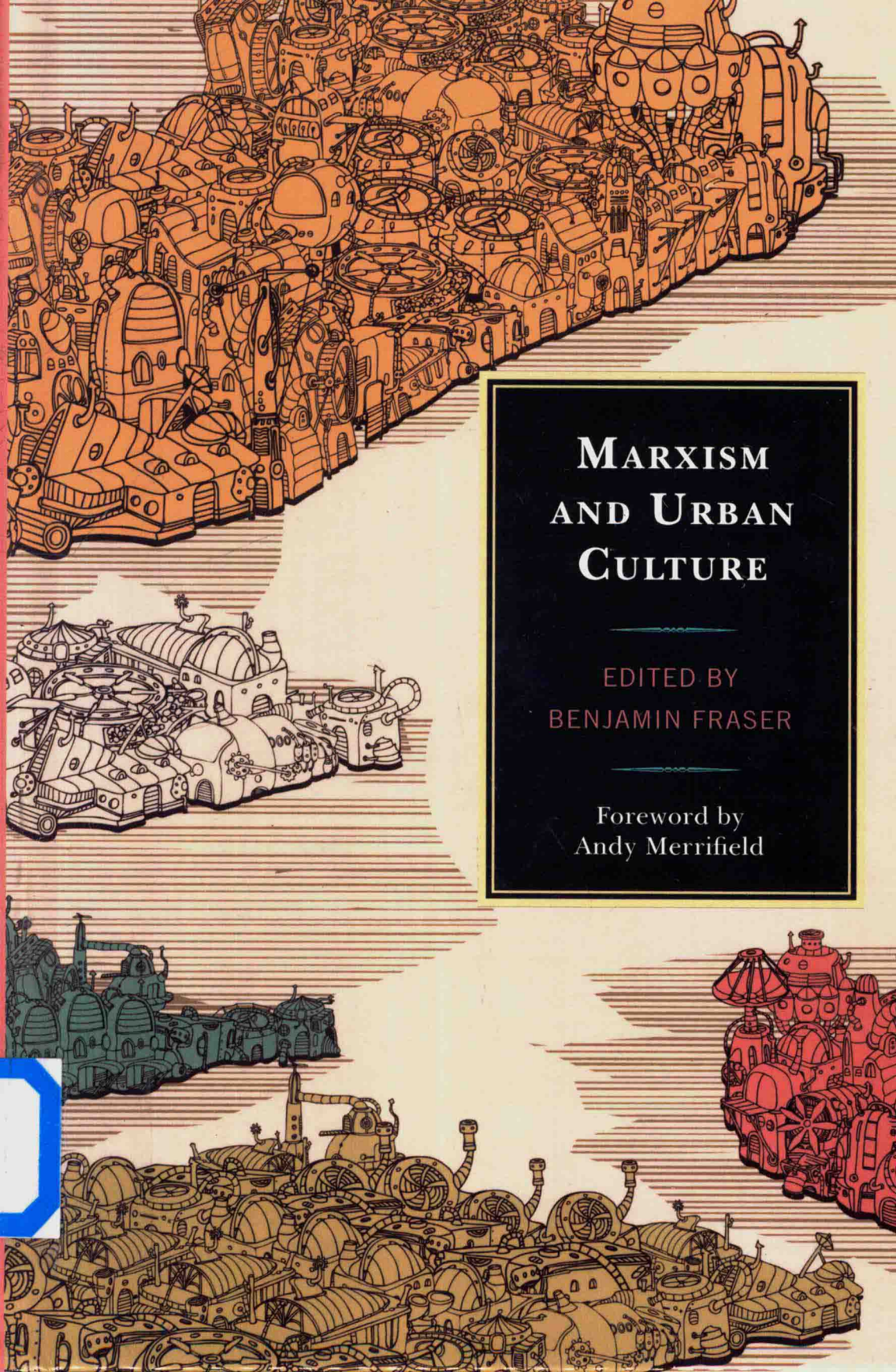

Marxism and Urban Culture

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Andy Merrifield

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Acknowledgments

This book project is the product of extensive reflections on a central contradiction obscured by the triumphant and triumphalist discourse of interdisciplinarity—as it plays out in academic institutions, in peer-review processes, in scholarly association meetings, and in numerous (if not, necessarily, all) disciplinary contexts. Although this contradiction is not explicitly discussed in the present volume—and although the topic is surely worthy of sustained consideration—it has motivated the selection of chapters and the brief introduction. The contradiction is this: that at the same time that mention of the word "interdisciplinarity" hypnotizes university administrators, hiring departments, job-seekers, editors, and authors, and more, still, it is nonetheless disciplinary knowledge which continues to exercise hegemonic power over scholarly activity, broadly conceived. I will spare the reader the numerous and varied experiences which have led me to this conclusion.

Make no mistake: I want neither to tout interdisciplinarity as a panacea nor to dig my heels into the disciplinary landscape that continues to shape the production and reception of scholarly work. Instead, this book has been—from its conception to its final structure—an attempt to expose the dimensions of disciplinary specialization through both the juxtaposition and the cohabitation of different approaches in a single volume. My belief—foregrounded also in the recent formation of the *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies*—is that "the urban" provides a point of encounter where disciplinary specializations can be brought to dialogue with one another. I do not believe that they cannot be fully transcended. But seen together they may help us to understand how it is that disciplinary specialization is, *a la* Henri Lefebvre, a form of alienation. In this sense, Marxian scholarship, clearly—though it should not necessarily be so—has been no exception to the rule that scholarly

writing has tended to fragment a totality into relatively autonomous, manageable areas of expertise.

In this light, I would like to take the time to thank those colleagues whose scholarship has been particularly valuable in thinking through disciplinary specialization by working across Hispanic Studies and Urban Studies specifically: Malcolm Alan Compitello, Susan Larson, Araceli Masterson-Algar, Stephen Vilaseca, Monica Degen, Rebecca Haidt, Amanda Holmes, Donald McNeill, Marcy Schwartz, Eugenia Afinoguénova, Edward Baker, Alberto Chamorro, Susan Divine, Matthew Feinberg, Daniel Frost, Leigh Mercer, Carlos Ramos, Nathan Richardson, and Nil Santiáñez. I owe thanks to countless others, of course, in Hispanic Studies and beyond, and to that end I would also like to thank those who have agreed to be on the editorial board of the *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies*. Thanks, too, to Adam David Morton for his encouragement of this book project, and particularly also Andy Merrifield, who graciously agreed to pen this book's foreword.

As always I thank Abby.

Foreword

Urbanism as World Culture and Here Comes Everybody

Andy Merrifield

One of the great wish-images of the *Communist Manifesto* is something Marx calls "world Literature." World literature, he says, is what everybody and anybody can read. We get it because we've somehow helped script it; it's a literature that's translatable and communicable—notwithstanding our native tongue. But it isn't tabloid trash Marx has in mind here; it isn't narrow-minded, trivial journalism, nothing provincial. Quite the opposite: it's the broadest of broadsheets, a global literature that hits the newsstands as samizdat, as popular agitprop. Invariably, this literature is a dialectical byproduct, an unintended good thing emerging from an intentional bad thing. It's a byproduct, Marx knew, of a bourgeoisie intent on business, tapping the world market, exploiting old-established national industries, downsizing these old industries and replacing them with dwindling workforces and new product lines. "In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants," Marx says. "In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations."[1]

Marx is adamant that this process isn't only an earth-moving (and earth-shattering) act of material production; it's also an earth-moving and potentially earth-shattering act of "intellectual production." What's more, in his eyes, these "intellectual creations of individual nations" have the power to become "common property."[2] World literature becomes a new sort of commons, for Marx, a collective visual and written language, something we see today as an ever-emergent *world culture*, as use-values ordinary people eve-

rywhere continually have to fight for and struggle to hold on to, especially as human value systems melt into air and get converted into anti-human, hyper-inflated exchange-values. In the *Manifesto*, Marx sketches out the developmental forces of the mode of production, its historical and geographical mission, its need to urbanize itself, to create industrial cities, to move mountains, to dig canals, to connect everywhere, nestle everywhere, to do all of that because of its inexorable urge, because it, as a mode of production, had to. Within it all, Marx thought urbanization would create a physical and emotional proximity of workers, workers piled on top of one another, beside each other. Cosmopolitanism would thus be a kind of sharing, an awareness of common lived experience.

Before us and inside us, urbanism today is a truly cosmopolitan world culture, our very own world literature. It's the expansive realm, we might say, of *Here Comes Everybody*, of H.C.E.—Joyce's sigla from *Finnegans Wake*—the "normative letters of planet" urban, the social, political, and economic environment to which everybody is coming and which everybody is somehow shaping, even if always unevenly. H.C.E, says Joyce, represents a "manyfeast munificent," an archetypal image of our collective, desiring unconscious.[3] The dreamer is "more mob than man," Joyce jokes, "an imposing everybody he always indeed looked, constantly the same as and equal to himself and magnificently well worthy of any and all such universalization."[4] Perhaps, with a little imagination, we can read *Here Comes Everybody* as what global citizenship ought to be about, a citizenship conceived of as something urban, as something territorial, yet one in which urban territoriality is narrower and broader than both "city" and "nationality"; a citizen of the block, of the neighborhood, becomes a citizen of the world, a universal citizen rooted in place, encountering fellow citizens across the corridor and at the other end of the planet, sharing world music together, reading books in every language, watching world cinema, entering Twitter streams, and communing on Facebook.

World literature has morphed into world culture, and this world culture is now an urban arena in which a more advanced cosmopolitan citizenship emerges—might emerge—a *Here Comes Everybody* forever present during its own birth pangs. In this citizenship, *perception* replaces passport and *horizon* is almost as important as habitat; a perception and horizon simultaneously in place and in space, off-line somewhere local, and online somewhere planetary, somewhere virtual. If we want to call this perspective a newly formulated cognitive map in our heads, we can. What's important in this mapping is that it maps the totality, that it works when people see these two realms coming together, when perception and horizon conjoin, encounter one another, and give rise to a collective political awareness. Citizenship therein *reveals itself through the negation of distance and the reaching out to distance*, through an opening up and a drawing in, a passionate embrace. It's

the point of convergence of both, a dialectic that's a structure of feeling and a way of seeing—feeling and seeing oneself on the same plane as one's planet. At the point of convergence, any singularity will be so powerful that no border patrols can ever prevent its rites of passage.

Official identity cards aren't necessary for citizens of the urban universe, for people who know they *live* somewhere yet *feel* they belong everywhere. Or who want to feel it. The conjoining of knowing and feeling is what engenders a sense of empathy whose nom de plume might really be citizenship itself. Urbanization makes this new sense of belonging possible, makes it both broader and narrower, even as it sometimes rips up the foundation of one's own dwelling space—dwelling in a narrow sense. This is the sort of dialectic that *Marxism and Urban Culture* is trying to work through, tries to look in the face, tarrying with the magical power of the negative, deriving something positive in the process. The assembled essays form a cultural contraflow that roams through historical time and global space, that bed themselves down in Hispanic studies as well as in political science, in Communication studies as well as International Relations, in Madrid as well as in Montreal, in Vienna as well as in Cairo, in Osaka as well as in Los Angeles and Guatemala City, on reel as well as in the real; it's a peripatetic grand narrative that concerns itself with art as well as protest, with representation as well as mobilization, sometimes in the street, occasionally unto death, but all times with an expressive desire—in Henri Lefebvre's words—"of *metamorphosing* the real."

In *The Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre uses a beautiful turn of phrase: "the urban consolidates" [*l'urbain rassemble*], he says.[5] The urban becomes urban because it creates its own definition, because, as complex web of social relations somehow hanging together, it engenders and expresses a specific kind of sociability. The urban is a bringer together, and the harbinger and transformer of everything in that coming together: capital and goods, people and information, activity and conflict, mass and underground media, confrontation and cooperation. The urban "de-structures and re-structures its elements," Lefebvre says. As a form, it concentrates and intensifies things, creates simultaneity and difference, difference where no awareness of difference existed; and what were once thought distinct and isolated become conscious of universality, of universality in their particularity. This is why Marx lobbies for its coming, for the becoming of urbanization. *The urban consolidates*: it is a particle and wave, a flow and thing, its own random uncertainty principle prevailing in everyday life.

More than a hundred and fifty years since the *Manifesto*, what gels people together doesn't only emerge from the workplace but from the dwelling space—"dwelling" in its broadest sense—dwelling as world culture beyond four walls. World culture forces our four walls open, enlarges their scope, widens their horizon, ensures that living space is now about *the totality of*

political and economic space in which one belongs. Once, seemingly long ago, people went out into the world, discovered the world, often through the world of work; now it seems the world comes to people, discovers us, sometimes whether we like it or not. Nowadays, if people identify with other people it is because of something shared, because of something that cements us together, bonds us across frontiers and barriers. Arguably, the world of work is no longer where this bonding takes place for a lot of people.

Is it, then, urban-consciousness rather than class-consciousness that bonds? Yes and no. It's affinity that bonds, and the urban is the site though which this affinity takes hold, takes place: a staging, to be sure, but not a passive staging when the curtain goes up, when the drama actually commences. The urban, just as Marx said, somehow helps affinity and class-consciousness grow, helps it become aware of itself, aware that other affinities exist in the world, that affinities can encounter one another, become aware of one another, aware of one another as the 99 percent, in a social network connected by a certain tissuing, by a spider's webbing, by a planetary webbing, by common notions. Meanwhile, the urban lets people become collectively conscious of an enemy, collectively conscious of a desire to do something about that enemy, collectively conscious about wanting no truck with this enemy's game. This has to be what progressive global urban culture is now all about. This is what it can be about. It's the terrain and stake for any twenty-first-century Marxism, for a Marxist culture of the urban, for *Marxism and Urban Culture*.

—Andy Merrifield, Cambridge, England, November 2013

NOTES

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Penguin Deluxe Edition, New York, 2011), 68.
2. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 69.
3. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (Penguin, New York, 1976), 261.
4. Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 32.
5. Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2003), 174.

Introduction

What is Urban Culture?

Benjamin Fraser

To some it will seem that this introduction—and by extension this edited volume as a whole—sets out for itself a monumental task. Others may say that there is relatively little that is novel about the motivation behind *Marxism and Urban Culture*. The truth is, of course, somewhere in-between. All things considered, the perspective adopted will not depend on how one understands *Marxism*, on how one understands *urbanization*, on how one understands *culture* . . . but rather on *how one understands each of these three variables in relation to the others*.

Indeed, this book builds on the central premise of an entire tradition of scholarship in the subfield of urban Marxism, just as it expands upon the way in which culture and cultural production are engaged by that tradition. On the whole, its intent is to spark dialogue across the humanities and the social sciences. The form of an edited volume provides an advantage in this respect: it allows for the gradual emergence of an inherently uneven method, one perhaps attuned to the uneven geographical development of contemporary capitalism in specific urban locations. Individual chapters have not been subjected to a coherent formula; authors have been free to approach Marxism, to approach culture, in the way that has been most appropriate given their subjects and chosen cities. Nonetheless, from these necessarily idiosyncratic snapshots the reader will reach a vision—once again, their own, one inflected by their own interests—of urbanized society as a *totality*. These chapters—their cohabitation in a single volume; the disciplinary debates replicated in their implicit collisions with one another—provide an opportunity for the *active* reader to reconcile the fields of politics, economy, geography, history, culture, literature, film, cultural studies. Rather than present a unified

theory, they uncover a variegated scholarly terrain. Rather than encourage simplicity, these chapters reveal complexity. Rather than provide an answer, they pose a question centered around not two but three terms.

MARXISM—THE URBAN—CULTURE . . . each of these three terms is unequivocally the subject of heated, substantial, and continuing debate. It is only possible to say otherwise if one is content to take the most narrow of views, and the increasingly interdisciplinary terrain of both the humanities and the social sciences has only made the limitations of such narrow views more apparent. It is clear that there has been much written on the subject of urban culture throughout the twentieth century—not all of it Marxist in nature, of course. From the point of view of disciplinary method, the scholarly landscape constituted by these writings is certainly an uneven one; that is, it is my position that, to date, there has been relatively little reconciliation of humanities and social science approaches to critiquing capital. The question driving social science approaches to urban culture has often been delimited by a method that, in practice if not also in theory, reduces artistic creations to being mere products enveloped in circuits of exchange. To ignore that culture seen in this light is indeed a commodity would be impossible—and I shall make no attempt to do so here. But this undeniable truth does not exhaust the nature of culture, nor does it exhaust the relevance of culture to a critique of urbanized capitalist society. In particular, it does not exhaust the potential of urban culture, but instead reveals its contradictory position in contemporary capitalist urbanization.

Henri Lefebvre once wrote that,

> For many Marxists, it seems that art is only a distraction, a form of entertainment, at best a superstructural form or a simple means of political efficacy. It is necessary to remind these people that great works of art deeply touch, even disturb, the roots of human existence. The highest mission of art is not simply to express, even less to reflect, the real, nor to substitute fictions for it. These functions are reductive; while they may be part of the function of art, they do not define its highest level. The highest mission of art is to *metamorphose* the real. (1988: 82–83, see also 2006)

From this point of view, urban culture cannot be solely a vehicle for capitalist accumulation. Simultaneously, that is, it may exercise a potentially disalienating role. If the question "What is urban culture?" has been answered many times with the response "It is but a commodity," it may be of help to remember the following dictum taken from the *Grundrisse*: "Frequently the only possible answer is a critique of the question, and the only possible solution is to negate the question" (Marx 1973: 127).[1] That is to say: we must think rather carefully, indeed, when formulating the question posed by this introduction. That question, evident in the subtitle appearing at the start of this brief essay, is "What is urban culture?"

A. ON THE QUESTION OF URBAN CULTURE

Before outlining the chapters of this book, and as a way of reformulating the question of urban culture—subjecting it to critique, negating its habitual bias, and exposing its inherent contradiction—I want to explore what, in my estimation, represents the most visible if not hegemonic Marxist approach to urban culture at the current time. Turning to Marxian geographer David Harvey—who is mentioned frequently throughout this book—we find a quick and appropriate way to broach the contradictions of culture in light of the aims of the present edited collection. It is clear that Harvey's "The Art of Rent"—the fourth chapter of what is, at the time of this writing, the critic's most recent book, *Rebel Cities* (2012: 89–112)—follows from his previous work. This would include, generally, his extension of Marxian thought into geographical territory via the urban phenomenon (by way of Henri Lefebvre, who is also frequently cited in this book's pages; see Harvey 2010, 2009, 2006, 2000, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1989). It would also include, specifically, earlier texts such as the very similar chapter of *Spaces of Capital* titled "The Art of Rent: Globalization and the Commodification of Culture" (Harvey 2001: 394–411).[2] In both publications, the spatial theorist discusses monopoly rents, cultural and symbolic capital, tourism, and the dynamic tension between the uniqueness and the marketability of culture. In the main text, he gives particular weight to the consequences of the latter; that is, the cultural homogenization which accompanies the successful marketing of unique commodities. It may be unnecessary to point out that urbanization broadly understood—(is there any other way to approach the urban?)—constitutes an implicit grounding for the entire piece. This is true even when he discusses the wine trade, and the urban also figures directly into his remarks on the way in which unique city locations are routinely traded upon by developers and speculators manipulating urban forms of capital.

What is so interesting, of course, is the way in which Harvey references urban culture (in both articles; see Harvey 2012, 2001). Evident here is the chosen method of the social scientist. This method is not an erroneous one by any means, but it is one that is, for lack of a better term, provisional or incomplete. (It is to this incompleteness that the present volume responds.) He writes,

> That culture has become a commodity of some sort is undeniable. Yet there is also a widespread belief that there is something so special about cultural products and events (be they in the arts, theater, music, cinema, architecture or more broadly in localized ways of life, heritage, collective memories and affective communities) as to set them apart from ordinary commodities like shirts and shoes. It may be, of course, that we set them apart simply because we cannot bear to think of them as anything other than different, existing on some higher plane of human creativity and meaning than that located in the

> factories of mass production and consumption. Yet even when we strip away all residues of wishful thinking (often backed by powerful ideologies) we are still left with something very special about those products designated as "cultural." How, then, can the commodity status of so many of these phenomena be reconciled with their special character? The relation between culture and capital evidently calls for careful probing and nuanced scrutiny. (Harvey 2001: 394; rewritten with minor changes in 2012: 89–90)

Clearly, the forms of urban culture referenced by Harvey ("the arts, music, theater, music, cinema [. . .]") are not engaged at the level of textual representation but are instead intended to be read as embodied cultural practices in urban contexts (as Sharon Zukin [1995], for one, has also done quite compellingly, for example). As elsewhere, here Harvey wants to discuss the cinema hall, but not the cinema; music venues, but not the music itself; the theater-going public, but not the staged performance; the art museum, but not the art it holds. He wants, as he put it on another occasion, to interrogate "the ways in which aesthetic and cultural trends get woven into the fabric of daily life" of urbanized capitalism (1990: 347). Accordingly, however, his chosen method (that of the social scientist) directs that he focus his attention on a certain and constructed "scale" of analysis by leaving textual representation out of the picture.[3]

Some may see this turn away from humanities texts as one properly befitting a "cultural geography" or "cultural studies" approach (of this, too, I am skeptical; cf. Williams 2007a). It should be noted that, to his credit, Harvey has not shied away from "reading" humanities texts specifically in some of his other writings. Therein, he has enjoyed more or less success, depending on whether or not we are taking into account the perspective of literary and filmic scholars (that is; see Harvey 1990, 1996, 2003, 2006)[4]. It bears repeating that the social science approach to culture is undeniably important if we are to interrogate the imbrication of humanities discourses at the extra-textual scale (in contemporary circuits of exchange and accumulation). But the question remains, what of these humanities texts themselves (novels, poetry, films . . .)? Have they also "a special character" that requires "careful probing and nuanced scrutiny"? Or may we write them off as—always, everywhere—pertaining to what might be called the alienating veneer of cultural phenomena under capitalism? May we reduce humanities texts to being merely signs of distinction, tangible forms of the cultural and symbolic capital discussed by Harvey? Or, as I believe—and as Harvey would ultimately agree (cf. chapter 2, this volume)—is their relationship to capital more complex?

Along with many others doing cultural studies work within the disciplinary structures of traditionally literary fields, I would argue that the "textual culture" of the humanities is ultimately neither distinct nor distinguishable from the nontextual urban culture that Harvey privileges in his analysis.

Interestingly, although Harvey's work is inspired by Marxian geographer Henri Lefebvre,[5] he has proven unable to reproduce the French urban philosopher's more capacious view of culture. In the article "Toward a Leftist Cultural Politics: Remarks Occasioned by the Centenary of Marx's Death" (published in English translation in 1988), Lefebvre wrote of the way in which aesthetics and culture are, in effect, one point of entry onto an entire world:

> It so happens that the word "culture" also evokes a magical image for me, that of Sleeping Beauty. She does not doze on flowers and on fragrant grass but on a thick mattress of texts, quotations, musical scores—and under a vast canopy of books, sociological, semiological, historical and philosophical theses. Then one day the Prince comes; he awakens her and everything around the forest comes to life along with her—poets poetizing, musicians musicking, cooks cooking, lovers loving, and so on. Singers? Songs? Yes, they are a part of culture, yet they must not be considered in isolation but within an ensemble that also includes dance, music, cartoon strips, television, and so forth. Moreover, culture is not merely a static palimpsest of texts, it is lived, active, which is what the fable of the wakened princess suggests to me. (Lefebvre 1988: 81–82)

Lest the reader think it was Lefebvre's intention to "move beyond texts," it is important to make clear that what he wanted to do was to fold texts back into everyday life; he wanted, not to consider them in isolation from cultural processes, but rather to adopt the more capacious view of culture to which I have just referred. His point is not that texts should be disregarded as static objects but rather that they should be seen as part of an ensemble of culture whose breadth is so seldom acknowledged by Marxists. The way Lefebvre framed urban space itself as a text (e.g., 1996) should thus be seen first and foremost as a way of blending humanities and social science concerns and of overcoming the limitations of disciplinary specialization. The place he found, in his oeuvre, for literature, poetry, and artistic work in general—as well as the "theory of the work of art" he elucidated in a foundational text still awaiting English translation (Lefebvre 2006 [1980])—demonstrates the inclusiveness of his capacious view of culture (cf. the way discussions of texts figure into Lefebvre 1991, 2005, 2006, 2007; also Fraser 2014).

We should not forget—Lefebvre did not forget—that the specialized role in society embodied by literary scholars, film scholars, art scholars in general, has long stemmed from (and has also reinforced) a pernicious bourgeois fragmentation of knowledge. The fragmented nature and fragmenting activity of knowledge was discussed explicitly and at length by Henri Lefebvre (1996, 2003), just as it was also implicit in the denunciation of bourgeois literary analysis launched by figures such as Raymond Williams (2007a, 2007b, 1975) and Fredric Jameson (1999, 1981).[6] But there is an essential

contradiction at work here—one that can only be partially explained by the pendular swings that are taken to constitute the historical evolution of academic scholarship. The contradiction is this: that in rightly asserting the role of culture within Marxism and within Urban Studies (as the Marxist urban geographer himself admits, two areas that have erroneously been dominated by a myopic understanding of political economy that marginalizes Marxist and Urban approaches), David Harvey has *in practice* essentialized and disregarded textual culture.

I say in practice, because this view seems to be congruous neither with his understanding of Marxism nor with his point of view on culture in general. As should be obvious to any literary scholar—and as follows from a broad application of Marxian thought—humanities texts are not things in the simple sense any more than a building or a city is a thing. As Harvey makes clear in his discussion of urban culture, as Lefebvre made clear in his extensive work on the urban phenomenon, and as Marx made clear in his nuanced exploration of the commodity form, what appear to us as simple things are in fact social relations that hide the conditions of their (re)production. How strange it is, then, that for many Marxists—as Lefebvre succinctly notes—grasping urban culture by the root should mean emptying cultural texts of their artistic qualities, their structure, and thus their nuanced construction and their necessarily social meaning . . .? As if cultural texts were solely products! To take this view of humanities texts—without a more nuanced understanding of the commodity—is, of course, to affirm the logic of capital. Cultural texts are indeed products, they are indeed (more and more, perhaps) circulated as products in webs of exchange. But—as it is with other commodities—they are also more than products. Just as with other products, their seemingly hard borders in fact hide the social reality of their split essence—that is, their dual existence, positioned betwixt and between use and exchange value. While aesthetics and culture have clearly been co-opted by the urbanized process of capital accumulation there is an aspect of culture that resists commodification. By this I refer to the use value of humanities texts in the hands of some scholars. This is not to say that scholarship is itself a world of its own, free from the influence of capital. As illustrated by the debates surrounding the future of scholarly publishing—(the rise of pay-to-publish models affecting the humanities, for example, along with the corporatization of formerly independent journals not to mention the not-unproblematic rise of the "public humanities" and the digital humanities, none of which will be discussed here)—academic scholarship is more a part of capital accumulation than it has ever been. But the arts in general will always continue to have a use value to the degree that they help us to think more carefully through how capital operates.

Make no mistake, the appropriation of culture by capital is ongoing and perhaps, in an immediate sense, unpreventable. But it is also a dynamic and

nuanced, uneven process. Moreover, the process of textual representation—alongside historical, geographical, anthropological analyses, that is—allows us to see capital in action and to envision how it is that material and immaterial forces interact in the continuous shaping of our urban worlds. That is, more important than dismissing culture as a mere tool of capital or, on the other hand, celebrating culture as an alternative utopian space—(whichever side one takes, would not this fragmented understanding reaffirm the spatializing alienations of capital?)—a nuanced approach to culture must seek to connect humanities and social science perspectives.

Here I find it helpful to turn to Henri Lefebvre—for the reason that it is in his work where we find a subtle yet persistent emphasis on the relationship between capitalist alienation and disciplinary knowledge, specifically. I have written on this at length elsewhere,[7] and here I will merely reproduce a quotation I feel to be crucial for the present project:

> Every specialized science cuts from the global phenomenon a "field," or "domain," which it illuminates in its own way. There is no point in choosing between segmentation and illumination. Moreover, each individual science is further fragmented into specialized subdisciplines. Sociology is divided up into political sociology, economic sociology, rural and urban sociology, and so forth. The fragmented and specialized sciences operate analytically: they are the result of an analysis and perform analyses of their own. In terms of the urban phenomenon considered as a whole, geography, demography, history, psychology, and sociology supply the results of an analytical procedure. Nor should we overlook the contributions of the biologist, doctor or psychiatrist, or those of the novelist or poet (. . .) Without the progressive and regressive movements (in time and space) of analysis, without the multiple divisions and fragmentations, it would be impossible to conceive of a science of the urban phenomenon. But such fragments do not constitute knowledge. (Lefebvre 2003: 48–49)

Here—as it is throughout his numerous works—Lefebvre seeks to work from fragmentary knowledge toward *totality* (a concept explored in greater depth in one of this volume's chapters and implicit in many more). In this process, the work of art plays a privileged role. That is, to return to the question of the "special" cultural commodity broached by Harvey earlier in this introduction: "Art is," as Marc James Léger has written in his own work on Lefebvre, "a specialised activity that resists specialisation" (2006: 151).

It is the relationship—or better said the tension—between specialization and totality which is key to understanding how capital, space, and culture intersect in the twenty-first century. The format of an edited volume is perhaps uniquely calibrated to explore this relationship, given the way in which different points of view and themes may be juxtaposed in a single text. The grouping together of numerous specialized points of view within a single if variegated framework may aid in identifying the consonant and discordant