic theorisation of the Temporary Autonomous Zone follows a similar trajectory: he glorifies openness but ultimately shrouds the TAZ in mystery and leaves its politics undefined (1991: 103). Bey uses beautiful imagery, but his subversion of politics through openness may not work in a revolutionary direction.

The danger of romanticising an evasive openness is found not only in the explicit description of insurgent appropriated spaces as ‘open’, but also in the glorification of the ‘public sphere’, civil society and processes such as ‘encounter’. According to a number of critics, the ‘public sphere’ and related notions such as Habermas’ deliberative democracy cannot escape their bourgeois origins.¹⁸ The bourgeois public sphere claims egalitarian universalizability (openness), but ultimately excludes

¹⁸ Kohn, for example launches a forceful critique of the public sphere based on its origins in secrecy, exclusivity, individualism, patriarchy and hierarchy (2003: 27-44). She points out that the supposedly open and egalitarian ‘public sphere’ developed in exclusive cafés, gentlemen’s clubs and hierarchical secret organisations like the Masons (2003: 30-34). Moreover, the very notion of the public sphere presupposed,

‘a realm of interiority, subjectivity, and privacy in which the bourgeois man experienced himself as an individual and developed the convictions that he would bring into public debate.’ (Kohn 2003: 34)

This private realm wasn’t (and still isn’t) available to workers whose homes tend to be noisy, overcrowded and uncomfortable.

workers, women and others. Critics such as Negt and Kluge suggest that the notion of universality actually disguises bourgeois economic interests as general interests (1993). The notion of ‘encounter’ is implicated in this critique, as Grell et al argue:

‘While it is clear that conflicts around inner city space have intensified, we have to avoid the notion that public space was once a place of encounter and is only threatened by current developments. This liberal idea of public space assumes that the possibility of encounter is a positive aspect in terms of confronting prejudices and inducing communication and learning processes. Yet, even if hierarchies and obstacles within these processes are acknowledged, such a view ultimately reduces the perception of public space as a container for social behaviour... In contrast, following Massey (1992) and Ruddick (1996a: b), we would assert that public space was always constituted through the specific exclusion of certain groups’ (1997: 210)

This reveals how ‘openness’ and the bourgeois notion of ‘public space’ are not only exclusionary in practice, but also return to a bare understanding of space as a container. Some commentators make a similar critique of that pre-eminent ‘open space’ – the World Social Forum:

‘The WSF has presented itself, since its inception, as a Forum for ‘civil society.’ The very concept of ‘civil society’, which is so popular of late, erases the borders between social classes that exist in society.’ (International Liaison Committee for a Workers International 2004: 162)

Because of its romanticisation of openness, the WSF has encountered difficulties (such as whether or not to allow heads of state to speak), and (according to some) has become marked by internal hierarchies and bourgeois ideology (Revolutionary Writers Association in WSF 2004: 284). The consideration of ‘openness’ in the context of the ‘public sphere’ reveals how forms such as ‘openness’ and ‘universalism’ can actually disguise a simple acceptance of the normative order of bourgeois privilege. The rhetoric of ‘global cosmopolitanism’ can be subjected to a similar critique: Postmodern cosmopolitanism ‘appears to treat displacement and exile as a simple opportunity to detach (at least for the privileged)’ (James 2002: 7). Ultimately, ‘openness’ cannot present a solution to particularism – both forms tend to reproduce elitism, bourgeois privilege and the like. Instead, all of these apparently contrasting problems (openness and particularism, globalism and localism) are in fact interrelated, and require some deeper political solution.

Spatial utopianism

For Harvey, the rejection of particularism and romanticised openness are part of a broader critique of ‘utopianisms of spatial form’ (see Chapter 1). Harvey argues that oppositional spatial utopias degenerate into compliance with the status quo because time takes hold of them in their materialisation (the spaces initially attempt to deny and control temporal processes). This helps to explain the process I critiqued above, whereby different spaces created with an anti-capitalist agenda and with contrasting tendencies reproduce similar forms of inequality and bourgeois privilege. Many of the criticisms of appropriation which have surfaced (including of instrumentalism and formalism, particularism and openness) can be situated within the broader critique of spatial utopianism. In other words, I believe that many appropriated spaces fall into the trap of spatial utopianism.

Understanding the problems of appropriation in terms of spatial utopianism suggests that these problems originate in an attempt to reject or control temporal processes. Certainly, appropriated spaces are almost always *temporary* – and accepting this temporariness can translate to a rejection of a long term struggle for change. A Reclaim the Streets party (which some see as an appropriated space) lasts a few hours; squatted social centres tend to be evicted after a few weeks or months (in the Australian context anyway); rented cultural centres and communes may last for years but their future is always unsure. And some even claim this temporariness is an advantage: Bey argues that the Temporary Autonomous Zone is superior to a ‘successful’ revolution, because the latter is doomed to follow the cycle of rebellion, reaction, betrayal and repression (1991: 99). But in Bey’s account it is as if the TAZ appears and disappears *instantaneously*, thereby avoiding definition; not only does this leave these spaces frustratingly indistinct, but it also means that the TAZ ultimately appears to exclude time and processes of change – it is a spatial utopia in Harvey’s sense. This exclusion of time also gives Bey’s radical poetics a somewhat defeatist tint because he implies that the world will never be free of political control – so the only option is to seek ‘freedom’ in the present through the TAZ (1991: 98 and 133). In the final analysis, this translates to a rejection of the possibility of building struggle over a period of time.

The problem of time and sustained struggle raises the question of the state and the meaning of ‘revolution’. For many critics, the main problem with spatial utopianism is its refusal to engage with the state. Indeed, the TAZ is meant to disappear before it even comes into contact with the state (Bey 1991: 101). For those who define revolution in terms of overthrowing the bourgeois state this means

that spatial utopianism is not revolutionary (or even counter-revolutionary). In his response to Cabet's utopian plans, Marx argued that the refusal to confront the state was a mistake and would ultimately mean defeat for all (cited in Marin 1990: 273). Marx believed that the only hope for communism lay in a revolutionary confrontation with bourgeois government, and that utopian colonies would inevitably be crushed by state-sanctioned 'persecutions' 'from the outside' (cited in Marin 1990: 277). Ever since, the question of engaging with the state has been crucial to debates between Marxists and anarchists, and within various streams of anarchism. According to some, the lack of a sustained revolutionary program means that appropriated spaces can only be temporary alternatives waiting to be crushed by the state. Worse still, appropriated spaces can function as a palliative,

'mending the problems that would otherwise threaten the stability and cohesion of the system which allows it to continue to function' (Mayer 1997: 261)

In this analysis, the distinction is between a sustained revolutionary challenge (usually framed in terms of a Party) and an episodic politics of self-indulgent events. However, this dichotomy (between Party politics and utopian separatism) is misleading. There are many commentators who address the question of the state in a more nuanced way: Chomsky for example refers to the metaphor of 'expanding the floor of the cage' to suggest a strategy of engaging with (and even defending) the state in the face of private power, but at the same time recognising that it is a cage which we must ultimately destroy (Chomsky 1997: 1). In connection with this strategy, Chomsky refers to anarchists in the third world. In this light, the Indigenous land occupations in Chiapas and Brazil can reveal how appropriating space may be able to fit into a strategy which engages with (and challenges) the state but also seeks radical alternatives. This also begins to suggest how appropriated spaces can avoid spatial utopianism, and relate to time and the state in a more productive fashion.

Although there certainly are problems with spatial utopianism, we must be careful not to fall into the equally problematic 'utopianism of social process' (Harvey 2000:173). One example of temporal utopianism can be found in the orthodox Marxist treatment of space as static and time as dialectical (which I discussed in the 'bare space' section of Chapter 1). This approach considers *all* forms of spatial appropriation to be utopian separatism, and argues that the only valid strategy is to build a state-focussed revolutionary Party. This involves an idealisation of temporal processes and an attempt to control or reject the complexities of space; and this can only have tragic outcomes, according to Harvey (2000: 178). So,

'Given the defects and difficulties of utopias of both spatial form and social process, the most obvious alternative (other than total abandonment of any pretense at utopianism whatsoever) is to build a utopianism that is explicitly spatiotemporal.' (Harvey 2000: 182)

This spatiotemporal utopianism, or ‘dialectical utopianism’ as Harvey also calls it, suggests a useful path for developing a better analysis and practice of appropriating space – in conjunction with social process and class struggle. And for Harvey, a crucial part of dialectical utopianism is connecting the spatial construction of community to the temporal processes of radical insurgent politics.

The need for politicisation

I have examined the problems of instrumentalism and formalism, particularism and openness, and linked these to a broader critique of spatial utopianism. Throughout this discussion, a major undercurrent has been the question of politicisation. For many commentators the key problem with appropriating space is that it is ‘apolitical’. Kohn explains that, ‘there is nothing intrinsically democratic or emancipatory about “protected spaces”’ (2003: 23). Even the attributes of ‘safety’, ‘sociality’, ‘openness’ and ‘autonomy’ do not have any *inherent* connection to emancipatory and transformative struggles – they can re-create bourgeois privilege, and they are not incompatible with racist, sexist or fascist productions of space. But at the same time space is not inherently conservative – there is an emancipatory potential in appropriated space. This ambiguity in space leads commentators such as Polletta to conclude that ‘ideological content’ or ‘cultural characteristics’ (as opposed to spatial properties) provide the basis for counter-hegemonic challenges (cited in Kohn 2003: 105). Similarly, Harvey argues that ‘The task is then to define an alternative’ (2000: 196);

‘the re-making and re-imagining of community will work in progressive directions only if it is connected en route to a more generalised radical insurgent politics.’ (2000: 240)

In both these accounts, the problems with appropriation can only be solved through politicisation. This perspective helps to explain why certain problems contrast but do not remedy each other (such as openness and particularism, or temporal utopianism and spatial utopianism). Each of the problems actually indicates the need for a radical politicisation of appropriation.

However, this point about politicisation can be easily misinterpreted. One might read the above paragraph and infer that the solution to the problems of appropriation is to fill appropriated spaces with a radical ideology. This banal conclusion contradicts the very basis of understanding space as produced. Attempting to ‘fill’ appropriated spaces with a revolutionary politics is to return to a bare understanding of space, and the most vulgar instrumentalism. Kohn criticises Polletta in this vein:

‘To restate this [Polletta’s] challenge in terms of our own subject, fascism and socialism may both have built heterotopic sites, but what distinguished them was the opposing content of their ideology. This claim, however

rests on the debatable assumption that ideology has no effect on spatial practices. Although it is true that one cannot deduce politics from spatial arrangements (or vice versa), certain spatial arrangements are more or less suited to particular goals. Because fascism and socialism had different political purposes, they used space in different ways.' (Kohn 2003: 105)

Kohn reveals here that politicisation must extend beyond 'ideological content' and into spatial practice and spatial framing. Harvey's demand that community-making be connected to radical politics cannot be met by a dogmatic and mechanical appeal to 'ideology'. Instead, as Kohn implies, the politicisation of appropriation must involve radicalising the very production of space: conceptions, practices and representations of appropriated spaces must all be tied to an emancipatory and transformative agenda.

Politicisation is about weaving a radical insurgent politics into both the form and the broader vision of an appropriated space. In cases of extreme formalism where there is no transformative agenda at all, politicisation requires the construction of this agenda. In cases of bare instrumentalism politicisation requires revolutionising spatial forms, concepts and practices. Politicisation involves, to use Harvey's terms, a combination of 'rule-making' (in the sense of defining a community and its politics), and 'rule-breaking' (challenging the rules, politics and the very existence of that community) (2000: 239). Harvey also understands this process as negotiating between the required closure of defined spatial forms, and the necessity of remaining open to new social processes (2000: 243).

Thus, politicisation refers back to spatio-temporal utopianism; both imply a dialectical connection of form and political agenda, present means and future ends, space and time, and community and class struggles. And this returns us to praxis – the revolutionary combination of theory and practice, consciousness and action. In the next chapter I will argue for the construction of 'geographies of power', 'prefigurative politics' and a variety of bridging strategies, as a way to respond to the need for politicisation. It is in these ideas that we can find solutions to the problems of appropriating space.

Conclusion

There is a tangle of problems which threaten to ensnare and undermine any attempt to appropriate space. In this chapter I attempted to unpick this knot by drawing out six of its major strands: instrumentalism, formalism, militant particularism, romanticising openness, spatial utopianism, and the need for politicisation. Instrumentalism and formalism are contrasting tendencies – the first

produces boring or oppressive spatial forms because space is dismissed as a means to some ideal end; the second sees spatial form as an end in itself and so tends towards self-indulgence, identity politics and political myopia. Militant particularism offers a useful way of analysing the isolation, elitism and localism which are so frequently associated with community-making; these problems can be understood as part of the class struggle and can therefore be addressed politically – perhaps through linking different sites of insurgence. Romanticising openness is associated with bourgeois notions of the public sphere, and can facilitate the reproduction of normative social hierarchies (or worse) within an appropriated space. Harvey’s contrast of spatial utopianism with temporal utopianism explains the danger of attempting to reject/control either space or time. And this critique thus undermines one-sided strategies such as utopian separatism and Marxist teleology. The need for politicisation formed a common thread through all this discussion: appropriating space must be bound up with a radical politics in both form and agenda, in order to overcome its problems. And in this politicisation of appropriation, spatio-temporal connections and combinations are of utmost importance – they will be my focus in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Realising the potential of appropriated spaces

‘The architect shapes and preserves long-term social memories and strives to give material form to the longings and desires of individuals and collectivities. The architect struggles to open spaces for new possibilities, for future forms of social life.’

(Harvey 2000: 200)

Introduction

In this chapter I will explore a series of strategies and political principles which suggest ways to improve the theory and practice of appropriating space. This discussion is also an attempt to develop a better framework for understanding appropriation than the four attributes I surveyed in Chapter 2, and for addressing the problems exposed in Chapter 3. This chapter is divided into five parts on: space and time, the social and the spatial, geographies of power, class and community, and prefigurative politics. One theme that runs throughout is the need to overcome divisions and bridge strategies and concepts (but without conflating them). I will seek to lift certain entities out of opposition and place them into more productive associations (such as space, time, and social movements, local and global scales, class and community, present means, future ends and everyday needs). And this is why the figure of the architect offers an evocative analogy; the architect has agency in the face of space and time, and imagines the future but builds in the material present. The architect also brings design to the process of construction, which this fits in with another of this chapter’s themes: turning the production of space into a conscious and political endeavour. The principles and tactics I will suggest arise from the analysis in previous chapters, but also seek to locate appropriation in a broader political framework. And while I may present these ideas as tactical ‘principles’, I do not mean to suggest that they are axiomatic or absolute laws. Rather they are meant to be contributions to an ongoing dialogue and development of appropriation – which will continue in future actions (and reflections). This chapter not only suggests that appropriated spaces are potentially vital to anti-capitalist mobilisation, but also proposes ways to realise that potential.

Space and time

In the previous chapter I argued that many of the problems with appropriation (and other practices) are related to privileging space over time or vice versa. Instead, we must theorise a tighter and more explicit connection between space and time. While this is a conceptual principle, it also has concrete ramifications. Asserting that space and time are inseparable may be a truism (in social reality as well as in physics) but it is a truth which is nevertheless ignored or poorly theorised. Harvey's 'spatiotemporal utopianism' is a useful way of conceptualising the link between space and time, which he elaborates through the analogy of the architect (2000: 182 and 200). The architect works in space and time, she lives in the world but also strives to change it, she opens up spaces of possibility but also defines and materialises. For Harvey, construing ourselves as radical architects can help us to appreciate our own agency and to productively realise the connection between space and time.¹⁹ This analogy also begins to reveal how connecting space and time lays the basis for the other tactical principles I will address, such as embedding spaces in movements, paying attention to real geographical contexts, and producing anti-capitalist alternatives. However, for Harvey, spatiotemporal utopianism and the architect remain a utopian ideal – he does not seem to see any possibility for producing real spaces along these lines. He tends to refer to spatiotemporal utopianism and architecture in terms of a 'language', 'communication' and a 'thought experiment' (2000: 230, 231 and 238).

Space and time must also be connected in more concrete ways. Kohn, for example refers to the connection of space and time in her discussion of radical spaces in Italy. She says of these 'spaces of resistance':

In a political movement these spaces facilitate and deepen the connection between militants and supporters of the cause as well as between times of mobilization and normal periods. (2003: 156)

This points to the interrelationship between appropriated spaces, movements and sustained mobilisation over time. For Kohn, the Italian Houses of the People and similar spaces were *real* manifestations of a connection between space and time – they brought people together and linked different times in the cycle of struggle. Another example of a concrete connection between space, time and liberation is provided by Romano: after discussing the 'liberation of space' in the form of

¹⁹ Harvey borrows and develops the architect analogy from Marx:

'the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality' and he 'not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose' (Marx cited in Harvey 2000: 200).

Italian social centres today, Romano connects this to the 'liberation of time' in relation to work and the workplace. Romano writes,

There are definitely more issues on the agenda than simply creating 'free spaces' and possibilities of intervention in the city. We now need to liberate 'time', the whole extent of our life-time, not just what remains of it after days spent in waged work and lost energy.' (1997: 241)

This call to liberate space and time also invokes the anarchist demand that we strive to realise (spatiotemporal) utopias in reality, and in the present. The connection of space and time emerges not only as a material fact of life, but as a principle which must be adopted in order to realise the potential of appropriated spaces.

The social and the spatial

Like space and time, the spatial and the social are often divided and ranked, when it would be better if they were constructively bridged. All of the problems I addressed in the previous chapter involve prioritising the spatial while disregarding the social, or vice versa. Appropriated spaces are often produced either as an inferior instrument of, or as a substitute for transformative social struggle. And spaces and movements are often analysed in isolation from each other. It is striking how many studies of the 'globalisation movement', for example, pay little attention to the movement's appropriated spaces, while analyses of squatted social centres in Europe pay little attention to transnational social movements (compare for example Goodman 2002a and Wolff et al 1997). Addressing these problems requires a more dialectical theorisation of the relationship between spaces and social struggle – where they are understood as distinct yet productively related. This connection of space and struggle could also be a response to the need for a politicisation of appropriation. In fact, there is already a close relationship between spaces and social movements in practice: appropriated spaces originate in social movements and movements originate in these spaces. Numerous studies suggest this, including Tilly's examination of 18th and 19th century contention in Paris and London (2000), Sewell's analysis of Chinese student insurgency in Beijing university campuses (2001), Kohn's research on radical spaces in pre-fascist Italy (2003), Wilton and Cranford's report on class struggle at a Los Angeles University (2002), and Katsiaficas' investigation of squats and European social movements (1997) to name a few. These examples begin to suggest how the spatial and social are connected implicitly, and how they could and should be connected more explicitly. An analysis of the spatial and the social also raises the question of the relationship between spaces and organisations. My discussion of spaces and social

movements sheds light on this issue but will not delve into organisational form, which constitutes a whole topic area in its own right.²⁰

Understanding and developing the productive interdependence between appropriated spaces and social movements requires that those spaces be consciously produced as oppositional alternatives to capitalist society – not simply as enclaves, elitist communities or minority subcultures. And to be alternatives to capitalism these spaces must be embedded in social struggle – the struggle of the working class, women, people of colour, queers and for the earth’s environment. Thus embedded, the spaces might be able to transcend their local form, and the sectarianism Marx ascribes to the utopian colonies. They might also transcend their temporariness: the state will continue to crush appropriated spaces, but their impact will live on if they are connected to a sustained movement, which in turn lives on in other spaces. And within a transformative movement, the radical subjectivities of those appropriating space translate to more than identity politics. The flip side to this politicisation of appropriation is the (equally important) imperative that emancipatory social movements take seriously the project of appropriating space. Space and social movements must be connected – in theory and in practice.

There are a number of promising local examples of appropriated spaces which have consciously attempted to connect space and social struggle. One example is Tranby College in Sydney: Kevin Cook describes how Tranby was started up with the aid of unions and church groups for the purpose of Aboriginal education, but over the years became a meeting point for indigenous activists from around the world, as well as the starting point of the ‘Survival’ concerts and of the movement against Aboriginal deaths in custody (Cook 2003: 51-52). Other possible examples of how to bridge spatial appropriation and social struggle might include Trades Hall in Melbourne, and the Grand Midnight Star social centre in Sydney. Both of these have been important in the globalisation movement. However even in these promising examples, the relationship between the spatial and the social has been at times ambivalent or even suppressed. This diffidence needs to be addressed – in material geography and in consciousness.

²⁰ It is, however, worth noting that ‘spaces’ and ‘organisations’ are different things – even if space is sometimes used as a metaphor for the discursive field of an organisation. It is true that appropriated spaces tend to be formed by organisations (or convergences of organisations), but spaces provide opportunities for non-instrumental activity and a diversity of opinions, which organisations are less able to accommodate. It is therefore not surprising that appropriated spaces seem to be most often connected with flat and decentralised organisational forms such as the network.

Producing geographies of power

Producing ‘geographies of power’ means connecting sites, scales and types of spaces, but also consciously producing a certain space in a particular way. Our world is already scarred by a capitalist geography of power – a set of interconnected spaces and scales which empowers a global elite; our goal is to produce a proletarian alternative. Kohn argues that appropriated spaces – in connection with each other and through connecting various struggles can help to create this sort of a ‘geography of power’ (2003: 64). Appropriated spaces might represent nodes on this web of power – nodes where different social movements and sorts of power can aggregate.

The strategy of connecting sites, scales and types of spaces is conceptualised in a number of ways.

Schmid emphasises the need to link interstitial sites of resistance at the urban level:

‘the different interstitial spaces hardly cohere, even if they are often side by side - they form isolated, ephemeral islands in a fragmented urban region. The crucial problem is how to link these spaces, and how to create a new, linked urban space.’ (Schmid 1997: 224)

This sort of horizontal linking is a difficult task, but one which is of the utmost importance; I will return to it below in the discussion of class and community struggles. Other theorists emphasise the importance of connecting *scales*:

‘to the extent that movements can move across scales – that is, to the extent that they can take advantage of the resources at one scale to overcome constraints encountered at different scales in the way that more powerful actors can do – they may have greater potential for pressing their claims. (Staheli 1994: 388)

Brecher et al also recommend the tactic of connecting and moving between scales:

‘the choice of spatial scale is not “either/or” but “both/and” even though the latter entails confronting serious contradictions’ (Brecher et al 2000: 37).

The connection of both sites and scales is one way to overcome the debilitating localism of appropriated space. One often cited example of this sort of tactical move is the Zapatistas’ use of the internet to garner international support; this support gained at the global scale buffered their local struggle against the terrorism of the Mexican government. A complementary conception of this strategy is presented by Chin and Mittelman, who argue that movements can and should use technology to ‘simultaneously occupy local, national, transnational and/or global space’ (2000: 34). This depicts the connection of different *types* of space – which also suggests linking virtual or discursive spaces (like the internet or realm of art) with physical spaces (like squatted social centres). However, the notion of connecting sites and scales should not refer to glorifying ‘global’ actors (such as the privileged elite of high profile NGO executives, for example). Some social movement theorists

fall into this trap and so overlook broader and more participatory forms of struggle (see for example Keck and Sikkink 1998; McCarthy 1997). Instead, producing geographies of power means thinking/acting locally *and* globally. This might be described as ‘globalisation from below’ (Brecher et al 2000), or a ‘transnational strategy’ as Goodman puts it:

‘transnational strategy means exploiting transnational channels for mobilisation, but also engaging with local and national contexts, with questions of state power and nationalism’ (2002b: xxiii)

This suggests a combined local/global strategy where different scales and spaces are connected or engaged simultaneously – but no one scale or space is privileged.

Appropriated spaces can and should play an important role in this sort of local/global strategy. Not only are they interstitial sites which embody a global movement in a specific locality, but they can actually *be* the link between different scales and types of space – consider for example, the free internet access to be found at many organising centres. ‘Local’ spaces are often the best means for constructing ‘global’ solidarity. Kohn maintains,

‘We should be careful about juxtaposing locality and cosmopolitanism. Spaces such as the chambers of labor [which were similar to the Houses of the People] actually challenged the political logic of territoriality (the nation state) and fostered identification with the international workers’ movement.’ (2003: 162)

The production of geographies of power is bound up with the construction of (global) solidarity, and in both these processes appropriated spaces can play a key role:

‘sites of resistance create geographies of power. Solidarity was not an automatic expression of the mode of production but rather the result of thinking and acting together. It was created through encounters at the cooperative store, or bar’ (Kohn 2003: 76)

Kohn makes a convincing case for the importance of appropriated spaces to the creation of solidarity. A similar way of conceptualising solidarity and the production of geographies of power is through the Autonomist Marxist theory of ‘class recomposition’. And once again, there is a clear role for appropriated spaces. Krasivij associates the Italian social centres with class recomposition:

‘Spreading across all of Italy during the eighties, as moments of social aggregation and resistance, today they [the social centres] constitute – from north to south – an enormously important network of territorial recomposition.’ (1996: 8)

The production of geographies of power (and solidarity and class recomposition) requires appropriated spaces, but also suggests a way for these spaces to overcome weaknesses such as localism and the need for politicisation.

However the construction of geographies of power, must involve more than *connecting* sites/scales: it must also comprise a careful *production* of the spaces in question. Many of the problems which I have

examined occur because those who appropriate space continue on some level to treat space as *natural*. The attributes of safety, sociality, openness and autonomy are regarded as naturally occurring, and so dissidents expect them to appear spontaneously as soon as a space is reclaimed. In fact, these attributes must be consciously produced, and in such a way as to overcome problems like particularism. Our spaces must be *made* safe, social, autonomous or whatever – through our conceptions, practices and representations. This insight is the precondition for realising the potential of appropriated spaces. For example, to realise the transformative potential of ‘encounter’ (and to separate it from its bourgeois associations) requires the production of a certain spatial frame: two strangers who bump into each other on the street will not have a transformative meeting, but this transformation may occur in the context of a social centre – if it is produced to intensify the possibility of transformative encounter.²¹ Similarly, ‘sociality’ and ‘community’ must be produced in certain (de-commodified) ways.²² The way that we produce appropriated spaces determines whether they will fulfil the possibilities suggested in my original survey of appropriation. And this production of appropriated spaces demands that we define the actual rules and practices of the space. As Harvey points out, any material space must,

‘face up to the materialist problems of authority and closure. Closure (the making of something) of any sort contains its own authority because to materialize any one design, no matter how playfully construed, is to foreclose, in some cases temporarily but in other instances relatively permanently, on the possibility of materializing others. We cannot evade such choices.’ (2000: 196)

Harvey’s argument is that we must accept that actually producing an alternative vision involves some sort of closure, and that as insurgent architects, we must employ our rule-making and rule-breaking capabilities: rules must be made with legitimate authority and broken if they are not (2000: 239). We must engage with the closure of producing space in a certain way – and consciously make sure that this way is emancipatory, democratic and empowers the working class.²³ ‘Openness’ must not be

²¹ This phenomenon is analysed by Kohn in her description of the encounter between government soldiers and socialist workers in Turin during 1919-20 (2003:65-67). The encounter occurred in the spatial context of cooperative bars and Houses of the People which resulted in the conventions of hospitality and camaraderie winning out. The soldiers were won over by the socialists. She concludes that,

‘The transformative potential of encounters lies precisely in the possibility of suspending certain aspects of reality in order to intensify others’ (2003: 68)

Thus, the way that the space of the encounter is produced, determines the outcome of the encounter.

²² Maggio argues that Italy’s social centres are,

‘places where there is giving and receiving outside the commodity system, in which sociality is based on values other than those of profit and competition: inclusion instead of exclusion; solidarity; equality; the overcoming of imposed roles and of hierarchies.’ (1997: 235)

This suggests that we must produce a certain *type* of sociality; we cannot expect radical sociality to emerge naturally in any space controlled by dissidents. Similarly, dissidents must not fall into the trap of accepting hegemonic definitions of ‘community’. Instead we must consciously produce community – whether this production be local, activist, working class or something else.

²³ One useful example of the necessity for closure comes in response to the issue of hard drugs. Drug abuse has destroyed many experiments in appropriation (Schmid 1997: 220), and therefore a number of appropriated spaces such as Christiania in Denmark have adopted a ‘no death drugs’ policy – they are closed to certain drugs. Similarly, at dance

romanticised or understood in a mechanical sense – this just reproduces the maladies of capitalist society. Instead we must define our spaces as anti-capitalist, feminist, anti-racist, queer and ecologically just. And in this way we may be able to produce spaces of real *difference* which cannot be co-opted by capitalism, as Lefebvre demands (1991: 52-55). We must not be afraid to consciously produce spaces. This conscious and politicised production of space is crucial to the creation of geographies of power.

Class and community

Many theorists and activists agree that connecting community-based struggles and working class struggles should be a priority for today's anti-capitalist social movements. However, the significant role which appropriated spaces might (and sometimes do) play in this process is often overlooked. This role, and the general need for connecting class and community have already begun to emerge in the above discussion; producing geographies of power clearly involves more than setting up another email list. Rather, as Kohn and Harvey argue, different sorts of anti-capitalist struggle must be brought into productive relation with each other (Harvey 2000: 244; Kohn 2003: 64). Struggles which relate to the sphere of 'reproduction' (such as feminist attacks on unpaid domestic labour, student battles against university fees, and the struggles of homeless people or renters against landlords) must be linked up with struggles relating to 'production' (workers campaigns for higher wages or collective control of the workplace). These different struggles are all on some level anti-capitalist; they are most successful when brought together (but without erasing their specificity). Appropriated spaces can facilitate this mutual aid without forcing struggles into unequal relationships. One recent example of this powerful unification of diverse struggles has been offered by the various anti-corporate 'summit-hopping' protests. Similarly, Kipfer describes the power of a community-class 'metropolitan strike' in Toronto in 1996:

'the political strike reconnected production (labour) and reproduction (community). Shutting down public transportation, dispatching workers and supporters to picket lines closest to their residential neighbourhoods ('community cross-picketing') and interspersing picket-line action with demonstrations at strategic locations throughout the city linked movement activists with important segments of organized labour' (1997: 176-177)

parties held at the Exodus land occupation in Britain, drugs for personal use are allowed, but drug *dealing* is not accepted by the collective (Exodus collective 1997: 42). This creates a safer and more peaceful atmosphere at the parties. These defined rules are indeed a form of closure, but it is a delineation which is necessary in the attempt to prefigure a world where drugs would not be the destructive form of exploitation they are today.

This sort of labour/community alliance is a powerful strategy of mobilisation. It may well be the defining strategy of class recomposition in our time – class recomposition understood in the terms of, ‘the overthrow of capitalist divisions, the creation of new unities between different sectors of the class, and an expansion of the boundaries of what the ‘working class’ comes to include.’ (Zerowork editors cited in Steve Wright, 2004: 5)

Few would deny the importance of this sort of process to the anti-capitalist struggle. But how are we to overcome these isolating divisions? The problem has spatial components,²⁴ and consequently there are spatial aspects to the solution. Appropriated spaces have the potential to bridge the labour/community divide.

Appropriated spaces are able to bring together people, struggles and spheres. Kohn describes how the appropriated spaces she studied were able to bring together different sorts of workers, because the hierarchies of the factory were suspended in these cooperative spaces (2003: 131). Maggio presents a more autonomist Marxist argument, asserting that social centres in Italy today connect struggles in the reproductive sphere to class struggle against the destruction of ‘social ties’ (1997: 237). Similarly, Krasivyj understands these appropriated spaces as a ‘high moment’ in class recomposition (1996: 8). Even if we reject the elision of class/community differences in these autonomist accounts, the usefulness of appropriated spaces remains apparent. In appropriated spaces workers are able to link people and realms by,

‘linking disputes over the control of production to consumption and leisure, building coalitions between workers and potential allies, and transforming struggles rooted in daily life into politics’ (Kohn 2003: 64)

Here Kohn points to three types of connection: firstly between struggles regarding reproduction and those regarding production, secondly between workers and others who may support workers’ aims, and finally between everyday life and political activity. Appropriated spaces can be this nexus between community, autonomous struggles and workers movements – a role which helps to construct geographies of power.

However, each appropriated space must be *consciously produced* as a class/community nexus, if it is to achieve the bridging capacity outlined above (just as I argued in regards to creating geographies of power). This means that appropriated spaces based in community struggles (such as social centres) should actively reach out to workers’ movements; and likewise spaces which are rooted in labour struggles (like workers’ organising centres) should assist and involve community organisations. Spaces

²⁴ For example the reproductive and productive spheres are usually spatially separated; the labour movement has traditionally been organised along industrial or sectoral lines rather than spatially or geographically; and both labour and community movement activists have been unable or unwilling to journey to each other’s spaces.

must protect, nourish and express different struggles without homogenising them. This sort of mutual support is also mutually beneficial. Ness describes a successful campaign to win higher wages for greengrocer employees in New York, where the community was encouraged to boycott and picket the exploitative shops (Ness 2002: 60-73). A radical union branch office provided a base and meeting point for workers and community activists in this battle. Another example comes from the Broadway squats in Sydney in 2000, where the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union was involved in a community picket which saved the squatted space from eviction. There was also an inspiring union/community alliance around Tranby college in Glebe (Cook 2003). Another sort of example is provided by a 'Land is Ours' land occupation in London in 1996, which suggested that,

'the broad green movement can engage with urban politics in ways that link questions around the environment and social justice' (Featherstone 1997: 124)

This was an appropriated space which powerfully (albeit briefly) connected different struggles. These examples begin to reveal how the community/class division can be bridged by a conscious and politicised appropriation of space.

This sort of production can also be theorised as constructing a proletarian public sphere. The difficulty is that this requires more than 'reclaiming public space', because 'public space' is already a bourgeois artefact. Instead it requires producing safety, sociality, openness and autonomy in ways which prioritise the interests of the most excluded and marginalised. Those who produce appropriated spaces must make a commitment to the needs of the poorest and as Sivanandan suggests (in Humphries 1994: 188), use this as an epistemological starting point for the production of a new sort of space. In this way social centres, cultural centres or organising centres can become nodes of a proletarian public sphere – an arena for debate and political development, for encounter and the construction of solidarity. This also reveals how the appropriation of space allows people to discover our own agency; to become collective architects of our future, constrained but not completely incapacitated by present structures (Harvey 2000: 200-202). So, one way that appropriated spaces can bridge class and community is through creating a working class public sphere; this requires an exercise of agency and the conscious production of a new set of spatial assumptions, practices and structures – in other words a different sort of space.

Prefigurative politics

My subject in this final part of the chapter is a principle which could also be considered a general politics, or even a creative art: the art of ‘prefiguring’ in the present a future alternative to capitalism. Grubacic defines prefigurative politics as, ‘modes of organisation that deliberately demonstrate the world you want to create’ (2004: 37). A prefigurative politics thus prompts dissidents to use methods which are participatory, emancipatory, egalitarian and the like – methods in the present which correspond to our hope for the future. But prefiguration also has an intrinsic association with appropriated space: a person or organisation can propose an alternative world, but a space can materially prefigure that world. Prefigurative politics builds on the principles I have discussed above, and also suggests new associations: in particular it involves connecting prefiguration with a transformative agenda. Although the term ‘prefiguration’ implies transformation from the outset (a transformed society is being prefigured), it is still necessary to strongly emphasise the transformative component because this is what prevents prefiguration from lapsing into mere formalism. My discussion of prefiguration will also explore three related associations: means and ends, present and future, politics and everyday life. These reveal how prefiguration offers another key for unlocking the potential of appropriated space.

The notion of prefiguration is used by a number of theorists and activists, but it is most often associated with anarchism. The anarchist conception of the interrelationship between means and ends forms the core of the prefigurative approach. Grubacic describes ‘pre-figurative politics’ as one of three ‘essentials running through all manifestations of anarchist ideology’ (along with anti-statism and anti-capitalism) (2004: 37). Even though anarchists are associated in the popular imagination with terrorism, they have in fact been the most consistent proponents of the idea that the means of struggle shape its ends, and therefore that the means should not be cruel or authoritarian (Marshall P. 1993: 629). Likewise, the anarchist notion ‘propaganda of the deed’ has occasionally referred to acts of destruction, but more often to ‘dropping out’, or creating libertarian spaces and organisations – in other words taking action which it is hoped will inspire others (Marshall P. 1993: 632-638). However, this approach to means and ends can also lead to a *conflation* of means and ends – formalism. In contrast to this, prefiguration suggests that means are not the same thing as ends, even though means are ‘ends-in-the-making’ (Marshall P. 1993: 637). Prefiguration follows the thought of the Italian anarchist Malatesta, who stressed that our means shape our ends, but our means are not the same as

our ends (1925: 1). The difficulty is therefore to adopt methods which match the vision of a free and equal society, but without losing sight of the revolutionary goal of actually getting to that society. Prefigurative politics is about achieving this balance. Prefiguration shows how we can combine appropriating space with struggling for social change; a material alternative with a transformative agenda. Prefiguration brings means and ends together, but without conflating the two.

The prefigurative approach is also about connecting the present and the future, and thus could be seen as enacting Harvey's 'spatiotemporal utopianism'. Harvey argues that,

'The task is to pull together a spatiotemporal utopianism – a dialectical utopianism – that is rooted in our present possibilities at the same time as it points towards different trajectories for human uneven geographical developments' (2000: 196)

Harvey theorises a process where we engage with what is possible in the present, imagine what could be possible in the future, and attempt to concretely define an alternative. A process which again calls to mind the architect, who works in the present but as an 'imaginative planner of the future' (Harvey 1998: 56). Prefigurative politics can operationalise this process. The temporal component of this practice – the struggle for some vision of the future – is present in the transformative agenda of prefiguration. This component is usually associated with the Marxist notion of revolution. The spatial aspect of the process – the materialisation of a real alternative in the present – is also part of prefiguration. This spatial approach is more often present in anarchist theory and practice.²⁵ So, while Marxist thought often divorces means and ends entirely by focussing on the struggle over time for a future vision; anarchist inspired formalism often conflates means and ends into the form of one present space. Prefiguration can resolve these problems. Prefigurative appropriation brings together a transformative agenda (which distinguishes means from future ends), and a material alternative (which reconciles means and ends in a present space). Through bridging present form and future vision prefiguration enacts a politicised spatiotemporal utopianism. Prefiguration connects the present and the future in a spatiotemporal dialectics which may be unstable, but is also very powerful.

Putting prefigurative politics into practice entails a tricky (but not impossible) multiplication of acts, and an attention to everyday needs. This means putting energy into more than one strategy at once: into prefiguration and transformation; into spaces and movements; into class and community-based struggles; into autonomy and solidarity; into political campaigns and everyday survival. This sort of

²⁵ Ferrell, for example, offers a vision of revolution in the form of a space: he describes a building reclaimed by homeless people and graffiti artists called the 'Towering Inferno' which represents a chaotic spatial antithesis to the order of capitalism (2001: 187-220). He also presents a dialectical conception of the struggle for public space – between those who seek to 'shut down' space and those who seek to 'liberate' it (2001: 227-228). In Ferrell's work there is a distinctly spatial conception of struggle and revolution. Means and ends are two aspects of one space.

multiple focus is the only solution to a number of dilemmas I've already mentioned, such as engaging with the state without becoming reformist, providing a service (free food, housing or education) without propping up the capitalist system, and avoiding the pitfalls of both instrumentalism and formalism. The combination of everyday needs and political struggle is also bound up with prefigurative politics because both are about mingling a transformative programme with a focus on the means of struggle. And because the means of struggle are also the means of *survival* for the most oppressed. Furthermore, meeting everyday needs through mutual aid prefigures the sort of communal world we wish to create. Consequently it is vital that prefigurative appropriated spaces offer real survival services, but also engage in the political struggle for a world where those services will be universally available or unnecessary. This sort of combination was famously materialised in the Black Panthers' soup kitchens and libraries, but these are by no means the only example. For instance, both the Mandala intentional community in Queensland and Kraftwerk 1 in Zurich are experiments in communal living *and* bases for broader struggle (Smale 1995: 110-113; p.m 1997: 56). A more local example of the prefigurative focus on struggle and survival, was offered by the Workers Health Centre set up by communist party and union militants in Sydney in 1977. The centre met workers' everyday health needs but also connected these to political struggle. Bartlett writes,

'One of the reasons for the success of the [Workers Health] centre, I believe, was that we didn't set it up just as a clinic. From the beginning we allocated human and other resources to providing information to workers' (2003: 129)

Workers Health Centre militants also conducted inspections of workplaces which workers reported to be unsafe, and politicised workers whilst meeting their survival needs. Similarly, Kohn says of the Italian Houses of the People and workers cooperatives that,

'In addition to supplying material benefits, shopping in the cooperative or drinking in the *casa del popolo* linked one's daily routine to a political project.' (Kohn 2003: 129)

Each of these examples suggests how prefigurative spaces can connect people's everyday needs to political struggle. Not only is this politicisation of everyday life a necessary step for developing anti-capitalist consciousness, but it also reveals another way to fulfil the potential of appropriated spaces.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have suggested strategies and ideas for realising the potential of appropriating space. These ideas have revolved around bridging various concepts and practices, and adopting a conscious and politicised approach to producing our spaces. I began by arguing for the connection of space and

time, conceptually through spatiotemporal utopianism and the architect analogy, but also materially through real spaces and struggles over time. I then addressed the bridging of the spatial and the social, through an association between appropriated spaces and social movements. In the discussion of geographies of power I drew attention firstly to the connection of sites, scales and types of spaces, and secondly to the conscious production of appropriated spaces and the closure this requires. The tactic of producing geographies of power can develop the understanding and practice of appropriating space, however this strategy does not stand alone – it is bound up with the joining of class and community struggles. Overcoming the class/community division is particularly important to today's anti-capitalist struggle and to the process of class recomposition. And appropriated spaces can play a significant role in this process through bringing together people, struggles and spheres. Linking labour and community struggles is mutually beneficial, and appropriated spaces which take on this project are also more likely to overcome the problems which I discussed in Chapter 3. The conscious production of a working class public sphere is one way to bring together class and community. But the creation of a proletarian public sphere is a difficult task and requires the production of a truly different space, and the development of a different sort of politics. I explored one such sort of politics in the section on prefigurative appropriation. Prefiguration is about materialising a real alternative space, but in connection with a vision of the future and a willingness to engage in revolutionary struggle to reach that future. Prefiguration is about recognising that present means shape future ends; means and ends must neither be divorced in the process of time, nor conflated in a spatial form of the now. Prefiguration enacts a spatiotemporal utopianism, but gives this idea an anarchist push towards reality – towards what the Italian Gnocchi-Viani called a 'concrete utopia' (cited in Kohn 2003: 117). Prefiguration traces out the shape of a better world. And it does this through appropriated spaces as politicised alternatives; appropriated spaces produced in opposition to capitalism and as part of a politicisation of everyday life. So, this chapter has attempted to offer strategies for understanding and developing appropriation. Throughout this discussion it has been clear that our production of space must be consciously political and dialectical. The techniques I have discussed suggest how we might integrate appropriated spaces into a broader political agenda; and how we might realise the revolutionary potential of appropriating space.

Conclusion

Appropriated spaces such as squatted social centres are of major importance to social movements. Not only because they protect and nourish movements, but also because express, inspire and prefigure. However this significance is not automatically achieved as soon as a space is occupied; the Balloon Factory did not fully realise this ideal. It is not enough to describe the space in terms of the positive attributes of safety, sociality, openness and autonomy. Taking an unsophisticated approach to appropriation can lead to instrumentalism or formalism, militant particularism, a romanticisation of openness, spatial utopianism and a lack of politicisation. These problems must be solved through a conscious and political approach to producing space. This demands bridging divisions, constructing geographies of power, and developing a prefigurative politics. In these ways we can approach the revolutionary potential of appropriating space.

The path which has led me to the above conclusions began with Balloon Factory, and it is with the Balloon Factory that I will end. I will retrace my argument in order to reveal how I have constructed a case for appreciating, but also critically analysing and improving the theory and practice of spatial appropriation. But I will also bring this argument back to the Balloon Factory because that occupation was the spark and question mark to which my thesis responds. The practical experience of a squatted social centre has been the constant backdrop for this writing, even though I have pressed my analysis outwards into broad theory. This concluding chapter thus returns to the principle of praxis.

In the first place, my experience in SCAN determined my methodology and thus the shape of the thesis. This experience challenged me to produce research which was both truthful and useful to dissidents. And this challenge led me to reject the functionalism of action research and the ethnographical description of participant observation in favour of a partisan research. The commitment to truthfulness, usefulness and politics outlined by partisan researchers motivated me to focus on developing a framework for understanding and improving appropriated spaces. My methodology was bound up with a transformative political vision. Consequently, I directed my thesis towards political theory, rather than a description of one case of appropriation. Moreover, the partisan combination of rigor and relevance, of truthfulness and political usefulness, models the combination of form and transformative politics which I advocated in Chapter 4. Clearly, the

methodology which developed out of the SCAN experience has defined the contours of my whole thesis, and especially the dialectical approach to method and goal.

In Chapter 1, I sketched out a context for my analysis. I rejected the ‘bare space’ understanding of space as an inert container for social action. The continuing influence of this outdated paradigm is responsible for many of the problematic tendencies associated with appropriation, such as the naturalisation of space and the division of time and space. However the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in social theory has also produced worrying tendencies, such as the reification of space into an all determining force of domination. In contrast to this, I outlined the approaches of Lefebvre and Harvey which situate the concept of space in a broader neo-Marxist theory of political economy. These theorists also suggest that space has some emancipatory potential – in connection with class struggle, the contradictions of capitalism and the potential to construct a different space. This return of agency sets up the possibility for appropriation and its meaning. Similarly, Mickey Quick said of the Balloon Factory, ‘it’s about getting back some agency’.²⁶ But he asserted this in reference not only to the structure of capitalist space but with regard to *government* and the ‘entrenched passivity’ it produces. This critique of the state, and related critiques of hierarchy and property are valuable anarchist contributions to spatial theory. Despite its apparent incoherence, anarchism is vital to understanding the practice of appropriating space. Certainly most of the activists involved in setting up the Balloon Factory drew on anarchism; although many also draw on a Marxist, feminist, green and/or queer politics. As well as the critiques of state and property, I highlighted the notions of autonomy and prefiguration in anarchist thought, since these would become increasingly important in later sections of the thesis.

After the broad theoretical sweep of Chapter 1, I surveyed the spatial practices of social movements in Chapter 2. Contestation, disruption and *détournement* are frequently employed spatial modes of struggle, and are close relatives of appropriation. Together, these spatial strategies help to concretise the possibilities for struggle and emancipation which Lefebvre and Harvey perceive in space. I then offered a detailed definition of ‘appropriation’ and explored the positive attributes which are often ascribed to appropriated spaces: safety, sociality, openness and autonomy. These attributes outline the basic attempt to creatively construct a ‘new space’ through new social relations. The Balloon Factory was one such attempt. It was identified as a ‘safe space’ where activist groups could meet and plan for actions – and a number of groups including the RTS collective and Friends of the Earth used it for

²⁶ Mickey Quick, in a group interview on 26/8/03

this purpose. It was also said to be about creating de-commodified sociality and community: Rana said, ‘People get to taste the alternative, they get to say, “Yeah, this is what it could be like if everything wasn’t based on making a buck”’.²⁷ And numerous people told me how inspired they were by the *experience* of the social centre space. Openness was also important: Domicilius asserted that she wanted the social centre to be ‘really open and available’, in order to ‘make it a community space not just for self-indulgence’.²⁸ The significance of autonomy was also raised by many participants, such as Steve who described the Balloon Factory as a ‘self-defined community’ (as opposed to the enforced ‘community’ of the nation state). He also explained, ‘squatting empowers people to make their own communities.’²⁹ And the creation of an autonomous culture was vital to the Balloon Factory – as was evident by the ‘anonart’ on every wall. The attributes of safety, sociality, openness and autonomy reveal the powerful potential of appropriated space.

These attributes reveal possibilities and are commonly deployed by dissidents and theorists in the attempt to appropriate space. However, they are also conceptually inadequate and associated with a number of problems in practice. In Chapter 3 I exposed and analysed these problems. The problems I highlighted are not a product of ‘human nature’ or of externalities such as police behaviour, nor are they intrinsic defects of appropriation. Rather they are political problems which can be solved through a conscious development of the process of appropriating space. The first of these problems which I analysed were the tendencies of instrumentalism and ‘formalism’. Instrumentalism can result in boring or authoritarian spaces because space is treated as a means to some remote political end. SCAN does not fall into this category; rather most SCAN participants defined the social centre in opposition to more instrumentalist political spaces which they had experienced – such as student associations, union offices, women’s refuges and political party headquarters. On the other hand, SCAN’s activity has at times fallen into the trap of formalism. This tendency sees space as an end in itself and so produces a certain self-indulgence and political myopia. I would argue that SCAN participants do sometimes fetishize the social centre form, promote an uncritical politics of ‘fun’, and focus on the present to the exclusion of any future political goal. One participant asserted, ‘if it feels good then it is good’ and ‘making myself feel better is enough’.³⁰ Of course, many SCAN members are critical of these tendencies and seek to resist them. Jemima noted that the Midnight Star became a ‘party venue’, and the collective ‘got caught up in the maintenance of the building and events’; she

²⁷ Rana, in a group interview on the 16/10/03

²⁸ Domicilius, in an individual interview on the 27/8/03

²⁹ Steve, in a group interview on the 8/10/03

³⁰ Sarah, in a group interview on the 24/8/03 and in a meeting on 16/2/04

wanted the Balloon Factory to avoid these problems.³¹ I don't think it did, although things may have changed if it had lasted longer.

The shortness of the occupation is bound up with two other problems which I exposed in Chapter 3: militant particularism and spatial utopianism. The theory of militant particularism points out that the isolation and elitism of many community-building projects can be explained in terms of class struggle. Spaces such as SCAN's often remain isolated and locally focussed because this is where proletarian movements are strongest. However, in order to succeed, these spaces must transcend their local basis by linking up with other sites, scales and struggles. The fact that SCAN does not really function as the 'network' its name suggests, is part of the reason why our occupations are so short. In order to overcome its particularism, SCAN should link up with other existing spaces, such as social centres in other cities, but also union spaces, refuges, student spaces and the like in Sydney. The Balloon Factory might have survived for longer than three weeks if it could have called on the support of other groups and spaces in the fight against eviction. And similarly, squatted social centres cannot be conceptualised as spatial utopias which control the forces of time, instead temporal processes of change and struggle must be bound up with the spatial form. In connection with social movements and other processes of struggle, an appropriated space might extend or transcend its short lifespan.

The romanticisation of 'openness' is another common problem in appropriated spaces, which I discussed in Chapter 3. It can lead to the reproduction of hierarchies and bourgeois privilege within an appropriated space. Participants in SCAN are well aware of this danger. Jemima argued,

'we're open to the extent that we have a recognition that we are involved in a struggle and there are enemies and that this is part of class battle. And we're not open in the sense that everybody can come. We're open to accepting people who are on our side in the struggle. So I guess it is territorial in that way, but I think that's a good thing – we need to be claiming a space.'³²

This indicates an effective approach to openness, but also suggests that the language of 'openness' could be replaced with a more honest understanding of appropriated spaces as anti-capitalist alternatives rather than undefined 'open' spaces.

Throughout the discussion in Chapter 3 ran the issue of *politicisation*. In order to reach the potential suggested by Chapter 2, appropriated spaces must be associated with a radical politics in form and agenda. Possibilities for affecting this politicisation then became my focus in Chapter 4. I offered a

³¹ Jemima, in an individual interview on the 22/8/03

³² Ibid

variety of strategies for dialectically bridging the divisions run below the surface of my entire thesis: rifts between space and time, means and ends, politics and form.

I began Chapter 4 with an argument for theorising a tighter relationship between space and time. This connection between two concepts which represent (in physics anyway) aspects of one reality, has concrete ramifications for social movement practice. It means paying attention to the interrelationship between sustainable struggle and political spaces, and it means fighting for the ‘liberation of time’ (in the workplace for example) as well as the liberation of space, through appropriation. This argument thus lays the foundation for my other demands in Chapter 4, such as the bridging of the spatial and the social, class and community, present and future. If we link the spatial and the social (instead of ranking them), then we may be able to extend the life of appropriated spaces and overcome their local foundations. In SCAN’s case this would require reuniting the ‘social’ centre with social movements: the Balloon Factory should have been more explicitly tied up with a movement or movements, then social processes of struggle could have nourished, protected and productively shaped the space (and vice versa) – as occurred at Tranby college. This point does however raise an issue that remains problematic: the relationship between spaces and organisations. Obviously much of my argument is relevant to this question, but I have left the discussion of space and organisational form to future researchers.

These ideas led on to a discussion of the construction of ‘geographies of power’. Sites of resistance must be connected, and different scales and types of space must be lifted out of antagonism and brought into a productive relationship. Social centres cannot stand alone: they must be inserted into networks of mutual support which include the widest range of anti-capitalist spaces possible. And this brought me to the connection of community and class. The physical and social distance which exists between community-based and class-based spaces/struggles/organisations is one of the most significant barriers to class recomposition today. Not only must this distance be traversed in order to realise the potential of appropriated spaces, but these spaces offer a promising avenue for making that connection. Len pointed out that even in its short life, the Balloon Factory ‘formed a crossover between different groups’ (such as student groups and community groups); people were brought into contact with each other who would otherwise never have met.³³ In other appropriated spaces, this same ‘crossover’ capacity brings together workers and community groups; this might also suggest the makings of a ‘proletarian public sphere’. The task, therefore, is to consciously and politically *produce*

³³ Len, in a group discussion on the 16/10/03

appropriated spaces to facilitate these sorts of functions. And this ‘production of space’ (to recall Lefebvre’s theory in Chapter 1) is a recognisable process which can be broken down into practices such as conception, representation and lived experience. Dissidents must hone these practices.

In the final section of Chapter 4 I made a case for ‘prefigurative’ politics. This anarchist principle demands that the means and ends of struggle be congruent, and it connects a vision of the future with the present form of struggle. The activists who created the Balloon Factory invoke prefigurative politics as rationale, but often return to formalism in practice because they entirely conflate means and ends in space. For some, the Balloon Factory was its own *raison d’être* – it *was* social transformation (rather than a step towards it). In contrast to this I sought to locate prefiguration in the tradition which sees means and ends as connected but also differentiated in time. Prefiguration must involve a transformative agenda (a willingness to struggle for the future world which you are prefiguring) which is distinct from (but related to) the present space. Prefiguration also means producing a material alternative to capitalism which is part of a politicisation of everyday life in the here and now. Appropriated spaces can link the struggle to survive with a broader political project, through the powerful nexus of experience, space and everyday life which I discussed in Chapter 2. Prefiguration offers one way for appropriation to realise this potential for connecting space and politics.

In this way I built a case for the importance of appropriated spaces to social movements, based on the interrelationship between the two phenomena. The spaces reveal inspiring possibilities for safety, sociality and autonomy, however achieving this potential takes a conscious politicisation of appropriation. Otherwise this practice is liable to succumb to the hazards of instrumentalism, formalism, particularism and the like. These problems can be traced back to rifts between theory and practice, means and ends, space and time. So in order to address them, divisions must be bridged and geographies of power must be constructed. When informed by a insurgent prefigurative politics, appropriated spaces can be part of this bridging process. The powerful politics of appropriating space can thus find full expression. With this thesis I have attempted to contribute to the development of appropriation, and its theory. However in keeping with the argument I have made for connecting means and ends, practice and reflection, it is now time to stop writing (and for you to stop reading). Enough words, the time and place for action has come.

Bibliography

- Adilkno (The Foundation for the Advancement of Illegal Knowledge) 1990. *Cracking the Movement: Squatting Beyond the Media*, translated by Martz L. Autonomedia: New York.
- Agnew J. A. and Duncan J. S. 1989. 'Introduction' in *The Power of Place: Bringing together geographical and sociological imaginations*, edited by Agnew J. A. and Duncan J. S. Unwin Hyman: Boston.
- Argyris C. and Schön D. A. 1991. "Participatory Action Research and Action Science Compared: A Commentary" in *Participatory Action Research*, edited by Whyte W. F. Sage Publications: Newbury Park, London and New Delhi.
- Bakunin M. 1992. "The Policy of the International" in *The Basic Bakunin: Writings 1869-1871*, translated and edited by Cutler R. M. Prometheus Books: Buffalo.
- Barnett K. 1998. "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden: Community Place-making at King William Park, South Fremantle" in *Imagined places: the politics of making space*, edited by Houston C., Kurasawa F., and Watson A. School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology, La Trobe Uni: Bundoora.
- Bartlett B. 2003. "Origins of the Workers Health Centre" in *A few rough reds: Stories of rank & file organising*, edited by Alexander H. and Griffiths P. Australian Society for the Study of Labour History: Canberra.
- Berkman A. 1973. *ABC of Anarchism* edited by Newell, P. E. Freedom Press: London.
- Best S. 1998. "Murray Bookchin's theory of social ecology" in *Organization & Environment*. Volume 11, Number 3, Pages 334-353.
- Bey H. 1991. *T.A.ζ. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. Autonomedia: Brooklyn.
- Blunt A. and Wills J. 2000. *Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practice*. Prentice Hall: Harlow.
- Bookchin M. 1991. *The ecology of freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy*. Black Rose: Montreal.
- Borja J. and Castells M. (with Belil M. and Benner C.) 1997. *Local and Global: Management of Cities in the Information Age*. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Earthscan Publications: London.
- Boyd A. 2002. "Irony, meme warfare and the extreme costume ball" in *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation*, edited by Shepard B. and Hayduck R. Verso: London and New York.

- Brecher J., Costello T. and Smith B. 2000 *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*. South End Press: Cambridge (US).
- Brenner N. and Theodore N. 2002. "Preface: From the "New Localism" to the Spaces of Neoliberalism" in *Antipode*, Volume 34, Issue 3, Pages 341-347.
- Burawoy M. 1991a. "The Extended Case Method" in *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*, edited by Burawoy M., Burton A., Ferguson A. A., Fox K. J., Gamson J., Gartrell N., Hurst L., Kurzman C., Salzinger L., Schiffman J., and Ui S. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford.
- . 1991b. "Introduction" in *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*, edited by Burawoy M., Burton A., Ferguson A. A., Fox K. J., Gamson J., Gartrell N., Hurst L., Kurzman C., Salzinger L., Schiffman J., and Ui S. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford
- Burgmann V. 2003. *Power, profit and protest: Australian social movements and globalisation*. Allen & Unwin: Crows Nest.
- Castells M. 1997. *The Information Age: Economy Society and Culture, Volume II: The Power of Identity*. Blackwell Publishers: Malden and Oxford.
- Centre for Workers' Control, The 2003. "An invitation to get involved in The Centre for Workers' Control" Draft Version distributed at the Workers' Control Conference, 10, 11 and 12 October 2003, University of Technology Sydney, Broadway.
- Certeau M. de 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- Chin, C. B. N. and Mittelman J. H. 2000. "Conceptualizing Resistance to Globalization" in *Globalisation and the Politics of Resistance*, edited by Gills B. K. Palgrave: New York (USA).
- Chomsky N. 1997. *Expanding the Floor of the Cage*. Interviewed by Barsamian D. viewed 19 April 2004, <<http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/articles/z9703-cage-1.html>>
- Cleaver H. 1979. *Reading 'Capital' politically*. Harvester Press: Brighton.
- Cook K. 2003. "From building sites to Aboriginal education" in *A few rough reds: Stories of rank & file organising*, edited by Alexander H. and Griffiths P. Australian Society for the Study of Labour History: Canberra.
- Corr A. c1995 "Anarchist Squatting and Land Use in the West: Direct Action and the Critique of Real Estate" [viewed 8 May 2003 <http://squat.net/archiv>](http://squat.net/archiv).
- . 1999. *No Trespassing! Squatting, Rent Strikes, and Land Struggles Worldwide*. South End Press: Cambridge (US).

- Culler J. 2001. *The Pursuit of Signs*. Routledge: London and New York.
- Cyler K. 2002 “Building a healing community from ACT UP to housing works, Benjamin Shepard interviews Keith Cyler” in *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation*, edited by Shepard B. and Hayduck R. Verso: London and New York.
- Eigo J. 2002 “The city as body politic / the body as city unto itself” in *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation*, edited by Shepard B. and Hayduck R. Verso: London and New York.
- Exodus Collective 1997. “Exodus - Movement of Jah people” in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff, R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Featherstone D. 1997 “The ‘Pure Genius’ Land Occupation: Reimagining the Inhuman City” in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff, R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Feldman A. 2002. “Making Space at the Nations’ Table: mapping the transformative geographies of the international indigenous peoples’ movement”, *Social Movement Studies*, Volume 1, Number 1, Pages 31-46.
- Ferrell J. 2001. *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy*, Palgrave: New York.
- Flemming M. 1988. *The Geography of Freedom: The Odyssey of Elisée Reclus*. Black Rose Books: Montréal and New York.
- Foucault M. 1977. *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*, edited by Sheridan A. Penguin, London.
- Friedland R. and Boden D. 1994. ‘NowHere: An Introduction to Space, Time and Modernity’ in *NowHere: Space, Time and Modernity*, edited by Friedland R. and Boden D. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Freire P. 1996. *Pedagogy of the Opressed*. Translated by M. B. Ramos. Penguin Books: London.
- Glover C. 1998 “Finding the Right Place: A Story of a Thesis in Progress” in *Imagined places: the politics of making space*, edited by Houston C., Kurasawa F., and Watson A. School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology , La Trobe Uni: Bundoora.
- Goldman E. 1969. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Dover Publications Inc: New York.
- Goodman J. 1998 .“Contesting the transnational: Social Movements Beyond the State” in *Imagined places: the politics of making space*, edited by Houston C., Kurasawa F., and Watson A. School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology , La Trobe Uni: Bundoora.
- . (editor) 2002a. *Protest and Globalisation: Prospects for Transnational Solidarity*. Pluto Press: Annandale.

- . 2002b. “Introduction” in *Protest and Globalisation: Prospects for Transnational Solidarity*, edited by Goodman, J. Pluto Press: Annandale.
- Graeber D. 2004. “The Twilight of Vanguardism” in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- Green P. 1993. “Taking Sides: Partisan Research in the 1984-1985 Miners' Strike” in *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*, edited by Hobbs D. and May T. Clarendon Press: Oxford.
- Grell B., Sambale J. and Veith D. 1997. “Inner!City!Action! - crowd control, interdictory space and the fight for socio-spatial justice” in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Grubacic A. 2004. “Towards Another Anarchism” in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- Habermas, J. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press: Cambridge (US).
- Hamm B. 1997. “Globalisation, Urban Development and Policies for the Urban Poor” in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Hammersley M. 1995. *The Politics of Social Research*. Sage Publications: London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi.
- Harvey D. 1973. *Social Justice and the City*. John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore.
- . 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford and Cambridge (US).
- . 1998. “Spaces of Insurgency” in *Subculture and Homogenization: Subcultura i Homogeneitzacio*. Fundacio Antoni Tapies: Barcelona.
- . 2000. *Spaces of Hope*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- hooks B. 1990 *Yearning*. South end Press: Boston.
- Humphries B. 1994. “Empowerment and social research: Elements for an analytic framework” in *Rethinking Social Research: Anti-discriminatory approaches in research methodology*, edited by Humphries B. and Truman C. Avebury: Aldershot, Brookfield (US), Hong Kong, Singapore and Sydney.
- Huston S. 1997. “Kropotkin and Spatial Social Theory: Unfolding an Anarchist Contribution” in *Anarchist Studies*, Volume 5, Number 2, Pages 109-130.

- International Liaison Committee for a Workers International 2004. "Is it possible to put a human face on globalisation and war?" in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- James P. 2002. "Principles of solidarity: beyond a postnational imaginary" in *Protest and Globalisation: Prospects for Transnational Solidarity*, edited by Goodman, J. Pluto Press: Annandale.
- Jameson F. 2000. 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' in *The Jameson Reader*, edited by Hardt M and Weeks K. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford and Malden.
- Jorgensen D. L. 1989. *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park, London and Delhi.
- Katsiaficas G. 1997. *The subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of everyday life*, Humanities Press: New Jersey.
- Katz A. N. 1996. "On Interpreting Statements as Metaphor or Irony: Contextual Heuristics and Cognitive Consequences" in *Metaphor: Implications and Applications*, edited by Mio J. S. and Katz A. N. Erlbaum: Mahwah.
- Keck M. E. and Sikkink K. 1998. "Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society" in *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*, edited by Meyer D. S. and Tarrow S. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc: Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford.
- Kemmis S. 1982. "Introduction" in *The Action Research Reader*, edited by Kemmis S. Deakin University Printery: Victoria.
- Kipfer S. 1997. "Urban Politics in the 1990s: Notes on Toronto" in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Klaus P. 1997. "Subculture and production of culture in the logic of global urban development - in the case of Zurich", translated by Stiener B. in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Klein N. 2001. *No Logo*. Flamingo: London.
- Kohn M. 2003. *Radical Space: Building the House of the People*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London.
- Krasivyj D. 1996. "For the Recomposition of Social Labour", *Riff Raff* 2, March 1994, translated by Steve Wright, 1996, viewed 28 April 2003, <http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/aut_html/kras.recomp.html>
- Lefebvre H. 1976. *The Survival of Capitalism*, translated by Bryant F. London: Allison and Busby.

- .1991. *The Production of Space*, translated by Nicholson-Smith D. Blackwell: Oxford and Cambridge (US).
- Lefkowitz J. 2002. "Students, sweatshops, and local power" in *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation*, edited by Shepard B. and Hayduck R. Verso: London and New York.
- Lukács G. 1970. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Translated by Livingstone R. Merlin Press: London.
- Lynn W. S. 2000. "Geography's Moral Turn: Ethics in Anglophone Geography" Chapter Three from Lynn W. S. 2000. *Geoethics: Ethics, Geography and Moral Understanding*. PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, viewed 18 April 2004, <http://www.practicaethics.net/geoethics_c3.pdf>
- Maggio M. "Urban movements in Italy: The struggle for sociality and communication" in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Malatesta E. 1925. *Malatesta on Syndicalism*. viewed 21 May 2004 <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/inter/malatesta_synd.html>
- Marcus G. E. and Fischer M. M. J. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London.
- Marin L. 1990. *Utopics: the semiological play of textual spaces*, translated by Vollrath R. A. Humanities Press International: Atlantic Highlands.
- Marshall G. (editor) 1998. *Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York.
- Marshall P. 1993. *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, Fontana: London.
- Massey D. 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*. Polity Press: Cambridge and Oxford.
- Mayer M. 1997. in "Horizons of Possible Urban Worlds: Final Panel discussion of the 7th INURA conference, June 18, 1997, Rote Fabrik, Zurich. Chaired by Fred Robinson," transcribed and edited by Maria Kunz and Richard Wolff in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- McCarthy J. 1997. "The globalization of social movement theory" in *Transnational social movements and global politics : solidarity beyond the state*, edited by Smith J., Chatfield C. and Pagnucco R. Syracuse University Press: Syracuse.
- McKay G. (editor) 1998 *DiY Culture: Part and Protest in Nineties Britain*. Verso: London and New York.

- McTaggart R. 1997. "Guiding Principles for Participatory Action Research" in *Participatory Action Research: International Contexts and Consequences*, edited by McTaggart R. State University of New York Press: Albany, (US).
- Melucci A. 1995. "The Process of Collective Identity" in *Social Movements and culture*, edited by Johnston H. and Klandermas B. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- . 1996. *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*, Cambridge University Press: London.
- Metcalfe B. 1995. "Preface" in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Co-operative Lifestyles in Australia*, edited by Metcalfe B. University of New South Wales Press: Sydney.
- Midnight Notes Collective. 1992. "The New Enclosures" in *Midnight Oil: Work, Energy, War, 1973-1992*, edited by Midnight Notes Collective. Autonomedia: 1992.
- Nandrea L. 1999. "'Graffiti taught me everything I know about space': Urban Fronts and Borders" in *Antipode* Volume 31, Issue 1, Pages 110-116.
- Negt O. and Kluge A. 1993. *The Public Sphere and Experience: Toward and Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Ness I. 2002. "Community labor alliances: a new paradigm in the campaign to organize greengrocery workers in New York City" in *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation*, edited by Shepard B. and Hayduck R. Verso: London and New York.
- Neuman W. L. 2000. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Allyn and Bacon: Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo and Singapore.
- Ochre G. 1995. "From a Circle of Stones to Commonground Dreaming" in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Co-operative Lifestyles in Australia*, edited by Metcalfe B. University of New South Wales Press: Sydney.
- Oakley S. 1998. "Urban Spatiality: A (Re)Interpretation of Space and Place" in *Imagined places: the politics of making space*, edited by Houston C., Kurasawa F., and Watson A. School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology, La Trobe Uni: Bundoora.
- p.m. 1997. "Kraftwerk 1: An Approach to a Civilisation Beyond Work" in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Punch M. 1986. *The Politics and Ethics of Fieldwork*. Sage Publications: Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi.
- Revolutionary Writers' Association 2004. "Struggle against Imperialism is neither fun nor picnic! It is a life and death practice" in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.

- Rocker R. 1989 . *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, Pluto Press: London.
- Romano A. 1997 “Liberated spaces - possibilities for liberating everyday life” in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff, R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Roseneil S. 1993. “Greenham Revisited: Researching Myself and My Sisters” in *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*, edited by Hobbs D. and May T. Clarendon Press: Oxford.
- Rossiter, B. “Walking, Straying and Neglected Urban Spaces” in *Imagined places: the politics of making space*, edited by Houston C., Kurasawa F., and Watson A. School of Sociology, Politics and Anthropology , La Trobe Uni: Bundoora.
- Santiago I. 2004. “Foreword: A fierce struggle to recreate the world” in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- Schmid C. 1997 “The Dialectics of Urbanisation in Zurich: Global city formation and urban social movements” in *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, edited by Wolff R. et al (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. (editors) 2004 *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- Sen, J. 2004 “How Open? The Forum as logo, the forum as religion: scepticism of the intellect, optimism of the will” in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- Sewell W. H. 2001. ‘Space in Contentious Politics’ in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, edited by Aminzade R., Goldstone J. A., McAdman D., Perry E. J., Sewell W. H., Tarrow S. and Tilly C. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Situationist International 1959. “Détournement as Negation and Prelude” in *Situationist International Anthology*, translated by Knabb K. Bureau of Public Secrets, viewed 22 May 2003, <<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/3.detourn.htm>>
- Smale B. 1995. “From Outrage to Insight (?)” in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Co-operative Lifestyles in Australia*, edited by Metcalfe B. University of New South Wales Press: Sydney.
- Spencer, N. 1997. “Historicizing the Spontaneous Revolution: Anarchism and the Spatial Politics of Postmodernism”, *Revolutions: The Second Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference*, University of California, Irvine, 12 October 1997, viewed 7 April 2004,

- <<http://www.ags.uci.edu/~clcwega/revolutions/Spencer.htm>>
- Soja E. W. 1994. 'Postmodern Geographies: Taking Los Angeles Apart' in *NowHere: Space, Time and Modernity*, edited by Friedland R. and Boden D. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- . 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagines Places*. Blackwell Publishers: Cambridge (US) and Oxford.
- . 2000. *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford and Malden.
- Staeheli L. A. 1994. "Empowering political struggle: spaces and scales of resistance" in *Political Geography*, Volume 13, Number 5, Pages 387-391.
- Starr A. 2000. *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalisation*, Zed: London.
- State of Emergency Organising Collective 2004. *Provocations*, viewed 15 May 2004
<<http://stateofemergency.nomasters.org>>
- Steier F. 1991. "Introduction: Research as Self-Reflexivity, Self-Reflexivity as Social Process" in *Research and Reflexivity*, edited by F. Steier. Sage Publications: London, Newbury Park and New Delhi
- Tarrow, S. 1998. *Power In Movement: Social Movements And Contentious Politics*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- . 2001. "Introduction" in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, edited by Aminzade R., Goldstone J. A., McAdman D., Perry E. J., Sewell W. H., Tarrow S., Tilly C., Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Thomas J. 1983. "Toward a Critical Ethnography" in *Urban Life* 11:477-490.
- . 1993. *Doing Critical Ethnography*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park, London and New Delhi.
- Tilly C. 2000. 'Spaces of Contention' in *Mobilization: An International Journal*, Volume 5, Number 2, Pages 135-159.
- Touraine A. 1974. *The post-industrial society*, Random House: London.
- Vidich A. J. 1969. "Participant Observation and the Collection and Interpretation of Data" in *Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader*, edited by McCall G. J. and Simmons J. L. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company: Reading (US), Menlo Park (US), London and Don Mills (Canada).
- Wadsworth Y. 1993. *What is Participatory Action Research?* Action Research Issues Association: Melbourne.
- Waterman P. (1999) 'The Brave New World of Manuel Castells: What on Earth (or in the Ether) is Going On?' review article, *Development and Change*, 30, pages 357-380.

- Whitaker C. 2004. "The WSF as Open Space" in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, edited by Sen J., Anand A., Escobar A., and Waterman P. The Viveka Foundation: New Delhi.
- Whyte W. F., Greenwood D. J. and Lazes P. 1991. "Participatory Action Research: Through Practice to Science in Social Research" in *Participatory Action Research*, edited by Whyte W. F. Sage Publications: Newbury Park, London and New Delhi.
- Wilton R. D. and Cranford C. 2002. "Toward an Understanding of the Spatiality of Social Movements: Labor Organizing at a Private University in Los Angeles" in *Social Problems*, Volume 49, Number 3, Pages 374-394.
- Winter R. 1987. *Action-Research and the Nature of Social Inquiry: Professional Innovation and Educational Work*, Avebury: Aldershot.
- . 1996. "Some Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Action Research" in *New Directions in Action Research*, edited by O. Zuber-Skerritt. The Falmer Press: London and Washington D.C.
- Witheyford N. 1994 "Autonomist Marxism and the Information Society" in *Capital and Class*, Spring 1994, Issue 52, pages 85-120.
- Wolff R., Shneider A., Schmidt C., Klaus P., Hofer A., Hitz H. (INURA Zurich – International Network for Urban Research and Action) (editors) 1997. *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the end of the 20th Century*, Birkhauser Verlag: Basel Boston Berlin.
- Wright S. 2004. "I get knocked down, but I get up again?" in *State of Emergency Reader*, viewed 15 May <<http://stateofemergency.nomasters.org/reader/classcomp.html>>