

Marx, Postmodernism, and Spatial Configurations in Jameson and Lefebvre

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**Arina Lungu,**

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**Abstract:** In her article, "Marx, Postmodernism, and Spatial Configurations in Jameson and Lefebvre," Arina Lungu discusses the connection between Marxist sociology and postmodernist theory. Lungu examines Fredric Jameson's volume *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* under the light of the spatial theory developed in the 1970s by Marxian theoretician Henri Lefebvre. For Jameson, the spatial turn is a consequence of the gap between the limited abilities of the human perceptive apparatus and the unrepresentability of the multinational hyperspace. In Lungu's view, Jameson reaches his definition of "culturally-dominant" sensibility by disregarding the rich body of spatial criticism outside postmodern theory. In contrast, Lefebvre's analysis of urban space points to the Marxist origins of the contemporary interest in space across a range of disciplines and cultural trends, and implicitly casts doubt on Jameson's attempt to define the spatial turn as an original development within postmodernism.

**Arina LUNGU****Marx, Postmodernism, and Spatial Configurations in Jameson and Lefebvre**

In the early 1970s, Western humanist scholarship and culture has witnessed the emergence of a new paradigm, with focus on the description and analysis of society in terms of spatial configurations. The novelty of this approach resides, on the one hand, in a rapprochement between the characteristics of physical space and the psycho-sociological profile of the individuals inhabiting it. On the other, the valorisation of spatiality qualifies as a reaction against the "canonized rhetoric of temporality of the critics and theorists of high modernism" (Jameson 365). The adaptation of this notion assumes the spatial turn -- perhaps in contrast to the "visual turn" -- to be connected to the rise of postmodernism and implicitly to mark a clear-cut distinction between this trend and the modernist movement.

In my paper, I examine the terms in which Fredric Jameson, in his *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, defines postmodernism as a new approach to space, deriving from the evolution of capitalist relationships of production. Jameson's views are contrasted with those of his acknowledged predecessor, Henri Lefebvre, as expressed in his *The Production of Space (La Production de l'espace)*. By means of this comparative method, my analysis attempts to cast a new light upon a series of related questions. To begin with, we will need to consider whether, as Lefebvre argues, human life has always been defined by spatial issues, yet some thinkers never paid proper attention to it, or conversely, as Jameson suggests, the contemporary interest in space represents a novel feature which is specific of postmodern identity. For Jameson, the main characteristic of postmodern culture is a mutation in objective space, which has not yet been matched by "any equivalent mutation in the subject" (38). I argue that this claim stems from a universalizing view of urban space -- in Lefebvre's terms an "abstract space" -- within which the perspective of the designer takes precedence over the lived experience of the inhabitants. Although Jameson rejects the principles of semiotics, his analysis of individual buildings seems to be deeply indebted to them. This observation appears all the more important by contrast with his pursuit of a "totalizing" approach to postmodernism based on Marxian conceptual strategies (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 400). In turn, Lefebvre also works within the Marxian project in spite of his frictional relationship with canonical Marxism. Despite its theoretical indifference to postmodernism (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 364), *The Production of Space* addresses crucial issues on the postmodern agenda which are paradoxically left out of Jameson's analysis -- such as the patriarchal aspects of the power algorithm, popular (as opposed to high culture) mechanisms of resistance, or the diversity of lived experience. However, firmly rooted in French sociological tradition (see Soja 45) and the critique of the "modernisation of France in the postwar ... era" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 364), Lefebvre's work does not justify -- what is more, defies -- postmodern encapsulation. Thus, rather than ascribing the spatial turn, and Lefebvre with it, to the area of postmodern innovations, it is more productive to regard them as specific developments within Western Marxism. In adopting this stance, I draw attention to the ambiguity of Jameson's own theoretical position which may be seen as simultaneously "inside" and "outside" the postmodern movement.

Lefebvre's spatial system is essentially dynamic, as suggested by the title of his work, which alongside its Marxian undertones inaugurates an active understanding of space as a process in continuous progress (110). As he elaborated his spatial analysis within a hostile or at least opaque cultural environment, his views would only slowly penetrate into the Western academe along with the mediation of the Anglo-American school of urbanism (see Merrifield 168-69). Examining Lefebvre's position in contemporary Western culture, Andy Merrifield draws attention to the discrepancy between his "minority status in France" and his current prominence within "Anglo-American intellectual circles" (168). In Merrifield's view, canonical French Marxists of the 1970s regarded Lefebvre's concern with urban space as a deviation from fundamental class issues, whereas dissenters within this doctrine showed more interest in Louis Althusser's reformulation of Marx from a poststructuralist perspective.

Lefebvre's ideas found, however, a fertile ground in the discipline of urban geography, whose foundations were being laid at the time in Anglo-American scholarship. It was the translation of *La Production de l'espace* into English in 1991 which eventually instituted Lefebvre's reputation as one of the leading contemporary spatial thinkers (Merrifield 170). We can therefore establish a direct connection between this early work and subsequent theories as the one developed by Jameson in the 1980s and 1990s. Lefebvre assumes the pioneering task of extracting the concept of space from the abstract field of philosophy and science, and placing it in a central position within sociological and psychological debates: "how were transitions to be made from mathematical spaces (i.e. from the mental capacities of human beings, from logic) to nature in the first place, to practice in the second, and thence to the theory of social life – which also presumably must unfold in space?" (3). In his view, this separation is itself inaccurate; consequently he replaces it with a generative concept of space, which is shown to be actively produced at the interface between physical, mental and social phenomena. The examination of such a "social space" would therefore imply an exhaustive analysis of both concrete and abstract human activities, since none of these can be imagined outside a particular spatial configuration, implicitly shaping while at the same time being shaped by them. The scholar/critic therefore regards the (previously neglected) dimension of space as a primary unit of sociological inquiry. The sweeping effect of Lefebvre's argumentation stems mainly from a heavy emphasis on novelty. Lefebvre construes his discourse in such a manner as to create the conditions of a cognitive "event," characterised by a rupture with a dissatisfying past in the name of an enhanced future. The (meta)narrative underlying this rhetorical strategy presupposes belief in the rational advancement of knowledge -- which links Lefebvre with the much debated project of modernity, and by dint of his materialist approach, with the Marxist tradition. Edward Soja suggests that Lefebvre was far from developing his interest in social space on virgin territory; to the contrary, "in France the spatial dimension had been an insistent element of studies in political economy since the end of the seventeenth century" (45). According to Soja, after a period of decline at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this spatial tradition surfaced once more in the concerns of all major thinkers emerging -- and distancing themselves -- from French Marxism. Lefebvre's criticism of such thinkers (we may mention, for instance, Michel Foucault or Louis Althusser) serves to confirm rather than disprove Soja's hypothesis. Whereas the particular direction embraced by his critique of space is undoubtedly genuine, his denial of predecessors as well as contemporary affiliations should also be approached in terms of the modernist rhetoric of innovation. This emphasis on the value of the present moment compels thinkers to a specific form of voluntary amnesia -- so that in most cases the severance of all links with the past can be exposed as a mere rhetorical trick. By contrast, for Jameson the "claim to historic originality of postmodernism" resides precisely in the "renunciation of the new or novum" (*Postmodernism* 104). In the "Introduction" to his book, he even adopts a critical distance from his own attempt to define this movement as a self-sufficient cultural trend: "I have pretended to believe that the postmodern is as unusual as it thinks it is, and that it constitutes a cultural and experiential break worth exploring in greater detail ... The fundamental ideological task of the new concept, however, must remain that of coordinating new forms of practice and social and mental habits ... with the new forms of economic production" (xiii-iv). This constant subordination of hermeneutical "suspicion" to the principles of coherence and continuity -- stemming from Marxian habits of thought -- signals the ambiguous character of Jameson's relation to postmodernism. It becomes obvious then that the critic's interest in contemporary space comes secondary to the task of providing a "totalizing" description of the postmodern movement. This observation casts a new light upon his attempt to enunciate a form of spatiality which characterises exclusively the postmodern age.

From the onset, the "spatial turn" is indicated as one of the most "productive ways of distinguishing post-modernism from modernism proper" (154), due to the latter's obsession with the problematic of time and historicity. Against Lefebvre's view of space as a social category organising the entirety of human history, Jameson postulates a "supplement of spatiality" specific of one particular stage in the

evolution of capitalism, namely the contemporary age of "multinational capital" (*Postmodernism* 365). The arbitrariness of Jameson's attempt to justify the limitations of his discussion of space becomes conspicuous in such paradoxical statements as "even if everything is spatial, this postmodern reality here is somehow *more* spatial than everything else" (*Postmodernism* 365). While Lefebvre's argument relies on the concept of change as the very driving force of the history of ideas, Jameson shifts the weight of the discussion towards the fields of nature and economy. Under the circumstances, his effort to stretch natural space seems far-fetched, or at least insufficiently argued. At the same time, the postulation of a supplement of space turns out to be quite superfluous, since following Lefebvre, the critic also insists upon the mutual dependence between the spatio-temporal axes and the processes of production (*Postmodernism* 367). Spatial configurations in any age would be accordingly stretched and molded by all other social factors. Rather than advocating space as the distinguishing feature of postmodern society, it would be more justifiable then to regard it as merely one of the main concerns of contemporary culture theory. The latter approach also accounts for the connection between the spatial turn and the Marxist formation of both thinkers, given that Marxism precedes and transcends modernism and postmodernism alike. In a parallel vein, it is obvious that both Lefebvre and Jameson, by the very scope of their analyses, take distance from classical Marxism. What is more, despite the resolutely Marxian character of their method, both have been severely criticized for straying from the right path of genuine Marxist criticism (see Jameson, *Postmodernism* 297; Merrifield 168). Jameson sums up this controversy in the following metaphor: "Marxism and postmodernism: people often seem to find this combination peculiar or paradoxical, and somehow intensely unstable, so that some are led to conclude that, in my own case, having "become" a postmodernist I must have ceased to be a Marxist in any meaningful (or in other words, stereotypical) sense. For the two terms (in full postmodernism) carry with them a whole freight of pop nostalgia images, "Marxism" perhaps distilling itself into yellowing period photographs of Lenin and the Soviet revolution, and "postmodernism" quickly yielding a vista of the gaudiest new hotels. The overhasty unconscious then rapidly assembles the image of a small, painstakingly reproduced nostalgia restaurant – decorated with old photographs, with Soviet waiters sluggishly serving bad Russian food -- hidden away within some gleaming new pink and blue architectural extravaganza" (*Postmodernism* 297). Such an image can only serve as an ironic and somehow outdated commentary upon the conceptual rigidity of Marxist groups in the West no less than elsewhere. Beyond doubt, it was not the secular worship of such groups which shoveled Marx's ideas into the twenty-first century, but, rather, the heresies of such thinkers as Jameson and Lefebvre who dwelled on primary texts so as to develop the present-day body of Marxian concepts.

The above metaphor challenges additionally the Cold War stereotypes of East versus West -- with "bad" Marxism figuring as the gloomy economic depression of the Soviet Union and "good" capitalism symbolized by the breathtaking skyscrapers of international corporations. Yet, on the other hand, Jameson's choice of illustrations throughout his book conveys the feeling that it is once more the role of the West -- more specifically, the prosperous US-American business environment -- to set the pace for the world's economic and cultural development. From this standpoint, Lefebvre seems closer to the spirit of Marx's work, not only in methodological but also in ethical terms. If we take, for instance, the system exposed in *The Production of Space*, it becomes evident that it can only be validated on the ideological scaffolding of Marx's theory of production. Thus the sociologist postulates the existence of three inter-related spatial categories. To begin with, "spatial practices" designate the correlation between the "social relationships of reproduction" -- the private and family sphere -- and the "social relationships of production" -- the sphere of work and social interaction (Lefebvre 33). They generate the specific configuration of any given society, and ensure its cohesion by requiring a certain degree of perceptual "competence" from its members. In other words, these practices represent the ways in which individuals *perceive* the social space they inhabit. Secondly, "representations of space" refer to the abstract space as conceived by architects and planners. By means of a system of codes and signs, these representations embody the ideology of the dominant class, and the social hierarchy imposed by

the relationships of production. In capitalism, for instance, this ideology is represented by the "logic" of the "world of commodities" (Lefebvre 53) which is inherent in such spaces as banks, commercial and business centres, airports and motorways, or information networks. Lastly, "representational spaces" are the domain of *lived* experience, of everyday activities, and may contain codes related to the "underground" order of existence, and also to art. This triad is envisaged as pervading all forms of social activity, and accounting for the complex network of influences between space and its inhabitants. For instance, for an English male peasant living in the Middle Ages, spatial practice was dominated by the roads connecting his home and village to neighbouring ones, and also by the famous pilgrims' and crusaders' ways across several continents (Lefebvre 45). Representations of space were to be found in the design of churches and castles, based on an opposition between Heaven and Hell, light and darkness, the world above and the one below. Representational spaces, on the other hand, regulated his daily routine, and were reflected by the various artefacts he produced, or the fabrics he used. However, as Merrifield points out, this ingenious conceptual system could well be regarded as merely pretentious in the absence of a Marxian substratum of in-depth analysis (175). Lefebvre's concept of abstract space can be fully understood only in terms of Marx's abstract labour -- as relations of production stripped of their human content. These abstract concepts are subordinated to social reality by virtue of their financial significance. The work of architects, in other words, is influenced invariably by monetary considerations -- and in most cases, it depends upon the interests of the money-supplying individuals or institutions. Lefebvre's spatial system is therefore backed by the Marxist thesis that money represents the common denominator of social relations in any capitalist society.

In my opinion, it is precisely this abstract space that Jameson privileges in his analysis. By this I do not mean solely that his book focuses on the examination of post-1960 architectural forms, and the extent to which they are representative of the contemporary *air du temps*. The changes in architectural space can justifiably offer invaluable insights as to the nature of the society inhabiting it. Yet Jameson repeatedly prioritizes the perspective of the designer over the diversity of concrete experience, by homogenising human occupation of space into one exponential pattern. For methodological purposes, even such simplification would be acceptable had the analysis been maintained within the disciplinary confines of architecture. Nevertheless, these partial conclusions are extended to the sphere of sociology, and brought to bear upon the very nature of postmodern sensibility. If we take for instance the analysis of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, it becomes obvious that Jameson's primary concern is with the vision of the architect, John Portman, and the failure or success of his enterprise. The building is stripped of economic connotations, and treated as a collection of signs presumably inscribed by the creator for a certain audience, who may or may not be able to interpret them correctly (*Postmodernism* 39-44). Jameson proceeds by looking at the individual elements of the construction, and trying to decipher their role in representing Portman's identity as a postmodern architect. One interesting example in this respect is his attempt at a narrative analysis of the hotel lifts: "We know in any case that recent architectural theory has begun to borrow from narrative analysis in other fields and to attempt to see our physical trajectories through such buildings as virtual narratives or stories ... In the Bonaventure, however, we find a dialectical heightening of this process: it seems to me that the escalators and the elevators here henceforth replace movement but also, and above all, designate themselves as new reflexive signs and emblems of movement proper ... Here the narrative stroll has been underscored, symbolized, reified, and replaced by a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade we are no longer allowed to conduct on our own: and this is a dialectical intensification of the autoreferentiality of all modern culture, which tends to turn upon itself and designate its own cultural production as its content" (*Postmodernism* 42). To begin with, this semiotic approach clashes with Jameson's initial commitment to a sociological-materialist perspective. In addition, by making a unique model of interpretation -- implicitly, his own -- the cornerstone of his spatial system, he infringes upon the democratization of the sign which lies at the very foundation of

poststructuralism. If architecture is to be interpreted as a language, therefore, we should necessarily make room for a variety of alternative perspectives.

For Jameson, however, the human subject occupying postmodernist space is by definition one whose "perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space I have called the space of high modernism" (*Postmodernism* 38). Further on, modernist architecture is described as "elitist" and reclusive, painstakingly isolating itself from the city fabric. By contrast, postmodernist buildings such as the Bonaventure hotel are essentially popular, open to "locals and tourists alike" (*Postmodernism* 39). Under the circumstances, while Portman's design may well be the result of a negotiation with high modernist ideology, there is little reason to generalise this observation at the level of hotel guests and staff, whose perception would undoubtedly be shaped by a wider variety of factors, among which their own cultural background as well as the social role they accomplish within that space. This generalisation supports one of the crucial claims in Jameson's essay "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1984); namely, that technological progress has resulted in a "postmodern hyperspace" which has surpassed the adaptability power of the human perceptive apparatus. In my view, Jameson's position can be challenged from several perspectives. On the one hand, his view of space can be contrasted to that of Lefebvre. For the French theorist, "representations of space" as embodied in public buildings represent the reification of relationships of production -- therefore a direct if covert expression of what Jameson would call a "mutation in the subject" ("The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" 38). Yet, Jameson sees these spaces as a function of the "superstructure" and reverses the Marxian paradigm by interpreting art -- in this case, architecture -- as the driving force of social change: "At any rate, the very concept of space here demonstrates its supremely mediatory function, in the way in which its aesthetic formulation begins at once to entail cognitive consequences on the one hand and socio-political consequences on the other ... Le Corbusier's "free plan" may be said in much the same sense to challenge the existence of the traditional room as a syntactic category and to produce an imperative to dwell in some new way, to invent new forms of living and habitation as an ethical and political (and perhaps also a psychoanalytic) consequence of formal mutation" (*Postmodernism* 104-07). It appears that Jameson -- programmatically or not -- chooses to obscure the increasing commodification of intellectual work in Marshall McLuhan's "global village." In so doing, he ignores or at least minimizes an essential feature of late-capitalist economy. By placing the socio-political in the subordinate layer of his development scheme, the critic leaves little room for the economic and political motivation of architects themselves, and the various ways in which dominant ideologies are reflected in urban planning. At the opposite pole, for Lefebvre, the belief that artists "are in some way the cause or *ratio* of space, whether architectural, urbanistic or global" (304) represents a regrettable fallacy in the history of art, which can only stem from a faulty methodology -- that is, the practice of considering works of art in disjunction from their social function.

One further argument in support of this criticism is formulated by Walter Benjamin in his essay on Charles Baudelaire. Benjamin defines the then current stage of capitalism as the moment when the architect-engineer replaces the artist as "the painter of the modern world" (176). Taking as an example Georg Haussmann's "strategic beautification" of Paris (partly serving the consolidation of state power, and partly for "sanitary purposes" with obvious economic repercussions), Benjamin infers that modernist aesthetics -- which was still governed by the principle of Beauty -- has been superseded by a new vision which has "liberated the forms of creation from art" (176) and implicitly relocated them at the level of technological processes of production and reproduction. On the other hand, Jameson's theory leaves open the question of the mutation in objective space. By insisting upon the role of artistic design in the production of postmodern sensibility, Jameson dismisses the equally justifiable hypothesis that it might have been this very change in sensibility which triggered the demand for new spatial configurations. The various social and political movements of the 1960s have undoubtedly influenced the *Weltanschauung* of postmodern architects, prompting the emergence of a new type of building -- more transparent, more accessible, less centralized. Following this line of thought, Italian

architect and theorist Paolo Portoghesi would claim that "architecture was one of the first disciplines to go into crisis when faced with the new needs and desires of postmodern society" (209). Needless to say, Jameson does not actually ignore the social dimension of contemporary architecture. To the contrary, he alludes repeatedly to the economic reality underpinning his analysis, namely the relationships of production within multinational capitalism. As previously stated, however, he underplays the diversity of power contributions to the production of space, and, as his overview of the Bonaventure hotel suggests, focuses primarily on the dimension of consumption, which is in its turn homogenised. It would not be too much to say, then, that in his attempt to come up with a coherent explanation of postmodernism, Jameson is forced to resort to an undue simplification of the complex reality that he sets out to describe. Conversely, it is the all too ambitious complexity of description which represents one of the setbacks of Lefebvre's spatial system. As Merrifield notices, more often than not the sociologist leaves to the reader the task of filling in his highly comprehensive conceptual frameworks (173). The common quest for an all-encompassing set of explanations confirms the fact that, as Kanisha Goonewardena points out: the principle underlying the work of both Jameson and Lefebvre is the Marxian descriptive "totality" -- which stands in sharp contrast with the "positivist and empiricist philosophy of postmodernism" holding that "reality is constituted of isolated, self-sufficient particulars" (59). Goonewardena suggests that as far back as 1971 György Lukács -- working within the framework of dogmatic Marxism -- noted that the true essence of Marxist criticism resides not in the "primacy of economic motives in historical explanation," but in the "point of view of totality" (59). From this perspective, the spatial systems under analysis qualify as fundamentally Marxist, beyond certain methodological and contextual differences. This conclusion provides a strong argument for an understanding of the spatial turn as a peripheral development within Western Marxism, which subsequently permeated other fields of culture (see Soja 43-45) -- architectural theory included.

Owing to the cultural context of their production and reception, the spatial systems put forth by Jameson and Lefebvre enter a complex relationship not only with Marxism but also with the equally influential deconstructive movement. With a similar materialist formation impinging them towards anti-formalism, these thinkers however respond differently to the challenge of deconstructive analysis. Lefebvre opposes the textualization of social space. In his view, to regard space as a discursive concatenation of signs and meanings would lead to an over-simplification of its praxis. While admittedly spaces contain meanings, they cannot be however reduced to the sum of those meanings (136-37). In other words, he continues to claim the spatial dimension for the realm of sociologic analysis, carefully opposing the deconstructionists' attempt to subordinate the social to the linguistic. In *The Production of Space*, the notion of abstract space is associated to a covert ideological content, which exerts a diffuse yet all the more powerful influence upon ordinary members of society. Thus -- as Merrifield sums up -- such space represents implicitly not only the economic and political domination of the bourgeoisie, but also the patriarchal values underpinning capitalist society, expressed in "the 'phallic erectility' of towers and skyscrapers, symbols of force, of male fertility, and of masculine violence" (176). Furthermore, Lefebvre draws attention to the deceitful blankness of all "representations of space" such as maps, transport networks, and city plans which ultimately aim to project their fake homogeneity upon the representational or lived space. This constructed erasure of difference prevents the natural expansion of what he calls "differential space" -- one celebrating the palpable presence of living bodies, whose diversity of experience undermines centralized discourse. By contrast, modern urban planning ultimately represents a "spatial embodiment of Logos" (Merrifield 177), the final assault of rationality upon the freedom of the body. In urban centres designed by adepts of the New Town movement, the lives of the inhabitants seem to be thoroughly pre-determined by the architect's draft. Such spatial configurations are meant to convey not the dynamic relationships of individuals with occupied space, but rather the frozen power hierarchy. As Merrifield points out, Lefebvre's Marxism is doubled by a celebration of those aspects of social life characterised by Nietzsche as Dionysian. Lefebvre rejoices in the subversive character of festival, which is indicated as one important way for the individual to

evade the rational strictures of commodified space (385). However, a genuine festival is more than the mere space of leisure, or non-work; it requires the creative transformation of the participants. Just like the ancient carnival then, such a spatio-temporal event may actively challenge the social fabric. Consumerist society, however, curbs the regenerative potential of festival by relegating leisure to "specially designated" places, which offer the mere "illusion of festivity." These spaces -- such as winter resorts, beaches, youth camps -- become intensely eroticized, so that even sexual pleasure is turned into an object of consumption (310). In this way, commodification reaches even the innermost level of personal relationships. As a result, individuals are reduced to the role of passive consumers -- a necessary yet subordinate link in the processes of production. "The final stage of the body's abstraction" -- concludes Lefebvre -- "is its functional fragmentation and localization" (310).

In Lefebvre's spatial analysis Marxist principles are only slightly adapted with a view to foregrounding the right to freedom of the human subject occupying space. Jameson's Marxism, on the other hand, is fully adjusted to the worldview and methods of poststructuralism. If we examine, for instance, the analysis of the famous Frank Gehry house in Santa Monica, we notice that the critic clearly privileges such concepts as textuality (of architecture), displacement and placelessness (of spatial dimensions), decentred subjectivity (Lefebvre 108-17). The description of this family house is governed conspicuously by a search for "the minimal units" of the language of architecture (105). From this perspective, Lefebvre identifies three types of signs which he connects to particular spatio-temporal paradigms: a frame, a wrapper and the postmodern space proper, which is the "new kind of space," produced by the "dialectical engagement between the two others" (120). To begin with, the "frame" consists of the pre-existing early twentieth-century family house which the architect used as the basis of his new building. This set of rooms and facilities, whose initial use and furnishing have been preserved or carefully reconstructed, is seen by Jameson as a memory-sign, a remnant of the old bourgeois ego which represents the core of postmodern identity. The meaning of this antiquated living space is, however, altered by the mere proximity of the rest of the building, in a manner which is interpreted once more in textual terms. In its relation to the past, postmodern architecture is shown to follow the pattern of the literary progression from parody to pastiche -- or "blank parody," that is, the random and gratuitous imitation of dead styles. Subsequently, the old house and its yard have been encapsulated into a corrugated metal construction -- the wrapper. One might expect Jameson to follow the frequently cited analysis of Gavin Macrae-Gibson in considering this industrial structure to be the postmodern element of design. However, he chooses to interpret it from an intertextual perspective -- as conveying Gehry's position within a particular disciplinary polemic. The wrapper would then stand for "the visible agent of architectural transformation in course" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 115), a programmatic attempt to leave behind such traditional oppositions as the one between façade and living quarters, inside and outside, open and closed. Wrapping is seen as a deconstructive device which serves to annihilate the conceptual binary oppositions inherited from the old building, and implicitly to make possible a truly new type of space which challenges the viewer's perceptive abilities. Through the mediation of this innovation, the living room is prolonged into the former front yard which also accommodates the dining room and the kitchen. The very concept of wall is undermined by the joint glass and metal structure which both delimits and opens up this space to the outer world. The odd perceptual effect of this interstitial area is described by Macrae-Gibson in the following terms: "Gehry's distorted perspective planes and illusionistic use of framing members...[i.e.] the tilting of planes expected to be horizontal or vertical and the converging of studwork members cause one to feel suspended and tipped in various directions oneself."

For Gehry the world vanishes in a multitude of points, and he does not presuppose that any are related to the standing human being. The human eye is still of critical importance in Gehry's world, but the sense of centre no longer has its traditional symbolic value" (Macrae-Gibson qtd. in Jameson 116). Therefore, Jameson sees only this third area of the house as illustrative of his concept of "post-modern hyperspace." The collapse of spatial boundaries causing the typical confusion of the senses

calls to mind the analysis of the Bonaventure hotel. Just as in that case, the critic homogenises the social diversity of potential observers into one exponential pattern. While it is possible to produce several interpretations of architectural signs, these hermeneutic exercises are assumed to be based on a perspective which is class and especially gender neutral. Gehry's house and the Bonaventure hotel stand out accordingly as both representative and formative of postmodern sensibility. Their free play with visual and tactile effects stems from a *Weltanschauung* which is posterior to the deconstructive "event," and by means of which "the structural distraction of the decentred subject [is] now promoted to the very motor and existential logic of late capitalism itself" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 117). More interestingly, their internal lack of cohesion testifies to some irreconcilable rupture within the social fabric itself. Thus the detached unassimilated metal of Gehry's wrapper is also read as an attempt to make visible, in this very symbol of prosperous capitalist enterprise, the ghetto-side of American society, the squalor and poverty of decaying industrial areas. This sombre reality partially obscures and partially highlights the Utopia of the US-American superstate -- defined by advanced technological development, political and economic power -- in the same manner in which the wrapper relates to the frame. Jameson thus associates the findings of his textual analysis to the problems of the social environment, and integrates once more his discussion of postmodernism within the analysis of the capitalist modes of production. He further turns into account Gehry's design so as to advance his own project of an "aesthetic of cognitive mapping" described by Soja as the "ability to see in the cultural logic and form of postmodernism an instrumental cartography of power and social control" (62-63). Following this line of thought, Jameson proposes the interpretation of Gehry's construction as a material response to the contradictions within post-industrialism. The invention of an intermediary spatial dimension would reconcile, at least from an artistic perspective, the opposite poles in the representation of present-day US-American society. Jameson's plea for a politically charged culture seems to stem from the need to adapt to, rather than resist, that "world space of multinational capital" which forges postmodern identity. However, one cannot deny that his descriptive analyses put forth a series of remarkable insights. By and large, Jameson's conclusion conveys the sense that the logic of late capitalism presupposes the gradual absorption of differences into the fabric of a decentred postmodern individuality. While Lefebvre pleaded for the fight against what he regarded as a superficial externally-induced similarity, Jameson insists on the inescapable character of modernisation and its adjacent effects. This hermeneutic difference spells out once more the specificity of each thinker's position with respect to Marxism. As a final point here, it may be useful to take into consideration Jameson's view that "what was variously called 'poststructuralism' or even simply 'theory' was also a subvariety of the postmodern" (*Postmodernism* xvi). The relationship of postmodernism to deconstruction obviously represents an extremely complex issue, which can make in itself the subject of a wider paper. Suffice it to say that critical opinions diverge, as suggested for instance by the conspicuous absence of Derrida's essays from acknowledged anthologies of postmodern texts (see, e.g., Jencks; Docherty). Furthermore, in one of the introductory chapters to their 2001 anthology *Modern Literary Theory*, Patricia Waugh and Philip Rice reverse Jameson's classification by describing poststructuralism as anterior to, and formative of, "all the most recent critical movements" (180), postmodernism included.

In the conclusion to his book, Jameson comments upon the intense specialization and compartmentalization of contemporary thought. Among other consequences of the spatial turn, he lists the passage from the modernist "historicity" based on an acute perception of time to the postmodern "historicism," which replaces a historically meaningful representation with the randomness of collage. As a result, cultural products tend to lead a disconnected existence, oblivious to one another. He opposes this tendency with his own method of mapping a historical phenomenon in its totality, which has been shown to be of Marxist utopian origin. By stating his overt support for the concept of totality, the critic places himself in a controversial position with respect to the cultural movement he attempts to theorize. One might conclude then either that his view creates a niche within a trend famously characterised by Jean-François Lyotard as a "war on totality" (46) or, as Goonewardena claims, that Jameson is

"best understood as the most impressively dialectical theoretician today not of space, perhaps not even *post-modernity*, but certainly totality" (59). As Jameson himself points out, in postwar Western culture, the concept of totality has been associated with totalitarianism and terror. The anti-Utopian, anti-essentialist orientation of postmodernism derives directly from this juxtaposition, however biased it may prove to be. One might then push Goonewardena's observation one step further and wonder whether Jameson actually theorizes the postmodern movement from the position of an outsider, so that his analysis should not necessarily be regarded as a postmodern, but merely as a (neo)Marxist text. Referring to Perry Anderson, Steve Matthewman and Douglas Hoey appear to confirm this intuition when asserting that postmodernism had been initiated as a bourgeois liberal movement, yet Jameson's intervention altered its position in the political spectrum, marking the "discursive victory" of "the revolutionary Left" (535). Such shift of perspectives leads radical contemporary analysts to describe postmodernism as a cultural construct, an ever-changing "chimera" or "spectre" (Matthewman and Hoey 530-36).

In sum, I argue that what is significant is the in-between-ness of Jameson's theoretical position. Following Goodewardena, we may then conclude that the main merit Jameson is to have imported Marxist geography and implicitly Lefebvre into the arena of Anglophone humanities and social sciences scholarship and thought. Other aspects of the my analysis, such as the specific aims of Jameson's *Postmodernism*, as well as the thematic gaps I have identified as a result of the comparison with Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, confirm the hypotheses stated at the beginning of my argumentation. On the one hand, it seems that Jameson undermines his own enunciation of the spatial turn as the sign of a "novel" postmodern epistemology by giving in to the temptation of a "totalizing" description -- fundamentally alien to the postmodern spirit. On the other hand, we cannot but observe that this hybrid model of totality offers considerably less than Lefebvre's (more consistent) Marxian approach.

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