for space

doreen massey

Presenting an impassioned argument for revitalising our imagination of space, Doreen Massey takes on some well-established assumptions from philosophy, and some familiar ways of characterising the twenty-first century world, and shows how they restrain our understanding of both the challenge and the potential of space.

The way we think about space matters. It inflects our understandings of the world, our attitudes to others, our politics. It affects, for instance, the way we understand globalisation, the way we approach cities, the way we develop, and practice, a sense of place. If time is the dimension of change then space is the dimension of the social: the contemporaneous co-existence of others. That is its challenge, and one that has been persistently evaded. ***for space*** pursues its argument through philosophical and theoretical engagement, and through telling personal and political reflection. Doreen Massey asks questions such as how best to characterise these so-called spatial times, how it is that implicit spatial assumptions inflect our politics, and how we might develop a responsibility for place beyond place.

This book is 'for space' in that it argues for a reinvigoration of the spatiality of our implicit cosmologies. ***for space*** is essential reading for anyone interested in space and the spatial turn in the social sciences and humanities. Serious, and sometimes irreverent, it is a compelling manifesto: for re-imagining spaces for these times and facing up to their challenge.

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Cover photograph: Doreen Massey

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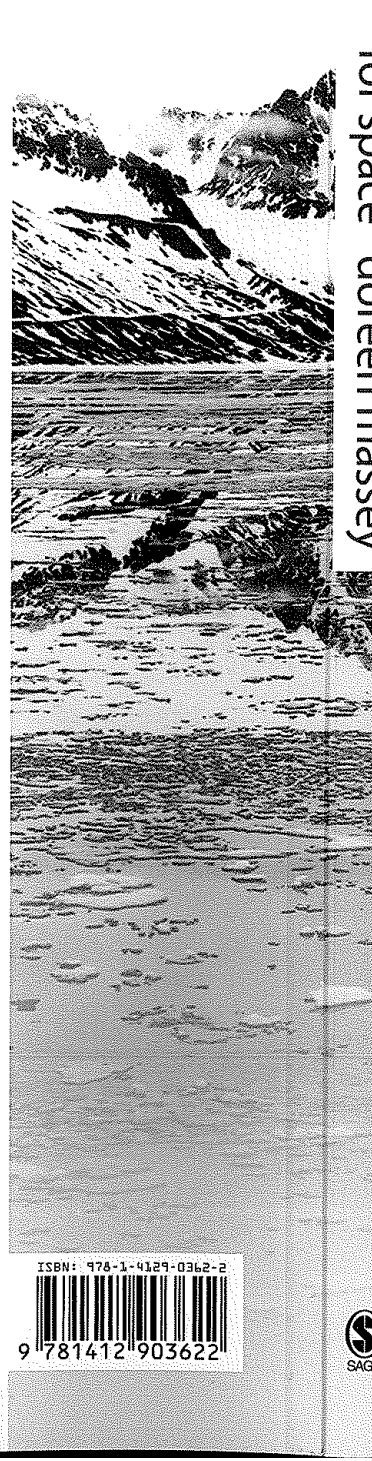

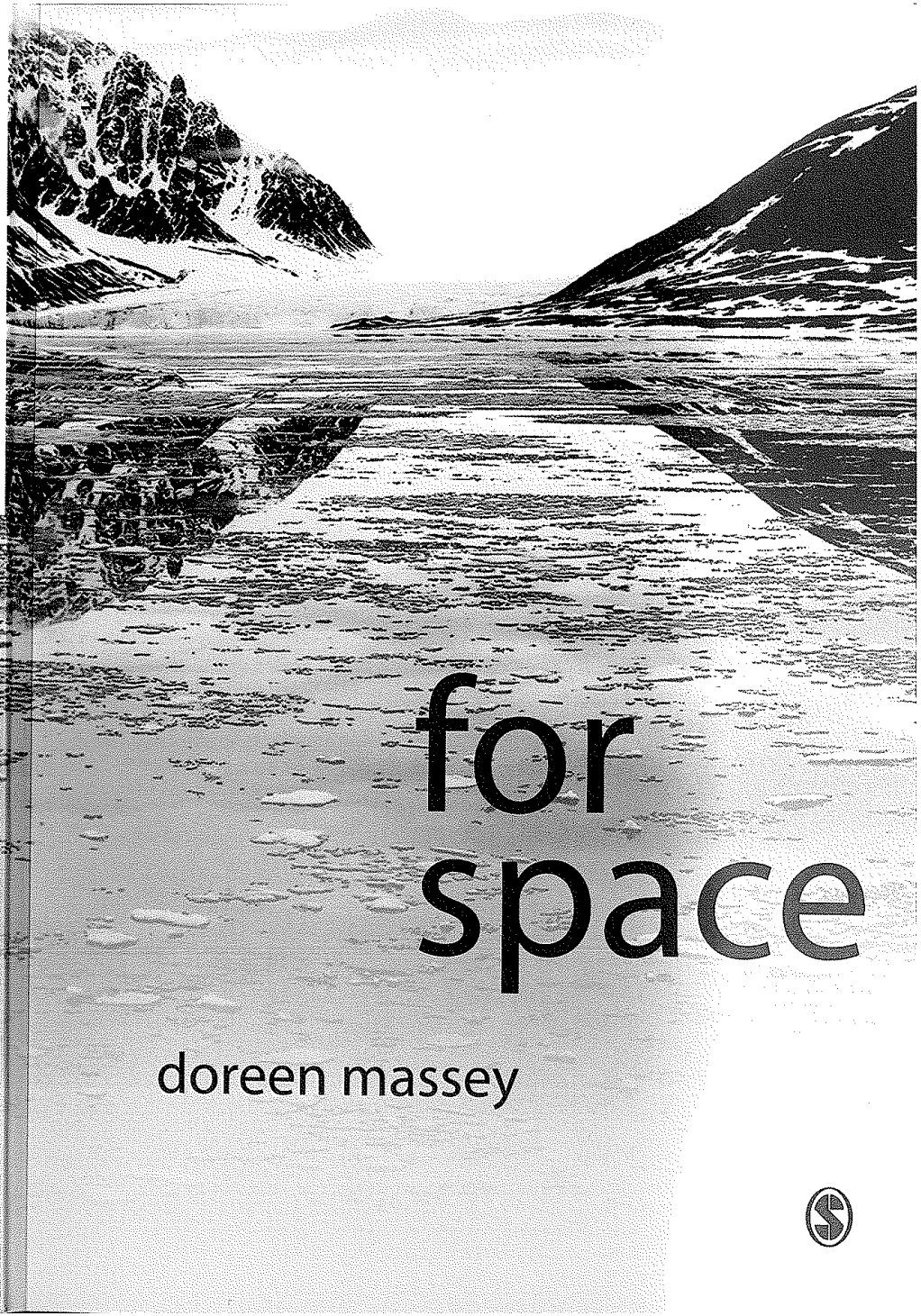

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SAGE

Los Angeles • London • New Delhi • Singapore • Washington DC

First published 2005
Reprinted 2007, 2008

SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B-42, Panchsheel Enclave
Post Box 4109
New Delhi 110 017

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4129-0361-5
ISBN 978-1-4129-0362-2 (pbk)

Library of Congress Control Number 2004094666

Typeset by C&M Digitals (P) Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed on paper from sustainable resources
Printed in Great Britain by CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Contents

acknowledgements

This book has been written, and rewritten, over a number of years in the increasingly pressured interstices of life as 'an academic'. It would be impossible to thank everyone who has influenced my ideas, in conversations variously intense and meandering, over that time but I should like to acknowledge just a few. The Geography Department at the Open University is constantly provocative of new thoughts. Within the department John Allen, Dave Featherstone (now at Liverpool), Steve Pile, and Arun Saldanha (now at Minnesota) gave me really helpful comments on all or part of the manuscript. More widely, I gained much from seminar discussions of these ideas at a number of universities, and especially at the Geography Departments at Queen Mary, University of London, and the University of Heidelberg. An annual Reading Weekend of German-speaking geographers has been a source of inspiration and friendship. Many of the arguments here, though, have had their source, and have been tested, in the world beyond academe – in the ordinary things of life and in a whole variety of political engagements. In the process of production I have benefited from the expert help of the team at SAGE, Robert Rojek, David Mainwaring, Janey Walker and Vanessa Harwood, and from the secretarial assistance of Michele Marsh at the Open University. In particular I should like to thank Neeru Thakrar, also at the Open University, whose skills in producing the typed manuscript and her professional administrative support have been invaluable. Finally, the longest conversation has been with my sister Hilary Corton, herself by education, imagination and passion also a geographer and with whom in the course of much walking talking and general travelling many of the thoughts here have developed.

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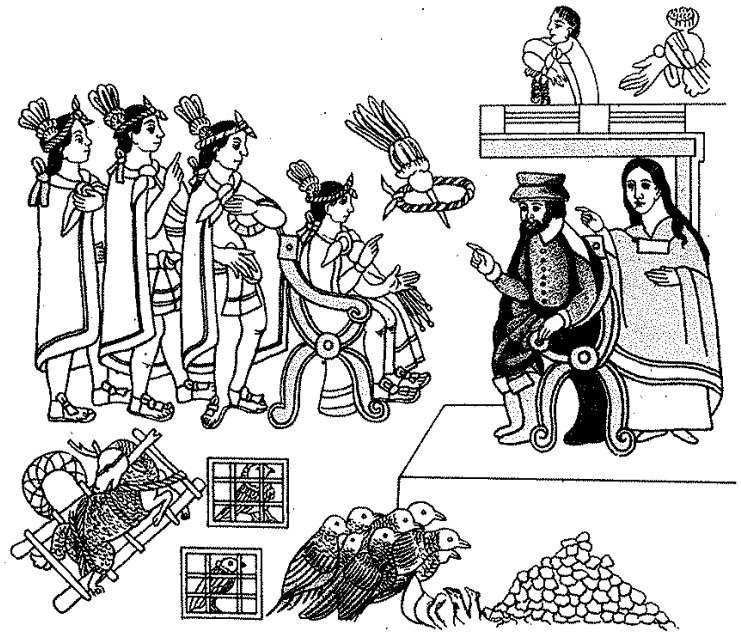
Texts

The boxed text on p.165 is courtesy of Greenpeace (http://www.greenpeace.org)

Part *Three* develops arguments first outlined in 'Imagining Globalisation: Power-Geometries of Time-Space', Chapter 2 of *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalization* edited by Atvar Brah, Mary J. Hickman and Máirtin Mac an Ghaill. Thanks to the British Sociological Association and BSA Publications Limited.



Tenochtitlan. Tierra del nopal. Entrada de Hernan Cortes, la cual se verificó el 8 de Noviembre de 1519.

Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Part *One*
Setting the scene

I've been thinking about 'space' for a long time. But usually I've come at it indirectly, through some other kind of engagement. The battles over globalisation, the politics of place, the question of regional inequality, the engagements with 'nature' as I walk the hills, the complexities of cities. Picking away at things that don't seem quite right. Losing political arguments because the terms don't fit what it is you're struggling to say. Finding myself in quandaries of apparently contradictory feelings. It is through these persistent ruminations – that sometimes don't seem to go anywhere and then sometimes do – that I have become convinced both that the implicit assumptions we make about space are important and that, maybe, it could be productive to think about space differenly.

Three ruminations

1 The armies were approaching the city from the quarter named the reed or crocodile – the direction in which the sun rises. Much was known about them already. Tales had come back from outlying provinces. Tax gatherers from the city, collecting tribute from conquered territories, had met up with them. Envoys had been despatched, to engage in talks, to find out more. And now neighbouring groups, chafing against their long subordination to the Aztec city, had thrown in their lot with the strange invaders. Yet in spite of all these prior contacts, the constant flow of messages, rumours, interpretations reaching the city, the approaching army was still a mystery. ('The strangers sat on "deer as high as the rooftops". Their bodies were completely covered, "only their faces can be seen. They are white, as if made of lime. They have yellow hair, although some have black. Long are their beards."'[1]) And they were arriving from the geographical direction which, in these time-spaces, was held to be that of authority.

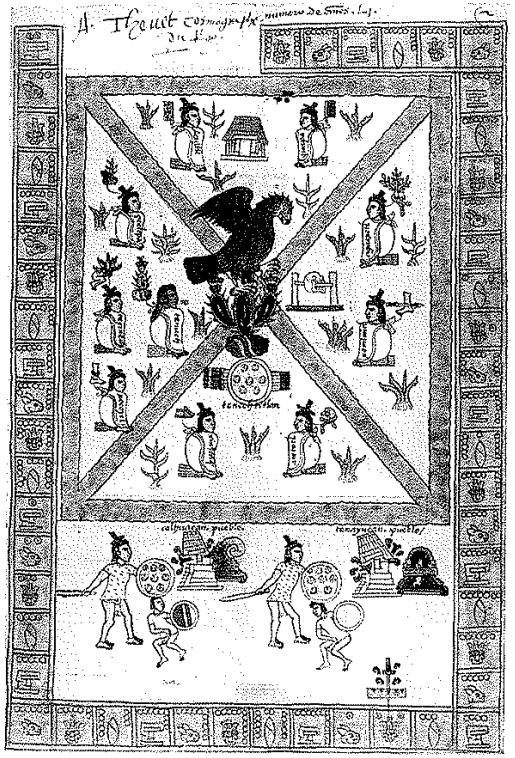


figure 1.1a *Tenochtitlán – Aztec depiction*
Source: The Bodleian Library

It was also the Year One Reed, a year of both historical and cosmological significance: a particular point in the cycle of years. Over past cycles the city had become mightily successful. It was only a few cycles ago that the Mexica/Aztecs had first set up in this huge high valley. They had arrived from the direction of the flint and after long wanderings; an uncultivated people in the eyes of the cities already established around the lake. But since their arrival, and the founding of this city Tenochtitlán, the Aztecs had piled success upon success. The city was now the biggest in the world. Its empire now stretched, through conquest and continual violent subordination, to the ocean in two directions.

Thus far the Aztecs had conquered all before them. But these armies approaching now are ominous. Empires do not last for ever. Only recently Azcapotzalco, on the edge of the lake, had been brought down after a brief blaze of glory. And Tula, seat of

the revered Toltecs, now lies deserted, as do the ruins of Teotihuacan. All these are reminders of previous splendours, and of their fragility. And now these strange invaders are coming from the direction of acatl; and it is the Year One Reed.

Such things are important. Coincidences of events form the structures of time-space. For Moctezuma they add to the whole wretched conundrum of how to respond. It could be a moment of crisis for the Empire.[2]

The men in the approaching army could hardly believe their eyes when they first looked down upon the city. They had heard that it was splendid but this was five times the size of Madrid, in the changing Europe which they had left behind just a few years ago. And these voyages, originally, had set out towards the west in the hope of finding the east. When, some years before, Cristobal Colón had 'headed across the great emptiness west of Christendom, he had accepted the challenge of legend. Terrible storms would play with his ships as if they were nutshells and hurl them into the jaws of monsters; the sea serpent, hungry for human flesh, would be lying in wait in the murky depths. ... navigators spoke of strange corpses and curiously carved pieces of wood that floated in on the west wind ...'[3] It was now the Year of Our Lord 1519.[4] This small army, with Hernán Cortés at its head and its few horses and its armour, had sailed from what their leaders had decided to call Cuba at the beginning of the year, and now it was November. The

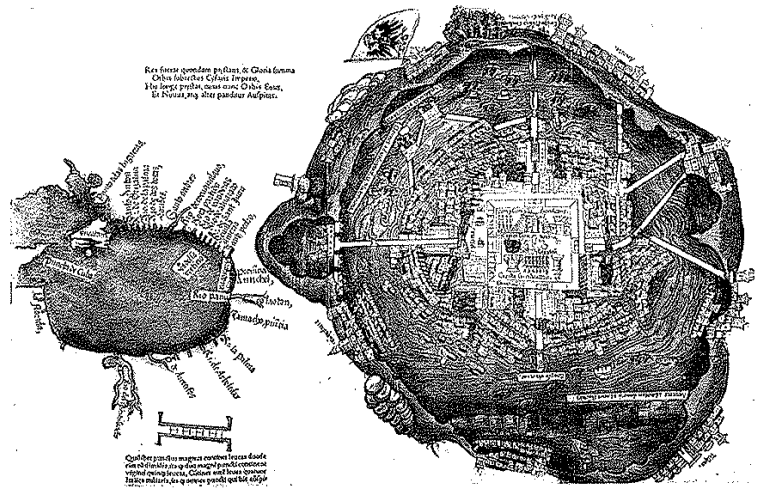


figure 1.1b *Tenochtitlán – Spanish depiction*
Source: The Newberry Library

journey from the coast had been hard and violent, with battles and the making of alliances. Finally, now, they had heaved to the top of this pass between two snow-capped volcanoes. To Cortés' left and high above him, Popocatepetl steamed endlessly. And below him, in the distance, lay this incredible city, like nothing he had ever seen before.

There were to be two years of duplicitous negotiation, miscalculation, bloodshed, rout, retreat and readvance before Hernán Cortés, Spanish conquistador, conquered the city of the Aztecs, Tenochtitlán, which today we call la ciudad de México, Mexico City, Distrito Federal.

The way, today, we often tell that story, or any of the tales of 'voyages of discovery', is in terms of crossing and conquering space. Cortés voyaged across space, found Tenochtitlán, and took it. 'Space', in this way of telling things, is an expanse we travel across. It seems perhaps all very obvious.

But the way we imagine space has effects – as it did, each in different ways, for Moctezuma and Cortés. Conceiving of space as in the voyages of discovery, as something to be crossed and maybe conquered, has particular ramifications. Implicitly, it equates space with the land and sea, with the earth which stretches out around us. It also makes space seem like a surface; continuous and given. It differentiates: Hernán, active, a maker of history, journeys across this surface and finds Tenochtitlán upon it. It is an unthought cosmology, in the gentlest sense of that term, but it carries with it social and political effects. So easily this way of imagining space can lead us to conceive of other places, peoples, cultures simply as phenomena 'on' this surface. It is not an innocent manoeuvre, for by this means they are deprived of histories. Immobilised, they await Cortés' (or our, or global capital's) arrival. They lie there, on space, in place, without their own trajectories. Such a space makes it more difficult to see in our mind's eye the histories the Aztecs too have been living and producing. What might it mean to reorientate this imagination, to question that habit of thinking of space as a surface? If, instead, we conceive of a meeting-up of histories, what happens to our implicit imaginations of time and space?

2 The current governments in the UK and the USA (and plenty of other current governments besides) tell us a story of the inevitability of globalisation. (Or rather, although they do not of course make this distinction, they tell us a story of the inevitability of that particular form of neoliberal capitalist globalisation which we are experiencing at the moment – that duplicitous combination of the glorification of the (unequally) free movement of capital on the one hand with the firm control over the movement of labour on the other. Anyhow, they tell us it's inevitable.) And if you

point to differences around the globe, to Moçambique or Mali or Nicaragua, they will tell you such countries are just 'behind'; that eventually they will follow the path along which the capitalist West has led. In 1998 Bill Clinton delivered himself of the reflection that 'we' can no more resist the current forces of globalisation than we can resist the force of gravity. Let us pass over the possibilities of resisting the force of gravity, noting merely that this is a man who spends a good deal of his life flying about in aeroplanes .... More seriously, this proposition was delivered unto us by a man who had spent much of his recent career precisely trying to protect and promote (through GATT, the WTO, the speeding-up of NAFTA/TLC) this supposedly implacable force of nature. We know the counter argument: 'globalisation' in its current form is not the result of a law of nature (itself a phenomenon under dispute). It is a project. What statements such as Clinton's are doing is attempting to persuade us that there is no alternative. This is not a description of the world as it is so much as an image in which the world is being made.

This much is now well established in critiques of today's globalisation. But it is perhaps less often made explicit that one of the crucial manoeuvres at work within it, to convince us of the ineluctability of this globalisation, is a sleight of hand in terms of the conceptualisation of space and time. The proposition turns geography into history, space into time. And this again has social and political effects. It says that Moçambique and Nicaragua are not really different from 'us'. We are not to imagine them as having their own trajectories, their own particular histories, and the potential for their own, perhaps different, futures. They are not recognised as coeval others. They are merely at an earlier stage in the one and only narrative it is possible to tell. That cosmology of 'only one narrative' obliterates the multiplicities, the contemporaneous heterogeneities of space. It reduces simultaneous coexistence to place in the historical queue.

And so again: what if? What if we refuse to convene space into time? What if we open up the imagination of the single narrative to give space (literally) for a multiplicity of trajectories? What kinds of conceptualisation of time and space, and of their relation, might that give on to?

3 And then there is 'place'. In the context of a world which is, indeed, increasingly interconnected the notion of place (usually evoked as 'local place') has come to have totemic resonance. Its symbolic value is endlessly mobilised in political argument. For some it is the sphere of the everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographical source of meaning, vital to hold on to as 'the global' spins its ever more powerful and alienating webs. For others, a 'retreat to place' represents a protective pulling-up of drawbridges and a building of walls against the new invasions. Place, on this reading, is the locus of denial, of attempted withdrawal from

invasion/difference. It is a politically conservative haven, an essentialising (and in the end unviable) basis for a response; one that fails to address the real forces at work. It has, undoubtedly, been the background imagination for some of the worst of recent conflicts. The upheavals in 1989 in various parts of old communist Europe brought a resurgence, on a new scale and with a new intensity, of nationalisms and territorial parochialisms characterised by claims to exclusivity, by assertions of the home-grown rooted authenticity of local specificity and by a hostility to at least some designated others. But then what of the defence of place by working-class communities in the teeth of globalisation, or by aboriginal groups clinging to a last bit of land?

Place plays an ambiguous role in all of this. Horror at local exclusivities sits uneasily against support for the vulnerable struggling to defend their patch. While place is claimed, or rejected, in these arguments in a startling variety of ways, there are often shared undergirding assumptions: of place as closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as 'home', a secure retreat; of space as somehow originarily regionalised, as always-already divided up.[5] And more than that again, they institute, implicitly but held within the very discourses that they mobilise, a counterposition, sometimes even a hostility, certainly an implicit imagination of different theoretical 'levels' (of the abstract versus the everyday, and so forth), between space on the one hand and place on the other.

What then if we refuse this imagination? What then not only of the nationalisms and parochialisms which we might gladly see thereby undermined, but also of the notion of local struggles or of the defence of place more generally? And what if we refuse that distinction, all too appealing it seems, between place (as meaningful, lived and everyday) and space (as what? the outside? the abstract? the meaning*less*)?

It is in the context of worrying away at questions such as these that the arguments here have evolved. Some of the moments that generated the thinking here I have written about before – 1989, the conflicts of class and ethnicity in east London, the elusive Frenchness of sitting in a Parisian café – but they have persisted, and crop up again here pushed a little further. Encounters with the apparently familiar but where something continues to trouble, and unexpected lines of thought slowly unwind. Most of all, the arguments which follow took shape, theoretically and politically, in the context of the perniciousness of exclusivist localisms and the grim inequalities of today's hegemonic form of globalisation; and in the face of the difficulties, too, of responding. It was wrestling with the formulation of these political issues that led to the prising open of their, often hidden, ways of conceiving of space.

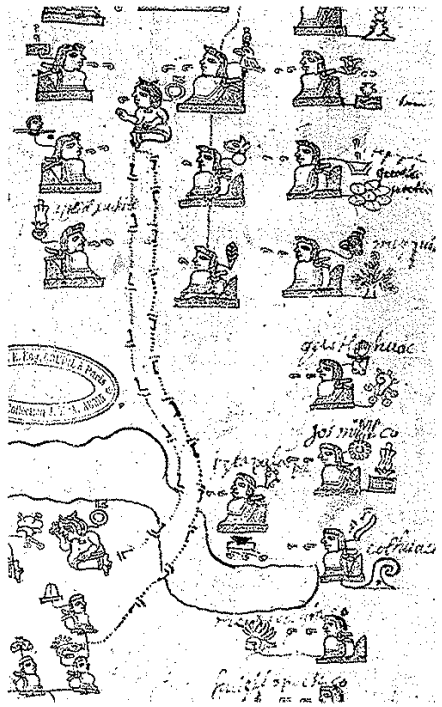


figure 1.2 *Aztec footsteps in the Codex Xolotl*

Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France

In the Year One Reed/Year of Our Lord 1519, among the many aspects of radical otherness that came face-to-face in the Valley of Mexico was the manner of imagining 'space'. Cortés carried with him aspects of an incipient version of present Western imaginations at the beginning of their triumphal progress; but imaginations still embedded in myth and emotion. For the Aztecs, too, though very differently, gods, time and space were inextricably linked. A 'basic aspect of the Aztec world view' was 'a tendency to focus on things in the process of becoming another' (Townsend, 1992, p. 122) and 'Mexica thought did not recognise an abstract space and time, separate and homogeneous dimensions, but rather concrete complexes of space and time, heterogeneous and singular sites and events. … "place-moments" ["lugares momentos"]' (Soustelle, 1956, p. 120; my translation).

The Codex Xolotl, a hybrid construction, tells stories. Events are linked by footsteps and dotted lines between places. 'The manuscript is read by locating the origin of the footprints and deciphering the place signs as they occur on these itineraries' (Harley, 1990, p. 101). Whereas the general assumption about Western maps today is that they are representations of space, these maps, as were the European mappae mundi, were representations of time and space together.

The imagination of space as a surface on which we are placed, the turning of space into time, the sharp separation of local place from the space out there; these are all ways of taming the challenge that the inherent spatiality of the world presents. Most often, they are unthought. Those who argue that Moçambique is just 'behind' do not (presumably) do so as a consequence of much deep pondering upon the nature of, and the relationship between, space and time. Their conceptualisation of space, its reduction to a dimension for the display/representation of different moments in time, is one assumes, implicit. In that they are not alone. One of the recurring motifs in what follows is just how *little*, actually, space is thought about explicitly. None the less, the persistent

associations leave a residue of effects. We develop ways of incorporating a spatiality into our ways of being in the world, modes of coping with the challenge that the enormous reality of space throws up. Produced through and embedded in practices, from quotidian negotiations to global strategising, these implicit engagements of space feed back into and sustain wider understandings of the world. The trajectories of others can be immobilised while we proceed with our own; the real challenge of the contemporaneity of others can be deflected by their relegation to a past (backward, old-fashioned, archaic); the defensive enclosures of an essentialised place seem to enable a wider disengagement, and to provide a secure foundation. In that sense, each of the earlier ruminations provides an example of some kind of failure (deliberate or not) of spatial imagination. Failure in the sense of being inadequate to face up to the challenges of space; a failure to take on board its coeval multiplicities, to accept its radical contemporaneity, to deal with its constitutive complexity. What happens if we try to let go of those, by now almost intuitive, understandings?

1
opening propositions

This book makes the case for an alternative approach to space. It has both the virtue, and all the disadvantages, of appearing obvious. Yet the ruminations above, and much that is to come, imply that it still needs elaborating.

It is easiest to begin by boiling it down to a few propositions. They are the following. *First*, that we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. (This is a proposition which will come as no surprise at all to those who have been reading recent anglophone geographical literature.) *Second*, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive. *Third*, that we recognise space as always under construction. Precisely because space on this reading is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far.

Now, these propositions resonate with recent shifts in certain quarters in the way in which progressive politics can also be imagined. Indeed it is part of my argument, not just that the spatial is political (which, after many years and much writing thereupon, can be taken as given), but rather that thinking the spatial in a particular way can shake up the manner in which certain political questions are formulated, can contribute to political arguments already under way, and – most deeply – can be an essential element in the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up to the very sphere of the political. Some of these possibilities can already be drawn out from the brief statement of propositions. Thus, although it would be incorrect, and too rigidly constraining, to propose any simple one-to-one mapping, it is possible to elucidate

from each a slightly different aspect of the potential range of connections between the imagination of the spatial and the imagination of the political.

Thus, *first*, understanding space as a product of interrelations chimes well with the emergence over recent years of a politics which attempts a commitment to anti-essentialism. In place of an individualistic liberalism or a kind of identity politics which takes those identities as already, and for ever, constituted, and argues for the rights of, or claims to equality for, those already-constituted identities, this politics takes the constitution of the identities themselves and the relations through which they are constructed to be one of the central stakes of the political. 'Relations' here, then, are understood as embedded practices. Rather than accepting and working with already-constituted entities/identities, this politics lays its stress upon the relational constructedness of things (including those things called political subjectivities and political constituencies). It is wary therefore about claims to authenticity based in notions of unchanging identity. Instead, it proposes a relational understanding of the world, and a politics which responds to that.

The politics of interrelations mirrors, then, the first proposition, that space too is a product of interrelations. Space does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations. More generally I would argue that identities/entities, the relations 'between' them, and the spatiality which is part of them, are all co-constitutive. Chantal Mouffe (1993, 1995), in particular, has written of how we might conceptualise the relational construction of political subjectivities. For her, identities and interrelations are constituted together. But spatiality may also be from the beginning integral to the constitution of those identities themselves, including political subjectivities. Moreover, specifically spatial identities (places, nations) can equally be reconceptualised in relational terms. Questions of the geographies of relations, and of the geographies of the necessity of their negotiation (in the widest sense of that term) run through the book. If no space/place is a coherent seamless authenticity then one issue which is raised is the question of its internal negotiation. And if identities, both specifically spatial and otherwise, are indeed constructed relationally then that poses the question of the geography of those relations of construction. It raises questions of the politics of those geographies and of our relationship to and responsibility for them; and it raises, conversely and perhaps less expectedly, the potential geographies of our social responsibility.

Second, imagining space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity resonates with the greater emphasis which has over recent years in political discourses of the left been laid on 'difference' and heterogeneity. The most evident form which this has taken has been the insistence that the story of the world cannot be told (nor its geography elaborated) as the story of 'the West' alone nor as the story of, for instance, that classic figure (ironically frequently itself essentialised) of the white, heterosexual male; that these were particular stories among many (and that their understanding through the eyes

of the West or the straight male is itself specific). Such trajectories were part of a complexity and not the universals which they have for so long proposed themselves to be.

The relationship between this aspect of a changing politics (and manner of doing social theory) and the second proposition about space is of a rather different nature from in the case of the first proposition. In this case, the argument is that the very possibility of any serious recognition of multiplicity and heterogeneity itself depends on a recognition of spatiality. The political corollary is that a genuine, thorough, spatialisation of social theory and political thinking can force into the imagination a fuller recognition of the simultaneous coexistence of others with their own trajectories and their own stories to tell. The imagination of globalisation as a historical queue does not recognise the simultaneous coexistence of other histories with characteristics that are distinct (which does not imply unconnected) and futures which potentially may be so too.

Third, imagining space as always in process, as never a closed system, resonates with an increasingly vocal insistence within political discourses on the genuine openness of the future. It is an insistence founded in an attempt to escape the inexorability which so frequently characterises the grand narratives related by modernity. The frameworks of Progress, of Development and of Modernisation, and the succession of modes of production elaborated within Marxism, all propose scenarios in which the general directions of history, including the future, are known. However much it may be necessary to fight to bring them about, to engage in struggles for their achievement, there was always none the less a background conviction about the direction in which history was moving. Many today reject such a formulation and argue instead for a radical openness of the future, whether they argue it through radical democracy (for example Laclau, 1990; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001), through notions of active experimentation (as in Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; Deleuze and Parnet, 1987) or through certain approaches within queer theory (see as one instance Haver, 1997). Indeed, as Laclau in particular would most strongly argue, only if we conceive of the future as open can we seriously accept or engage in any genuine notion of politics. Only if the future is open is there any ground for a politics which can make a difference.

Now, here again – as in the case of the first proposition – there is a parallel with the conceptualisation of space. Not only history but also space is open.[6] In this open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished. Here, then, space is indeed a product of relations (first proposition) and for that to be so there must be multiplicity (second proposition). However, these are not the relations of a coherent, closed system within which, as they say, everything is (already) related to everything else. Space can never be that completed simultaneity in which all interconnections have been established,

and in which everywhere is already linked with everywhere else. A space, then, which is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links. *For* the future to be open, space must be open too.

All these words come trailing clouds of connotations. To write of challenging the opposition between space and place might legitimately provoke thoughts of Heidegger (but that is not what I mean). Talking of 'difference' can engender assumptions about othering (but that is not what I am getting at). Mention of multiplicities evokes, among others, Bergson, Deleuze, Guattari (and there will be some engagement later with that strand of thought). A few preliminary clarifications might help.

By 'trajectory' and 'story' I mean simply to emphasise the process of change in a phenomenon. The terms are thus temporal in their stress, though, I would argue, their necessary spatiality (the positioning in relation to other trajectories or stories, for instance) is inseparable from and intrinsic to their character. The phenomenon in question may be a living thing, a scientific attitude, a collectivity, a social convention, a geological formation. Both 'trajectory' and 'story' have other connotations which are not intended here. 'Trajectory' is a term that figures in debates about representation that have had important and abiding influences on the concepts of space and time (see the discussion in Part *Two*). 'Story' brings with it connotations of something told, of an interpreted history; but what I intend is simply the history, change, movement, of things themselves.

That bundle of words difference/heterogeneity/multiplicity/plurality has also provoked much contention. All I mean at this point is the contemporaneous existence of a plurality of trajectories; a simultaneity of stories-so-far. Thus the minimum difference occasioned by being positioned raises already the fact of uniqueness. This is, then, not 'difference' as opposed to class, as in some old political battles. It is simply the principle of coexisting heterogeneity. It is not the particular nature of heterogeneities but the fact of them that is intrinsic to space. Indeed it puts into question what might *be* the pertinent lines of differentiation in any particular situation. Nor is this 'difference' as in the deconstructive move of spac*ing*: as in the deconstruction of discourses of authenticity, for instance. This does not mean that such discourses are not significant in the cultural moulding of space; nor that they should not be taken to task. Romances of coherent nationhood, as in the third rumination, may operate on precisely such principles of constituting identity/difference. David Sibley (1995, 1999) among others has explored such attempts at the purification of space. Indeed, they are precisely one way of coping with its heterogeneities – its actual complexity and openness. But the point at issue here is another one: not negative difference but positive

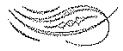
heterogeneity. This links back to the political argument against essentialism. Insofar as that argument adopted a form of social constructionism which was confined to the discursive, it did not in itself offer a positive alternative. Thus in the particular case of space, it may help us to expose some of its presumed coherences but it does not properly bring it to life. It is that liveliness, the complexity and openness of the configurational itself, the positive multiplicity, which is important for an appreciation of the spatial.

This book is an essay on the challenge of space, the multiple ruses through which that challenge has been so persistently evaded, and the political implications of practising it differently. In pursuit of this there is inevitable engagement with many other theorists and theoretical approaches, including many whose explicit focus is not always on spatiality. They are referenced in the text. But it is perhaps important to say now that my argument is not simply in the mould of any one of them. I have not worked from texts on space but through situations and engagements in which the question of space has in some way been entangled. Rather, my preoccupation with pushing away at space/politics has moulded positions *on* philosophy, and on a range of concepts. The debates about heterogeneity/difference and social constructionism/discourse are cases in point. Equations of representation with spatialisation have troubled me; associations of space with synchrony exasperated me; persistent assumptions of space as the opposite of time have kept me thinking; analyses that remained within the discursive have just not been positive enough. It has been a reciprocal engagement. What I'm interested in is how we might imagine spaces for these times; how we might pursue an alternative imagination. What is needed, I think, is to uproot 'space' from that constellation of concepts in which it has so unquestioningly so often been embedded (stasis; closure; representation) and to settle it among another set of ideas (heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness ... liveliness indeed) where it releases a more challenging political landscape.

There has, as is often now recounted, been a long history of understanding space as 'the dead, the fixed' in Foucault's famous retrospection. More recently and in total contrast there has been a veritable extravaganza of non-Euclidean, black-holey, Riemannian ... and a variety of other previously topologically improbable evocations. Somewhere between these two lie the arguments I want to make. What you will find here is an attempt to awaken space from the long sleep engendered by the inattention of the past but one which remains perhaps more prosaic, though none the less challenging, than some recent formulations. That is what I found to be most productive. This is a book about ordinary space; the space and places through which, in the negotiation of relations within multiplicities, the social is constructed. It is in that sense a modest proposal, and yet the very persistence, the apparent obviousness, of other mobilisations of 'space', point to its continuing necessity.

There are many who have pondered the challenges and delights of *temporality*. Sometimes this has been done through the lens of that strand of anthropocentric

philosophical miserabilism which preoccupies itself with the inevitability of death. In other guises temporality has been extolled as the vital dimension of life, of existence itself. The argument here is that space is equally lively and equally challenging, and that, far from it being dead and fixed, the very enormity of its challenges has meant that the strategies for taming it have been many, varied and persistent.



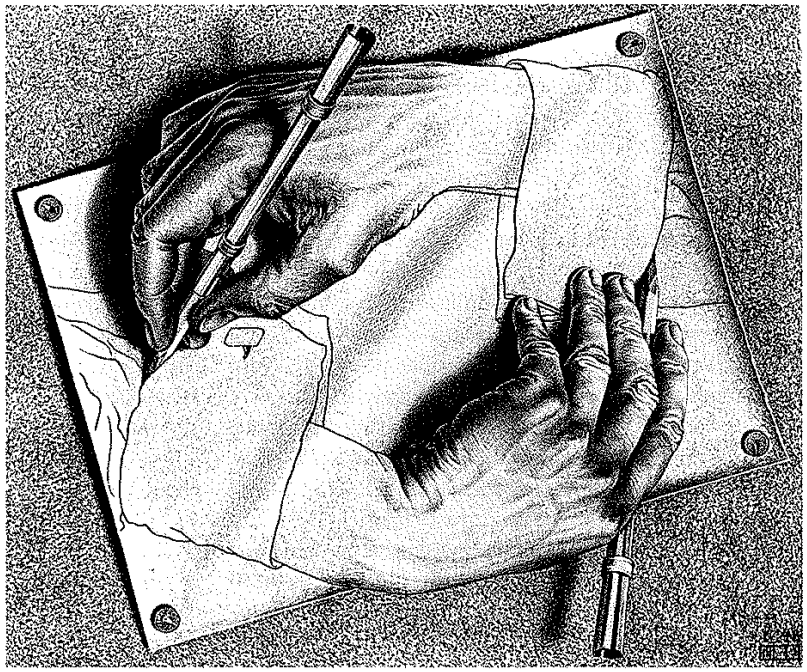
When I was a child I used to play a game, spinning a globe or flicking through an atlas and jabbing down my finger without looking where. If it landed on land I'd try to imagine what was going on 'there' 'then'. How people lived, the landscape, what time of day it was, what season. My knowledge was extremely rudimentary but I was completely fascinated by the fact that all these things were *going on now*, while I was here in Manchester in bed. Even now, each morning when the paper comes, I cast my eye down at the world's weather (100°F and cloudy in New Delhi, 46 and raining in Santiago; 82 and sunny in Algiers). It's partly a way of imagining how things are for friends in other places; but it's also a continuing amazement at the contemporaneous heterogeneity of the planet. (I wrote this book under the working title of 'Spatial delight'.) It was, possibly still is, all appallingly naive, and I have learned at least some of its dangers. The grotesqueness of the maps of power through which aspects of this 'variety' can be constituted; the real problems of thinking about, and still more of appreciating, place; how much more easy it is for some than for others to forget the simultaneity of those different stories; the difficulty simply, even, of travelling. (The telling of the voyages of discovery in a way that holds 'the discovered' still; the version of globalisation which dismisses others to the past ...) None the less it seems important to hold on to an appreciation of that simultaneity of stories. It sometimes seems that in the gadarene rush to abandon the singularity of the modernist grand narrative (the singular universal story) what has been adopted in its place is a vision of an instantaneity of interconnections. But this is to replace a single history with no history – hence the complaint, in this guise, of depthlessness. In this guise, the 'spatial turn' were better refused. Rather we should, could, replace the single history with many. And this is where space comes in. In that guise, it seems to me, it is quite reasonable to take some delight in the possibilities it opens up.

Part *Two* addresses some of the imaginations of space that we inherit from a range of philosophical discourses. This is not a book about philosophy but at this point it engages *with* some strands of philosophy in order to argue that

from them are derived common readings and associations which may help to explain why in social and political life we so often lend to space the characteristics we do. Part *Three* takes up a range of ways in which space is articulated in social theory and in practical-popular and political engagements, in particular in the context of debates about modernity and capitalist globalisation. In neither of these Parts is the primary aim one of critique: it is to pull out the positive threads which enable a more lively appreciation of the challenge of space. Part *Four* then elaborates a range of further reorientations concerning both space and place. Throughout the book, strands of the relevance of these arguments to political debate are developed, and Part *Five* turns to these directly. This book, then, is not 'for space' in preference to something else; rather it is an argument for the recognition of particular characteristics of space and for a politics that can respond to them.

A number of subthemes weave their way *sotto voce* through the Parts. Some of these have their own headings. The series called 'A reliance on science?' questions some elements of the current relation between natural and social sciences broadly conceived. 'The geography of knowledge production' weaves a story of the connection between certain modes of practising science and the social and geographical structures in which they are set (indeed, more strongly, through which they are constituted). In both of these spheres, it is proposed, not only are there implicit spatialities but also there are both conceptual and political links to the wider argument of the book.

Other themes persistently surface as part of the more general thesis. There is an attempt to go beyond the specifically human. There is a commitment to the old theme that space matters, but also a questioning of some of the ways in which it is commonly thought to do so. There is an attempt to work towards a groundedness that – in an age in which globalisation is so easily imagined as some kind of force emanating always from 'elsewhere' – is vital for posing political questions. There is an insistence, relatedly, on specificity, and on a world neither composed of atomistic individuals nor closed into an always-already completed holism. It is a world being made, through relations, and there lies the politics. Finally, there is an urge towards 'outwardlookingness', towards a positivity and aliveness to the world beyond one's own turf, whether that be one's self, one's city, or the particular parts of the planet in which one lives and works: a commitment to that radical contemporaneity which is the condition of, and condition for, spatiality.



Part *Two*
Unpromising associations

Henri Lefebvre points out in the opening arguments of *The production of space* (1991) that we often use that word 'space', in popular discourse or in academic, without being fully conscious of what we mean by it. We have inherited an imagination so deeply ingrained that it is often not actively thought. Based on assumptions no longer recognised as such, it is an imagination with the implacable force of the patently obvious. That is the trouble.

That implicit imagination is fed by all kinds of influences. In many cases they are, I want to argue, unpromising associations which connotationally deprive space of its most challenging characteristics. The influences to be addressed in this Part derive from philosophical writings in the broadest sense of that term. Part *Three* will take up more practical-popular and social-theoretical understandings of space, particularly in the context of the politics of modernity and capitalist globalisation. The aim of both Parts is to unearth some of the influences on hegemonic imaginations of 'space'. What follows immediately, then, is an attempt to draw out some particular threads of argument which exemplify ways in which space can come, through significant philosophical discourses, to have associated with it characteristics which, to my mind at least, disable its full insertion into the political. This is not a book about philosophy; the arguments here are particular and focus solely on how some commonly accepted positions, even if not directly concerned with space, have reverberations none the less for the way in which we imagine it. The particular philosophical strands addressed here serve as exemplars. They revolve around Henri Bergson, structuralism and deconstruction: a selection made both because of their significance as strands of thought and because in their wider arguments they have, in different ways, much to offer the kind of project this book is engaged in. In other words, they are engaged with because of their promise rather than their problems.

None of these philosophers has the reconceptualisation of space as their objective. Most often, and in the context of wider debates, temporality is a more pressing concern. Over and again space is conceptualised as (or, rather, assumed to be) simply the negative opposite of time. It is indeed, I want to argue, in part that

lacuna in relation to thinking actively about space, and the contradictions which thereby arise, that can provide a hint of how to breach the apparent limits of some of the arguments as they now stand. One theme is that time and space must be thought together: that this is not some mere rhetorical flourish, but that it influences how we think of both terms; that thinking of time and space together does not mean they are identical (for instance in some undifferentiated four-dimensionality), rather it means that the imagination of one will have repercussions (not always followed through) for the imagination of the other and that space and time are implicated in each other; that it opens up some problems which have heretofore seemed (logically, intractably) insoluble; and that it has reverberations for thinking about politics and the spatial. Thinking about history and temporality necessarily has implications (whether we recognise them or not) for how we imagine the spatial. The counterpositional labelling of phenomena as temporal or spatial, and entailing all the baggage of the reduction of space to the a-political sphere of causal closure or the reactionary redoubts of established power, continues to this day.

The prime aims of the philosophies explored here were largely in tune with the arguments presented in this book. I cheer on Bergson in his arguments about time, approve of structuralism's determination not to let geography be turned into history, applaud Laclau's insistence on the intimate connection between dislocation and the possibility of politics ... It's just when they get to talking about space that I find myself rebuffed. Puzzled by the lack of explicit attention they give, irritated by their assumptions, confused by a kind of double usage (where space is both the great 'out there' and the term of choice for characterisations of representation, or of ideological closure), and, finally, pleased sometimes to find the loose ends (their own internal dislocations) which make possible the unravelling of those assumptions and double usages and which, in turn, provokes a reimagination of space which might be not just more to my liking, but also more in tune with the spirit of their own enquiries.

There is one distinction which ought to be made from the outset. It has been argued that, at least in recent centuries, space has been held in less esteem, and has been accorded less attention, than has time (within geography, Ed Soja (1989) has made this argument with force). It is often termed the 'prioritisation of time over space' and it has been remarked on and taken to task by many. It is not, however, my concern here. What I am concerned with is the *way* we imagine space. Sometimes the problematical character of this imagination does indeed perhaps result from deprioritisation – the conceptualisation of space as an afterthought, as a residual of time. Yet the early structuralist thinkers can by no means be said to have prioritised time and still, or so I shall argue, the effect of their approach was a highly problematical imagination of space.

Moreover, the excavation of these problematical conceptualisations of space (as static, closed, immobile, as the opposite of time) brings to light other sets of connections, to science, writing and representation, to issues of subjectivity and its

conception, in all of which implicit imaginations of space have played an important role. And these entwinings are in turn related to the fact that space has so often been excluded from, or inadequately conceptualised in relation to, and has thereby debilitated our conceptions of, politics and the political.

What follows is an engagement with some of those debilitating associations. Each of these strands of philosophy has developed in particular historico-geographical conjunctures. They themselves have been interventions in something already moving. Sometimes what is at issue is disentangling them in some measure from the orientations provoked by their moments, the debates of which they were a part. Reorienting them to my own concerns can produce new lines of thought from them. Sometimes what is at issue is pushing them further. The effect in the end, I hope, is to liberate 'space' from some chains of meaning (which embed it with *closure* and *stasis*, or with *science*, *writing* and *representation*) and which have all but choked it to death, in order to set it into other chains (in this chapter alongside *openness*, and *heterogeneity*, and *liveliness*) where it can have a new and more productive life.

2
space/representation

There is an idea with such a long and illustrious history that it has come to acquire the status of an unquestioned nostrum: this is the idea that there is an association between the spatial and the fixation of meaning. Representation – indeed conceptualisation – has been conceived of as spatialisation. The various authors who will figure in this chapter have come to this position along different routes, but almost all of them subscribe to it. Moreover, though the reference is to 'spatialisation', there is in all cases slippage; it is not just that representation is equated with spatialisation but that the characteristics thus derived have come to be attributed to space itself. Moreover, though the further development of these philosophical positions implies almost always quite another understanding of what space might be, none of them pause very long either explicitly to develop this alternative or to explore the curious fact that this other (and more mobile, flexible, open, lively) view of space stands in such flat opposition to their equally certain association of representation with space. It is an old association; over and over we tame the spatial into the textual and the conceptual; into representation.

Of course, the argument is usually quite the opposite: that through representation we spatialise time. It is space which is said thereby to tame the temporal.

Henri Bergson's is one of the most complex and definitive of these philosophical positions. For him, the burning concern was with temporality, with 'duration'; with a commitment to the experience of time and to resisting the evisceration of its internal continuity, flow and movement. It is an attitude which strikes chords today. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze (1988) denounces what he sees as our exclusive preoccupation with extended magnitudes at the expense of intensities. As Boundas (1996, p. 85) expands this, the impatience is with our over-insistent focus on the discrete at the expense of continua, things at the expense of processes, recognition at the expense of encounter, results at the expense of tendencies ... (and lots more besides). Every argument being proposed in this book would support such an endeavour. A reimagination of things as processes is necessary (and indeed now widely accepted) for the reconceptualisation of places in a way that might challenge exclusivist localisms based on claims of some eternal authenticity. Instead of things as

pregiven discrete entities, there is now a move towards recognising the continuous becoming which is in the nature of their being. Newness, then, and creativity, is an essential characteristic of temporality. And in *Time and free will* (1910), Bergson plunges straight into an engagement with psychophysics and the science of his day, wielding an argument that this intellectualisation was taking the life out of experience. By conceptualising, by dividing it up, by writing it down, it was obliterating that vital element of life itself.

To address the problem he worked through a distinction between different kinds of multiplicities. For both Bergson and Deleuze, whom Boundas (1996) rolls together, in relation to this discussion, as Deleuze–Bergson, are engaged over the meanings of 'difference' and 'multiplicity'. For them there is an important distinction between *discrete* difference/multiplicity (which refers to extended magnitudes and distinct entities, the realm of diversity) and *continuous* difference/multiplicity (which refers to intensities, and to evolution rather than succession). The former is divided up, a dimension of separation; the latter is a continuum, a multiplicity of fusion. Both Bergson and Deleuze are in battle to instate the significance, indeed the philosophical primacy, of the second (continuous) form of difference over the first (the discrete) form. What is at issue is an insistence on the genuine openness of history, of the future. For Bergson, change (which he equated with temporality) implies real novelty, the production of the really new, of things not already totally determined by the current arrangement of forces. Once again, then, there is a real coincidence of desires with the argument of this book. For the burden of the third proposition of this book is precisely to argue not just for a notion of 'becoming', but for the openness of that process of becoming.

However, Bergson's overwhelming concern with time, and his desire to argue for its openness, turned out to have devastating consequences for the way he conceptualised space. This has often been attributed to a classic (modernist?) prioritisation of time. Indeed Soja (1989) argues that Bergson was one of the most forceful instigators of a more general devaluation and subordination of space relative to time which took place during the second half of the nineteenth century (see also Gross, 1981–2). And the classic recantation by Foucault of the long history of the denigration of space, begins: 'Did it start with Bergson, or before?' (Foucault, 1980, p. 70). The problem however runs more deeply than simple prioritisation. Rather, it is a question of the mode of conceptualisation. It is not so much that Bergson 'deprioritised' space, as that *in the association of it with representation* it was deprived of dynamism, and radically counterposed to time. Thus:

> Has true duration anything to do with space? Certainly, our analysis of the idea of number [which he has just been discussing] could not but make us doubt this analogy, to say no more. For if time, as the reflective consciousness represents it, is a medium in which our conscious states form a discrete series so as to admit of being counted, and if on the other hand our conception of number ends in spreading out in space everything which can be directly counted, it is to be

> presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space. That which goes to confirm this opinion is that we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession; it follows that pure duration must be something different. Such are the questions which we have been led to ask by the very analysis of the notion of discrete multiplicity. But we cannot throw any light upon them except by a direct study of the ideas of space and time in their mutual relations. (1910, p. 91)

One of the crucial provocations for Bergson, and a constant reference point, is Zeno's paradox. The message which the paradox is used to hammer home is that movement (a continuum) cannot be broken up into discrete instants. 'It is ... because the continuum cannot be reduced to an aggregate of points that movement cannot be reduced to what is static. Continua and movements imply one another' (Boundas, 1996, p. 84). This is an important argument but it is an argument about the nature of *time*, about the impossibility of reducing real movement/becoming to stasis multiplied by infinity; the impossibility of deriving history from a succession of slices through time (see also Massey, 1997a).

However the line of thought gets tangled up with an idea (inadvertent? certainly not very explicit) of space. Thus, in *Matter and Memory* (Bergson, 1911) we find:

> The arguments of Zeno of Elea have no other origin than this illusion. They all consist in making time and movement coincide with the line which underlies them, in attributing to them the same subdivisions as to the line, in short in treating them like that line. In this confusion Zeno was encouraged by common sense, which usually carries over to the movement the properties of its trajectory, and also by language, which always translates movement and duration in terms of space. (p. 250)

The rejected time of instantaneous time-slices attracts the label 'spatial', as in: what is at stake for Bergson–Deleuze is 'the primacy of the heterogeneous time of [temporal] difference over the spatialized time of metrication with its quantitative segments and instants' (Boundas, 1996, p. 92). Immediately this association renders space in a negative light (as the lack of 'movement and duration'). And so, to the list of dualisms within which these philosophies are doing combat (continua rather than discontinuities, processes rather than things...) is added time rather than space (p. 85).

Now these arguments have taken flight in particular situations. One dragon that had to be vanquished (but which is still around today) was empty time. Empty, divided and reversible time in which nothing changes; where there is no evolution but merely succession; a time of a multiplicity of discrete things. Bergson's concern was that time is too often conceptualised in the same manner as space (as a discrete multiplicity). We misunderstand the nature of duration, he argued, when we 'spatialize' it – when we think of it as a fourth dimension

of extension. (There is here a prescient critique of an over-easy tendency to talk of space-time, or of four-dimensionality, without investigating the nature of the integration of dimensions which is at issue.) The nature of the dragon provoked the form of the response. The instantaneous slice through time was assumed to be static, as it is in the form in which it is invoked in Zeno's paradox. It was then awarded the label 'spatial'. And finally it was argued: anyway, if there is to be real becoming (the genuine continuous production of the new), then such supposedly static slices through time must be impossible. Static time-slices, even multiplied to infinity, cannot produce becoming.

However, the argument can be turned around. Does not the argument in the form just recounted imply that the 'space' which comes to be defined, *via* a connotational connection with representation, must likewise be impossible? Does it not rather mean that space itself (the dimension of a discrete multiplicity) can precisely *not* be a static slice through time? With that kind of space it would indeed be impossible to have history as becoming. In other words, not only can time *not* be sliced up (transforming it from a continuous to a discrete multiplicity) but even the argument that this is *not* possible should not refer to the result as space. The slide here from spatialisation as an activity to space as a dimension is crucial. Representation is seen to take on aspects of spatial*isation* in the latter's action of setting things down side by side; of laying them out as a discrete simultaneity. But representation is also in this argument understood as fixing things, taking the time out of them. The equation of spatialisation with the production of 'space' thus lends to space not only the character of a discrete multiplicity but also the characteristic of stasis.

Space, then, is characterised as the dimension of quantitative divisibility (see, for instance, *Matter and Memory*, 1911, pp. 246–53). This is fundamental to the notion that representation is spatialisation: 'Movement visibly consists in passing from one point to another, and consequently in traversing space. Now the space which is traversed is infinitely divisible; and as the movement is, so to speak, applied to the line along which it passes, it appears to be one with this line and, like it, divisible' (p. 248). This character of space as the dimension of plurality, discrete multiplicity, is important, both conceptually and politically. But in Bergson's formulation here it is a discrete multiplicity *without duration*. It is not only instantaneous it is static. Thus, 'we cannot make movement out of immobilities, nor time out of space' (*Time and Free Will*, 1910, p. 115). From a number of angles, this proposition will be questioned in the argument which follows. In *Matter and Memory* Bergson writes 'The fundamental illusion consists in transferring to duration itself, in its continuous flow, the form of the instantaneous sections which we make in it' (1911, p. 193). In its intent I applaud this argument; but I would demur at its terms. Why can we not imbue these instantaneous sections with their own vital quality of duration? A dynamic simultaneity would be a conception quite different from a frozen instant (Massey, 1992a). (And then, if we persisted in the nomenclature of 'spatial' we could

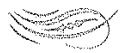
indeed 'make time out of space' – save that we would not have started from such a counterpositional definition in the first place.) On the one hand, this throws doubt upon the use of the word 'space' in the foregoing quotations from Bergson; on the other hand, however, it shows that the very impetus of his argument provides a further step, a questioning of the use of the term space itself. It is a questioning already implicit in Bergson's argument, even in these earlier works.

The problem is that the connotational characterisation of space through representation, as not only discrete but also without life, has proved strong. Thus, Gross (1981–2) writes of Bergson as arguing that 'the rational mind merely spatialises', and that he conceptualised scientific activity in terms of 'the immobilising (spatial) categories of the intellect':

> For Bergson, the mind is by definition spatially oriented. But everything creative, expansive and teeming with energy is *not*. Hence, the intellect can never help us reach what is essential because it kills and fragments all that it touches ... We must, Bergson concluded, break out of the spatialisation imposed by mind in order to regain contact with the core of the truly living, which subsists only in the time dimension ... (pp. 62, 66; emphasis in the original)

As Deleuze (1988) persistently points out, this is to load the cards. Space and time here are not two equal but opposing tendencies; everything is stacked on the side of duration. This 'principal Bergsonian division: that between duration and space' (p. 31) provides its own way forward through its very imbalance. 'In Bergsonism, the difficulty seems to disappear. For by dividing the composite according to two tendencies, with only one showing the way in which a thing varies qualitatively in time, Bergson effectively gives himself the means of choosing the "right side" in each case' (p. 32).

In *Creative evolution* (Bergson, 1911/1975), the distinction between spatialisation and space is made effective. While retaining the equation between intellectualisation and spatialisation ('The more consciousness is intellectualized, the more is matter spatialized', p. 207), Bergson came to recognise also, at first in the form of a question, the duration in external things and this in turn pointed to a radical change in the potential conceptualisation of space. That recognition of the duration in external things and thus the interpenetration, though not the equivalence, of space and time is an important aspect of the argument in this book. It is what I am calling space as the dimension of multiple trajectories, a simultaneity of stories-so-far. Space as the dimension of a multiplicity of durations. The problem has been that the old chain of meaning – space–representation–stasis – continues to wield its power. The legacy lingers on.



Thus, for Ernesto Laclau (1990) the development of the argument is rather different from Bergson's but the conclusion is similar: 'space' is equivalent to representation which in turn is equivalent to ideological closure.[1] For Laclau spatialisation is equivalent to hegemonisation: the production of an ideological closure, a picture of the essentially dislocated world as somehow coherent. Thus:

> any representation of a dislocation involves its spatialization. The way to overcome the temporal, traumatic and unrepresentable nature of dislocation is to construct it as a moment in permanent structural relation with other moments, in which case the pure temporality of the 'event' is eliminated ... this spatial domesticization of time ... (p. 72)[2]

Laclau equates 'the crisis of all spatiality' (as a result of the assertion of dislocation's constitutive nature) with 'the ultimate impossibility of all representation' (p. 78) ... 'dislocation destroys all space and, as a result, the very possibility of representation' (p. 79), and so on. The pointers towards a potential reformulation are evident and exciting (if all space is destroyed...?), but they are not followed up, and the assumption of an equivalence between space and representation is unequivocal and insisted-upon.

In contrast yet again to Laclau, who rather tends just to *assume* that representation is spatialisation, de Certeau, who holds the same position, spells out in some detail his reasons why. They are very similar to Bergson's. For de Certeau, the emergence of writing (as distinct from orality) and of modern scientific method involved precisely the obliteration of temporal dynamic, the creation of a blank space (*un espace propre*) both of the object of knowledge and as a place for inscription, and the act of writing (on that space). These three processes are intimately associated. Narratives, stories, trajectories are all suppressed in the emergence of science as the writing of the world. And that process of writing, more generally of making a mark upon the blank space of a page, is what removes the dynamism of 'real life'. Thus, in his attempt, which is really the whole burden of his book, to invent ways of recapturing those narratives and stories (precisely to bring them back into some form of produced 'knowledge') he ruminates upon whether or not to use the word 'trajectory'. The term, he thinks,

> suggests a movement, but it also involves a plane projection, a flattening out. It is a transcription. A graph (which the eye can master) is substituted for an operation; a line which can be reversed (i.e. read in both directions) does duty for an irreversible temporal series, a tracing for acts. To avoid this reduction, I resort to a distinction between *tactics* and *strategies*. (de Certeau, 1984, p. xviii–xix; emphasis in the original)

Now, this association of scientific writing with assumptions of reversibility, and a desire to hang out for irreversibility, harks back to the engagements which Bergson had with the science of his day. Science-writing takes the life out of

processes, and renders them reversible; whereas real life is irreversible. A first reflection on this will be explored later: that we should no longer be fighting that battle against 'science' – both because Science is not a source of unimpugnable truth (though it is most certainly a powerful discourse), and because there are now plenty of scientists who would anyway no longer hold this position.

De Certeau continues:

> However useful this 'flattening out' may be, it transforms the *temporal* articulation of places into a *spatial* sequence of points. (p. 35; emphasis in the original)

Moreover, the distinction de Certeau makes is once again related directly and explicitly to representation:

> ... the occasion – that indiscreet instant, that poison – has been controlled by the spatialization of [i.e. by] scientific discourse. As the constitution of a proper place, scientific writing ceaselessly reduces time, that fugitive element, to the normality of an observable and readable system. In this way, surprises are averted. Proper maintenance of the place eliminates these criminal tricks. (p. 89)

And finally he writes of:

> ... the (voracious) property that the geographical system has of being able to transform action into legibility, but in doing so it causes a way of being in the world to be forgotten. (p. 97)

Ironically, it is on the basis of this argument that de Certeau decides against the use of the term 'trajectory' and instead resorts to a distinction between tactics and strategy which cements into place precisely the dualism (including between space and time) with which the rest of the book is struggling.[3]

One way and another, then, all of these authors equate space and representation. It is a remarkably pervasive and unquestioned assumption, and it does indeed have an intuitive obviousness. But as already indicated perhaps this equation of representation and spatialisation is *not* something which should be taken for granted. At the very least its implacability and its repercussions might be disturbed. It is an extraordinarily important move. For what it does is to associate the spatial with stabilisation. Guilt by association. Spatial layout as a way of containing the temporal – both its terrors and its creative delights. Spatialisation, on this view, flattens the life out of time. I want, through the course of this book, to build an argument which will come to a very different conclusion.

To begin with, note that there are two things going on here: first, the argument that representation necessarily fixes, and therefore deadens and detracts from, the flow of life; and second, that the product of this process of deadening is space. The first proposition I would not entirely dispute, although the form in which it is customarily couched is presently being modified. However, it

seems to me that there is no case at all for the second proposition: that there is an equivalence between space and representation. It is one of those accepted things that are by now so deeply embedded that they are rarely if ever questioned. Let us, then, question it.

In order to ground the discussion, it is necessary to establish some preliminary points.

First, it is important in itself to recognise that this way of thinking has a history. It derives, as do all positions, from social embeddedness and intellectual/scientific engagement. From the very earliest days of Western philosophy the capturing of time in a sequence of numbers has been thought of as its spatialisation. The appeal of this has already been acknowledged. The problem lies in the movement from spatialisation to characterisations of space. Citations tracing the persistence of that imagination could be numerous, and tedious. Perhaps just one, to give the essence of the case: Whitehead (1927/1985) writes of 'the presentational immediacy' of space which 'enables space to speak for the less accessible dimension of time, with differences in space being used as a surrogate for differences in time' (pp. 21–3). I shall suggest that one route of development for this now-hegemonic equation of space and representation may thread its way through nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century battles over the meaning of time. This is not, of course, in any way to 'criticise': such embeddedness is inevitable. It is merely to emphasise that this intellectual position is the product of a process: it is not somehow self-evident.

Second, even if we agree that representation indeed fixes and stabilises (though see below), what it so stabilises is not simply time, but space-time. Laclau writes of *'history's* ultimate unrepresentability' (1990, p. 84; my emphasis), but what is really unrepresentable is not history conceived of as temporality but time-space (history/geography if you like). Indeed, two pages earlier he both half-recognises this (by referring to 'society') but then blows it by his use of space-terminology: 'Society, then, is ultimately unrepresentable: any representation – and thus any space – is an attempt to constitute society, not to state what it is' (p. 82). It would be better to recognise that 'society' is both temporal and spatial, and to drop entirely that definition of representation as space. What is at issue, in the production of representations, is not the spatialisation of time (understood as the rendering of time as space), but the representation of time-space. What we conceptualise (divide up into organs, put it how you will) is not just time but space-time. In the arguments of Bergson and de Certeau too the issue is formulated as though the lively world which is there to be represented (conceptualised/written down) is only temporal. It certainly *is* temporal; but it is spatial too. And 'representation' is an attempt to capture both aspects of that world.

Third, it is easy to see how representation can be understood as a form of spatialisation. That business of laying things out side by side; indeed the production of a simultaneity, a discrete multiplicity. (On this basis space would also be easy to represent, if that were merely what space was.) So Bergson

writes of substituting the path for the journey, de Certeau of substituting a tracing for acts. But consider. In de Certeau's formulation, a tracing is itself a representation; it is not 'space'. The map is not the territory. Alternatively, what Bergson writes is: 'You substitute the path for the journey, and because the journey is subtended by the path you think the two coincide' (1911, p. 248). We may, here, though it is set within a wider discussion of representation, take the path to be a real path (not a representation/conceptualisation). It is not the map; it is the territory itself. But then a territory is integrally spatio-temporal. The path is not a static instantaneity. Indeed, we can now draw out Laclau's own conclusions. All space, he writes as we have seen, is dislocated. A first consequence is Laclau's own point: that there is a crisis of representation (in the sense that it must be recognised as constitutive rather than mimetic). But a second consequence is that space itself, the space of the world, far from being equivalent to representation, must be *un*representable in that latter, mimetic, sense.

This historically significant way of imagining space/spatialisation not only derives from an assumption that space is to be defined as a lack of temporality (holding time still) but also has contributed substantially to its continuing to be thought of in that way. It has reinforced the imagination of the spatial as petrification and as a safe haven from the temporal, and – in the images which it almost inevitably invokes of the flat horizontality of the page – it further makes 'self-evident' the notion of space as a surface. All these imaginaries not only diminish our understanding of spatiality but, through that, they even make more difficult the project which was central to all of these authors: that of opening up temporality itself.

Now, there have in recent years been challenges both to representation as any kind of 'mirror of nature' (Rorty, 1979; and many others) and as an attempt to de-temporalise. On the latter, Deleuze and Guattari, for instance, argue that a concept should express an event, a happening, rather than a de-temporalised essence and (drawing indeed on Bergson) argue against any notion of a tripartite division between reality, representation and subjectivity. Here what we might have called representation is no longer a process of fixing, but an element in a continuous production; a part of it all, and itself constantly becoming. This is a position which rejects a strict separation between world and text and which understands scientific activity as being just that – an activity, a practice, an embedded engagement *in* the world of which it is a part. Not representation but experimentation. It is an argument which has been made by many (for instance Ingold, 1993; Thrift, 1996) across a range of disciplines. Together with the notion of the text/representation as itself an open disseminatory network, it at least begins to question the understanding of scientific practice as representation-as-stabilisation in that sense. The geographers Natter and Jones (1993) trace parallels between the histories of representation and space, suggesting that the post-structuralist critique of representation-as-mirror could be re-enacted as a parallel critique of space. As the text has been destabilised in

literary theory so space might be destabilised in geography (and indeed in wider social theory).

The issue is complex, however. For if scientific/intellectual activity is indeed to be understood as an active and productive engagement in/of the world it is none the less a *particular kind* of practice, a specific form of engagement/production in which it is hard to deny (to absolve ourselves from the responsibility for?) *any* element of representation (see also Latour, 1999b; Stengers, 1997), even if it is, quite certainly, productive and experimental rather than simply mimetic, and an embodied knowledge rather than a mediation. It does not, however, have to be conceived of as producing a space, nor its characteristics carried over to inflect our implicit imaginations of space. For to do so is to rob space of those characteristics of freedom (Bergson), dislocation (Laclau) and surprise (de Certeau) which are essential to open it up to the political.

It is peculiar that space is so widely imagined as 'conquering time'. It seems in general to be perceived that space is somehow a lesser dimension than time: one with less gravitas and magnificence, it is the material/phenomenal rather than the abstract; it is being rather than becoming and so forth; and it is feminine rather than masculine (see, for instance, Bondi, 1990; Massey, 1992a; Rose, 1993). It is the subordinated category, almost the residual category, the not-A to time's A, counterpositionally defined simply by a lack of temporality, and widely seen as, within modernity, having suffered from deprioritisation in relation to time.

And yet this denigrated dimension is so often seen as conquering time. For Laclau, 'Through dislocation time is overcome by space. But while we can speak of the hegemonization of time by space (through repetition), it must be emphasized that the opposite is not possible: time cannot hegemonize anything, since it is a pure effect of dislocation' (1990, p. 42). For de Certeau, 'the "proper" is a victory of space over time' (1984, p. xix). The victory is of course one of 'representation' over 'reality', of stabilisation over life, where space is equated with representation and stabilisation (and therefore time, one is forced to presume, with reality and life). The language of victory reinforces an imagination of enmity between the two. But life is spatial as well as temporal. Walker (1993), writing of international relations theory, argues that 'modern accounts of history and temporality have been guided by attempts to capture the passing moment within a spatial order' (pp. 4–5). He points to that 'fixing of temporality within spatial categories that has been so crucial in the construction of the most influential traditions of Western philosophy and socio-political thought' (p. 4). Likewise in anthropology Fabian (1983) has developed at length an argument that a core, and debilitating, assumption of that discipline has been its spatialisation of time: 'the temporal discourse of

anthropology as it was formed decisively under the paradigm of evolutionism rested on a conception of Time that was not only secularized and naturalized but also thoroughly spatialized' (p. 16).

Thus the supposedly weaker term of a dualism obliterates the positive characteristics of the stronger one, the privileged signifier. And it does this through the conflation of the spatial with representation. Space conquers time by being set up as the *representation of* history/life/the real world. On this reading space is an order imposed upon the inherent life of the real. (Spatial) order obliterates (temporal) dislocation. Spatial immobility quietens temporal becoming. It is, though, the most dismal of pyrrhic victories. For in the very moment of its conquering triumph 'space' is reduced to stasis. The very life, and certainly the politics, are taken out of it.

(A reliance on science? 1)

Sotto voce *through much of that story of the connotational connection of representation with space has run another thread: that of the relationship between this connection and conceptualisations of 'science'.*

The most evident relationship is where 'science' stands for the whole process of representation (the trace rather than the journey), and thus in fact for intellectual knowledge in general. The whole business of conceptualisation; the intellectual rather than the lived or the intuitive.

But the engagement with science was also more immediately and specifically with the natural sciences. Bergson's practice, in particular, had deep roots in the historical development of the natural sciences and in their complex relationship with philosophy. Time and free will *plunges straight in as Bergson does battle with the ascendant psychophysics of his day. It is clearly that which has provoked him, motivated him into his present argument. And there were other wrestlings, too, with Riemann over the nature of multiplicities, and most famously over the implications of the new relativity theory. In other words, the definition of space was caught up in the broader dialogue between the 'natural' and 'human' sciences. That was one of the encounters through which 'space' became sedimented into a particular chain of meanings. It is true once again today: people reach to the natural sciences in their efforts to conceptualise the new spaces of our times. Bergson's story, however, points to some of the difficulties of that strategy.*

Bergson's concern was with the nature of time; through 'duration' he was emphasising its continuity, its irreversibility, its openness. However, as Prigogine and Stengers (1984) document, the development of science (and in particular physics) from Newton through to and including Einstein and (some versions of) quantum mechanics operates with a notion of reversible time. Processes are reversible and there is no meaningful distinction between past and future. There have been arguments, both within science and between 'science' (in that specific form) and its doubters, but the notion of the non-*reversibility of time was a hard one to establish. Timeless processes do not generate a notion of open historical time. Behind that powerful model of 'science' as 'physics in the guise of classical mechanics' is an assumption about time that deprives it of its openness; reduces its possibility of being truly historical. This is the case not only in the concept of fully timeless processes, but also in closed equilibrium systems, where the future is given, contained within the initial conditions – it is closed.*

While this was accepted by many within philosophy (and indeed this form of physics, as classical mechanics, was widely adopted as a model for science – and even knowledge – in general) there were other strands of philosophy which struggled against it.[4] *'Science's' vision flew in the face of what these critical philosophers understood of*