SPATIAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

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In 2000, it was David Harvey in an interview who commented with some lamentation that although *The Limits to Capital* 'was a text that could be built on' it was, sadly in his view, not taken up in that spirit (see Harvey, 1982; Harvey, 2000: 84). The tangible melancholy in this comment seems somewhat incredulous in the years before and since, given the rightly justified centrality of David Harvey's agenda-setting work in advancing historical-geographical materialism. For many, Harvey delivers the 'hard excavatory work' in providing three cuts to understanding 1) the origin of crises embedded in production; 2) the financial and monetary aspects of the credit system and crisis; and 3) a theory of the geography of uneven development and crises in capitalism. The result, in and beyond *The Limits to Capital*, is a reading of Marx that offers a spatio-temporal lens on uneven geographical development. Put differently, a combined focus on space and time together reveals the *spatiality of power* and the command over space as a force in shaping capitalism and the conditions of class struggle.

Closer to what is now home, it was Frank Stilwell in *Understanding Cities & Regions* who crafted the term *spatial political economy* as a way of approaching the concerns of political economy in relation to cities and regions, space and place (Stilwell, 1992). The exhortation here was to give political economy a *spatial twist*: to develop a spatial political economy able to grapple with the relationship between social processes and spatial form. Moreover, the approach of spatial political economy aims to do so in such a way that would have both a spatial and temporal dimension. 'The hiving off of geography (the space dimension) and history (the time dimension)', stated Stilwell (1992: 15), 'has further impoverished the residuals' available to political economy.

Although there has been no lamentation forthcoming, to my knowledge, from Stilwell, the notion of spatial political economy is, for me, a notion on which to build and one that has been seemingly neglected. As Stilwell recognises, there is a difficulty in tracking the spatial element of social and economic life. For example, how regions can be analysed as intermediate-level constructions between a wider space-economy and the uniqueness of place; how cities may be understood as mediations between state-civil society relations; and how place-specific aspects of political economic life can be inserted and then understood within the different functions of capitalistic space.

In arguing *for* a political economy of space and place, my aim is to begin, to recommence, or to build on a contribution to spatial political economy. The result, hopefully, will be the avoidance of any possible lament that this notion has been neglected. In so doing, the question I have posed is: "Under capitalism, how does the state organise space in our everyday lives through the streets we walk, the monuments we visit, and the places where we meet?" Furthering the project of spatial political economy, I argue, moves us toward some form of answer in articulating an approach for the political economy of space and place. This is what spatial political economy can hopefully offer: an approach to understanding space not as something neutral. Instead, space has a history according to periods, modes and relations of production, and a distinctive function within capitalism. These are the issues that spatial political economy—or an argument for a political economy of space and place—can address.

The structure of the paper is to do the twist, the spatial twist, in political economy more through *eludication* rather than *application*, although there will be a little of the latter too. I want to explore a set of departure points derived from Antonio Gramsci, Walter Benjamin and Henri Lefebvre that will assist in developing a spatial political economy. More explicitly these departure points are presented as three cuts through spatial political economy. Just as Goldilocks engages the Three Bears through a progressive series of encounters—three bowls of porridge, three chairs, and three beds—until each time finding the third "just right", then my own encounter through the three cuts on space will similarly unfold until finding the "just right". 'Any definition of architecture', states Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*, 'itself requires a prior analysis and exposition of the concept of space' (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 15). So how can the space of modernism

produced in the built environment of the twentieth-century be understood?

My latest research has been on the historical sociology and political economy of modern state space in Mexico through the lived experience of architecture (Morton, 2017a: *forthcoming*). Architecture is therefore taken as a vector, or mediation, that captures everyday lived relations in the production of state space. My research as a resident Visiting Fellow at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montréal in 2017 and also at the Centre for Creative Photography (CCP) in Tucson, Arizona, will explore this focus further by examining the history of space and the specificity of state space across a range of modernist architecture in Mexico, specifically in the era of the 1930s.

The ambition is to engage with work on modernism in Latin America that avoids the assumption of a worldwide diffusion of modernist architecture from the universalising experiences of the Euro-American context. Instead, my aim is to stress the multiple modernities that have shaped Mexico and wider geographical spaces. Hence the focus on local appropriations of modernist movements to highlight modernism not simply as a Euro-American implant but as a process through which there was a localisation of modernism, which reverberates throughout different geographical spaces.

Background influences on this approach to the specificity of modernism and the hybrid architectural expression of modernity in Latin America are drawn from James Scott (1998), of course, but also from the work on Mexico of Mauricio Tenorio Trillo (2012), Edward Burian (1997), Luis Carranza (2010), Nestor García Canclini (1995), Nicola Miller (Miller and Hart 2007, Miller 2008), and Sarah Radcliffe (2007) as well as from work on geographies of modernity more broadly in relation to Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan (2012), Duangfang Lu (2011, 2012) and as a critique of Fernando Coronil (1997), Enrique Dussel (1995), Anibal Quijano (1995), and Walter Mignolo (2000).

Beyond the three cuts through spatial political economy (Gramsci, Benjamin, Lefebvre), my aim is to deliver three examples of modernism in specific places. These examples of modernism cut three ways will include Turkey, Mexico, and Australia.

Three cuts through spatial political economy

Antonio Gramsci: The material structure of ideology

Forays into Gramsci as a spatial theorist have focused more on a general surface level of assertions and listings about his relevance to spatial issues (see Jessop, 2006: 29-30; Soja, 1989: 89-90; Said, 1995/2001: 464). More challenging is to deliver precise excavatory work that can contribute to a wider demonstration of how processes of state formation prompted a conceiving of space and place construction within the thinking of Antonio Gramsci.

For Gramsci, 'Americanism and Fordism' was the latest phase in Italy's history of modern state formation as an expression of passive revolution, referring to the reorganisation of state power and class relations as well as the very constitution of political forms to suit the expansion of capitalism as a mode of production. Passive revolution here refers to a set of constructed and contested class practices where aspects of the social relations of capitalist development are either instituted and/or expanded, resulting in both 'revolutionary' rupture and a 'restoration' of social relations across different scales and spatial aspects of the state (Gramsci, 1971: 114-18, Q10II§61; Morton, 2011/2013; Morton, 2017b).[1] It is through the relationship between the urban and the rural that the reorganisation of state power and associated class relations becomes relevant in understanding the expansion of capitalism as a mode of production. 'In Italy there have been the beginnings of a Fordist fanfare: exaltation of big cities, overall planning for the Milan conurbation, etc.; the affirmation that capitalism is only at its beginnings and that it is necessary to prepare for it grandiose patterns of development' (Gramsci, 1971: 287, Q22§2). Captured here are the territorial, spatial and geographical dimensions of uneven development as well as the combined character of its crystallisation within a social formation. The

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[1] A specific convention associated with citing the *Prison Notebooks* is adopted throughout this book. In addition to giving the reference to the selected anthologies, the notebook number (Q) and section (§) accompanies all citations, to enable the reader to trace their specific collocation. The concordance table used is that compiled by Marcus Green and is available at the website of the International Gramsci Society: *http://www.internationalgramscisociety.org/*.

reorganisation of the labour process enacted by the introduction of new methods of rationalisation, regulation and disciplining as well as their impact on familial arrangements, the gendered division of labour, and cultural and ideological forms that were all manifested within 'Americanism and Fordism', led Gramsci to a profound questioning of the spatial and temporal spread of capitalism. Presciently, this entailed raising 'the question of whether Americanism can constitute an historical "epoch", that is, whether it can determine a gradual evolution of the same type as the "passive revolution"…of the last century' (Gramsci, 1971: 279-80, Q22§1).

These conditions relevant to a political economy of space and place construction and thus spatial political economy also provoked Gramsci to produce one of his most fascinating vignettes on the scalar spaces of state power. Penned in 1930, Gramsci's interest is drawn in one singular and very short note to what he refers to as the 'material structure of ideology' denoting:

> how the ideological structure of a ruling class is actually organised: that is, the material organisation meant to preserve, defend and develop the theoretical or ideological "front" (Gramsci, 1996: 52, Q3§49).

Paramount here in his analysis is reference to the role played by the press in general, publishing houses, libraries, schools, the church, associations and clubs, as well as the very spatial grid and layout of streets and their names, as teased out in my work elsewhere (see Bieler and Morton, 2008; Bieler and Morton, 2018: *forthcoming*). As he goes on to indicate, all these factors should be evaluated in order to 'inculcate the habit of assessing the forces of agency in society with greater caution and precision' (Gramsci, 1996: 53, Q3§49). But a critical questioning of the notion of passive revolution also needs to be maintained when engaging alternative contexts. Specifically, Gramsci assumed that an instance of passive revolution occurred within processes of state formation when 'the impetus of progress is not tightly linked to a vast local economic development…but is instead the reflection of international developments which transmit their ideological currents to the periphery—currents born of the productive development of the more advanced countries' (Gramsci, 1971: 116, Q10II§61). So the problem of diffusionism, assuming the straightforward implant of Euro-American productive forces and associated ideological currents from 'core' to 'periphery' is traceable (see Morton, 2017a: *forthcoming*). This imprint of diffusionist

reasoning within the notion of passive revolution means that matters are not "just right" in developing a spatial political economy.

Walter Benjamin: Making the continuum of history explode

As conveyed in Walter Benjamin's essay, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility', written in 1936, architecture is not idle. It has a history as a 'living force' so that buildings can be appropriated in a twofold manner in order to comprehend state-civil society relations (Benjamin, 1936/2006). An architectural site is therefore made up of use (touch) and perception (sight) in order to probe the social function of the built environment.

> Tactile reception comes about not so much by way of attention as by way of habit. The latter largely determines even the optical reception of architecture, which spontaneously takes the form of casual noticing, rather than attentive observation. Under certain circumstances, this form of reception shaped by architecture acquires canonical value. For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at historical turning points cannot be performed solely by optical means—that is, by way of contemplation. They are mastered gradually—taking their cue from tactile reception—through habit (Benjamin,1936/2006: 120).

The encouragement here is to cast attention beyond modernist architects to instead focus on the habit of collective behavior in relation to the everyday material environment. Urban modernism is thus vital for Benjamin because of the collective distraction it acquires through commonplace habit, or reception as a form of distraction. 'Wouldn't it be better', he states in *The Arcades Project* (1999: 391), 'to say "the role of bodily processes"—around which the "artistic" architectures gather, like dreams around the framework of physiological processes?' The predominant focus here is on the tactile appropriation of architectural places to emphasise how the built environment is collectively experienced both in terms of abetting a given order through alienation but also in terms of opening up a redemptive dimension to consider collective emancipation.

In the theses 'On the Concept of History', written in 1940, Benjamin also addresses the notion of struggle through the redemptive aspect of architecture and how the history of past struggles can be connected to the present. Here Benjamin asserts a historicist approach to recover how

history and collective remembrance can rupture the triumphal procession of victors.

> With whom does historicism actually sympathise? The answer is inevitable: with the victor. And all rulers are the heirs of prior conquerors. Hence empathising with the victor invariably benefits the current rulers. The historical materialist knows what this means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which current rulers step over those who are lying prostrate (Benjamin, 1940/2006: 391).

But, as Adolfo Gilly (2006: 28, 45) argues in *Historia a contrapelo*, Walter Benjamin equally asserts how struggles over space may not simply be about returning to, or preserving, the past but rather that there might be redemptive hope in projecting alternative struggles over space. The injunction in the theses On the Concept of History, 'to brush history against the grain' (Benjamin, 1940/2006: 392), is therefore about recovering the utopian aspects transmitted by the cultural legacies of monuments. Such a rupture with the distraction of habit is enacted through the 'now time' of revolution that makes 'the continuum of history explode' (Benjamin, 1940/2006: 395). To blast open the continuum of history, as described in thesis sixteen from 'On the Concept of History', means interrupting the procession of its victors in and through the monuments and triumphal arches of historical consciousness (Benjamin, 1940/2006: 396). The terrifying description of the *Siegessäule*, or the Victory Column (inaugurated in 1873 to commemorate various Prussian war victories), in the essay 'Berlin Childhood around 1900', is one such example. Here Benjamin contrasts the grace of the statue of Victory that sits atop the monument with the dark frescoes of its lower part, representing scenes of war and suffering that affirm the continuum of history (Benjamin, 1938/2006: 347-9). As Michael Löwy interprets, 'the ruling elite appropriates the preceding culture by conquest or other barbaric means and integrates it into its system of social and ideological domination' (Löwy, 2005: 51, 54). As Benjamin himself concludes in 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century': 'we begin to recognise the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled' (Benjamin, 1935/2006: 44). Again, though, this approach to spatial political economy is not quite "just right", as it struggles to move beyond a focus on the perceived and conceived practices and representations of space.

Henri Lefebvre: The right to the production of space

The third cut into a spatial political economy and how the modern state binds itself to the organisation of space involves recourse to the dialectical production of capitalist space addressed by Henri Lefebvre. In *The Production of Space*, it is asserted that, 'monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath the signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought' (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 15, 143). But congruent with Lefebvre (1979: 287), capitalism produces an *abstract space* within which the city form becomes a cradle of accumulation and the centre of historical space producing surplus value. The concept of abstract space is Henri Lefebvre's attempt to grasp capitalist space as it enables, facilitates and projects isolated and homogenous (abstract) functions in and through the production of surplus value. For me, this is where we begin to engage a spatial political economy that is "just right".

Abstract space embodies violence in structural terms constituted by the grids, nodes, networks of property, production and exchange through which the law of value exerts its abstract domination and corresponds to abstract labour and the general form of commodity production within capitalism (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 307, 341, 404). So abstract space encompasses both direct state power and violence direct towards commanding space and the seemingly apolitical form of space—the space of economic infrastructure and technocratic planning—that functions to conceal violence, appearing as a neutral backdrop where 'contradictions...are smothered and replaced by an appearance of consistency' (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 363).

Dominant social practices therefore suffuse abstract space in order to reduce contradictions and diffuse legitimating ideology through the social fabric whereby 'desire and needs are uncoupled, then crudely put back together' by the articulation of 'tranquilising ideas' (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 309). The urban form is therefore replete with dominant class rule using abstract space as a mode of organising the means of production to generate profit (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 314). As such, the accumulation of capital within the urban form relies on the production of surplus value (for instance, through investments in urbanisation, in air space, or the tourism industry); the realisation of surplus value (for example, through the organisation of urban consumption and everyday life); and the allocation of surplus value (such as in ground rents)

(Lefebvre, 1970/2003: 35; Lefebvre, 1978/2009: 247). Within abstract space, as Gwen Guthrie might have put it albeit with a different inflection meant than Karl Marx or Henri Lefebvre, 'Ain't Nothin' Goin' On But the Rent'.

It is the modern state, then, that *claims* a right to the production of space. This is something that David Harvey traces in *Paris*, *Capital of Modernity* in stating how Paris evolved as 'a capital city being shaped by bourgeois power into a city of capital' (Harvey, 2003: 24). 'The state', Lefebvre (1979: 288) outlines in his essay, 'Space: Social Product and Use Value', 'uses space in such a way that it ensures its control of places, its strict hierarchy, the homogeneity of the whole, and the segregation of the parts'. A logic of homogeneity is projected through state space and its claims to arbitrate, occupy, map, control, reproduce and contain.

Contiguous with the focus on the spatial role of the state, for Lefebvre, is also a concentration on the role and function of mimesis, imitation, and its corollaries through architecture. Especially in 'countries in the throes of rapid development', Lefebvre notes, there is a tendency to destroy historic spaces and then reconstitute them as cultural features for tourism and leisure, notably in relation to monumental spaces (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 360). A monumental work will convey a horizon of meanings but the question of space and the social relations of production are condensed in monumental space (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 222, 225). It is through architecture that one witnesses the promotion of mimesis, a form of reasoning projected through the built environment by analogy, and the reproduction of the social relations of production by means of imitation (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 305). But the transformation of space also, of course, produces its own contradictions, its own historical peculiarities and vernacular forms.

Alongside, the abstract space produced by capitalism with its homogenising and repetitive tendencies is, then, a struggle over the right to the production of space and the snowballing of spatial differences (Lefebvre, 1979: 288). This means addressing how the spatial role of the state also produces contradictions that shape counter-spaces attempting to thwart state strategies. The argument for a political economy of space and place has to therefore ensure space for Lefebvre in an endeavour to get spatial political economy "just right".

Modernism cut three ways
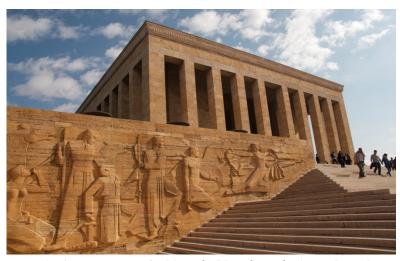
Architecture of Revolution in Turkey

Figure 1: The monument-tomb of Atatürk's Mausoleum, the Anıt-Kabir, Ankara in 2012. Private collection of the author.

The architecture of revolution [*inkılap mimarisi*] of the 1920s and 1930s in Turkey collapsed two meanings into one: combining a focus on aesthetic canons and rationalist/functionalist doctrines of the Modern Movement ['revolution in architecture'] and the building programme of the new Kemalist regime in Turkey associated with the ruling Republican Peoples' Party (RPP) after 1931 ['architecture in revolution'] (see Bozdoĝan and Akcan 2012). The result was a transfer *from* the early Republican Turkish state that relied exclusively on foreign émigré architects and planners *to* shaping its own representative buildings through national vernacular architects e.g. *from* Bruno Taut who was involved in designing all the major state buildings (ministries, schools, and hospitals) in Ankara symbolising the achievements of the Revolution and influenced changes at the Academy of Fine Arts; or Martin Elsaesser who designed the national headquarters of the Sümerbank, 1934-5, as the

state's primary financial institution with a mandate to jump-start national industrialisation *to* Turkish architects and state commissions including the Municipalities Bank in Ankara (Seyfi Arkan, 1935-6), the railway station at Ankara (Şekip Akalın, 1935-7) and the State Monopolies General Directorate (Sedad Eldem, 1937-8). Of course, this also included, after the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in 1938, the most significant representation of state power through monumental architecture in the form of the ultimate nationalist state monument of the republic, Atatürk's Mausoleum, the Anıt-Kabir. This 'monument-tomb' was designed by Emin Onat and Orhan Arda [1942] to evoke an abstract monumentalised version of the classical temple form, extending the history of the Turks back to pre-Islamic Anatolia (the Hittites), depicting the saga of the War of Independence on the wall reliefs leading to the mausoleum, whose colonnaded portico nevertheless had affinities with Albert Speer's architecture in Germany.
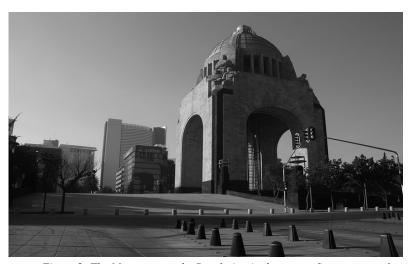
The Monument to the Revolution in Mexico

Figure 2: The Monument to the Revolution in the twenty-first century, after renovations, with the spatial impact of this landmark building somewhat diminished by taller buildings and now surrounded by private financial institutions. Private collection of the author.

Under the *Antiguo Régimen* of the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship (1876-1910), the French architect Émile Bernard was chosen to design a Federal Legislative Palace (1897) in neo-Classical style, with a double cupola structure at the centre made of iron, situated along an axial line linking Avenida Madero to Avenida Juárez in Mexico City, to resemble the United States Capitol (see Morton, 2017a: *forthcoming*). With the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), this specific attempt to project state space and re-eorganize the geography of state territory, remained abandoned. It was not until the post-revolutionary period that the iron skeleton with its double cupola structure was to become part of the construction of a new articulation of state space. Under the post-revolutionary state, the remnants of the Legislative Palace would be used by the Mexican architect Carlos Obregón Santacilia to construct a commemorative initiative as a Monument to the Revolution [1938].

The commission to institutionalise the Mexican Revolution through the state and convert it into a monument also involved contracting Oliverio Martínez, the sculptor known for his equestrian statue of Emiliano Zapata in Cuautla, to design four sculpture groups to be placed at each corner of the base of the monument's double dome. Thought to represent National Independence, Reform, the Redemption of the Peasant, and the Redemption of the Worker, these sculptures further enforce a distinctly Mexican mode of composition blending state ideology with conceptions of modernism. The Plaza de la República surrounding the monument soon became the spatial site for official ceremonies on Revolution Day (20 November) and the Monument to the Revolution has witnessed the coalescence of annual sports festivals ever since. Beginning in 1942, by order of Congress, the ashes or mortal remains of revolutionary 'heroes' have been interned in the bases of the monument. Hence Venustiano Carranza (1942), Francisco I. Madero (1960), Plutarco Elías Calles (1969), and Lazaro Cárdenas (1970) have all been transferred to the pillars of the monument, supposedly along with Francisco 'Pancho' Villa (1976).

Although the social function of the monument has varied across time, most recently its role as a spatial fix for capital accumulation through monopoly rent has come to the fore, especially after a US$25 million renovation with the state extracting surpluses from the site, commodifying the space, and controlling the land of the proximate surroundings as part of urban entrepreneurialism.
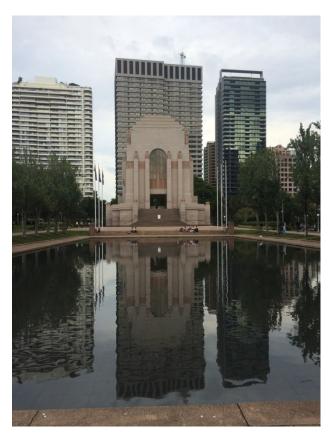
The Anzac Memorial in Australia

*Figure 3: The Anzac Memorial in 2014 prior to renovations and remodelling.
Again, the spatial impact of the original monument is diminished by the
surroundings of the contemporary cityscape. Private collection of the author.*

The Anzac Memorial [1934] in Hyde Park, Sydney, was designed by
Bruce Dellit and developed in collaboration with Rayner Hoff, an
English immigrant who arrived from Nottingham to Australia in 1923
(see Beck 2017). The Art Deco design reflects the interwar years marked
by extensive large-scale governmental programmes of social change and

vitalist conceptions of modernity that combined sexualised male and female bodies, drawn from a classical legacy, and related to national identity and utopian politics. The granite sculptures set into the corners of the superstructure are those of a naval commander, matron, air force officer, and lieutenant with the building itself both acting as a commemorative site but also an administrative centre for returned sailors' and soldiers' associations. In Bruce Dellit's own words, from *The Book of the Anzac Memorial, N.S.W.*, the design 'is intended to express with dignity and simplicity neither the glory nor the glamour of war, but those nobler attributes of human nature which the great tragedy of Nations so vividly brought forth—Courage, Endurance, and Sacrifice' (Dellit, 1934: 46). According to Virginia Spate, though, the monument, 'denies memory in that it allows the spectator no space for his or her experience', and, 'it is, indeed, more a monument to the beliefs of the social establishment and the artistic avant-garde who controlled its making' (Spate, 1999: 53, 54). But as one contemporary tourist pamphlet linked to this memorial attests, this is very much 'a living memorial' whose continued role as a site of remembrance is still to be tracked. What Doreen Massey (2005: 12) calls, in *For Space*, 'the stories-so-far' are still to be written about the Anzac Memorial, not least because of the announcement in 2015 of plans to redevelop the site at a cost of AU$20.3 million to the NSW Government in addition to AU$19.6 million from the Federal Government and AU$7.5 million from the City of Sydney to complete the original 1930s vision of the Memorial.[2] As Paul Daley has documented, the costs of the centenary 'Anzac 100' commemorations have been calculated at AU$552 million to the Federal and NSW State governments that equates to AU$8,800 for each Australian killed in World War I, compared to $109 per British fatality and $2 for each German.[3] Set alongside projects such as the redevelopment of Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden (estimated at AU$17 million), or the leasing of the

[2] Sydney Morning Herald, 'Sydney's Anzac Memorial to undergo $40 million revamp', (19 July 2015); available online: *http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydneys-anzac-memorial-to-undergo-40-million-revamp-20150719-gifo2o.html*; accessed online 22 July 2016 and The Anzac Memorial, Centenary Project, *http://www.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/anzac-memorial-centenary-project*; accessed 22 July 2016.

[3] Paul Daley, 'Australia's lavish spending on Anzac memorials cloaks a more distasteful reality', *The Guardian* (11 November 2015); available online: *https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2015/nov/11/lavish-spending-first-world-war-commemorations-cloak-distasteful-reality*; accessed 26 July 2016.

state of New South Wales' "poles and wires" TransGrid network to investors to fund infrastructure works (estimated at over AU$10 billion), or the redevelopment at the Barangaroo foreshore in Sydney (estimated at AU$6 billion), or the contentious and contested WestConnex motorway scheme (estimated at AU$16.8 billion) one can get a sense of the part played by the creation of social and physical infrastructures in absorbing surpluses of capital to support further accumulation in the construction of abstract space.

Conclusion

A spatial political economy necessarily turns our attention to the realm of the everyday as an extension of capitalist social relations of production within abstract space. Abstract space, 'corresponds, however, to *abstract labour*...and hence the general form of the commodity' (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 307). The extension of the commodity and the market where exchange value prevails as an implacable logic over everyday life is pivotal. Capitalism, 'can achieve nothing but abstractions: money and commodities, capital itself, and hence *abstract labour*...within abstract space' (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 348, original emphasis).[4] Across the grid of urban space the street is regarded as a crucial place of movement and circulation, order and resistance and so too is the monument. The construction of monuments can be critically appraised as reflective of repressive relations, the seat of institutional power, laden with symbols that draw our consideration to such expressions of the built environment and the idea of *habiting* architecture within capitalism. Equally, monuments are a site of collective social life holding a multifunctionality and expressing an ethical and aesthetic power that can project a sense of alternative being, a differential space, an awareness of utopic space (Lefebvre, 1970/2003: 21).

The struggle for spatial political economy is therefore over such a critique of everyday life to contest forms of cultural reproduction,

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[4] After the inaugural lecture, this issue cropped up in the questions and answers session, notably with the comradely interventions by Joe Collins and Troy Henderson. My hope is that this commentary on abstract space and its relationship to capitalist production, distribution and consumption and thus abstract labour helps to nudge along the debate— albeit without resolving—how spatial political economy may address the space of capitalism.

including architecture and monuments, specifically in the renewal of the abstract space of capitalism. A spatial political economy can then also highlight struggles over differential space, or spaces of difference, challenging the right of the state to the production of space and the associated violent abstractions of capitalism.

Adam David Morton is Professor of Political Economy at the University of Sydney. This article is the text that animated his 'Sydney Insights' (or Professorial Inaugural) Lecture that was entitled 'For a Political Economy of Space and Place' and given at the University of Sydney (4 August 2016). The paper was written in the register of a lecture and carries its discursive style. The only significant additions are the bibliographic references to assist the reader in following the links raised.

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