Interstitial Literatures:

Contemporary North American Writing and Uneven Development 1990-2015

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an intervention into the burgeoning field of geocritical literary studies. It uses Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space to develop socio-spatial readings of contemporary poetry and novels and argues that these texts present a distinctly neoliberal spatiality. The thesis follows Michel Foucault in conceiving of neoliberalism as an order of normative reason, and suggests that it applies economic values and metrics to every aspect of life. It argues that uneven development is the socio-spatial manifestation of the economic logic of competition that lies at the heart of neoliberalism. These neoliberal spaces act to reveal inequality rather than conceal it as capitalism hitherto tended to. Unevenness comes to represent functional competition. The interstitial literatures under study in this thesis self-reflexively register uneven development in their form and content to explore the implications of, and possibilities of resistance to, a world made increasingly economic.

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We [in America] can profit in every sense of the word
from these amazing changes… all of this starts with geography

- Casper Weinberger, Reagan's Secretary of Defense

La géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre

- Yves Lacoste

INTRODUCTION

An interstice is an intervening space, usually a small one. It is also a gap, or break, in something generally continuous. This thesis is interested in the ways that space moulds our experience of neoliberalism, which I follow Foucault in conceiving as a governing rationality, and the literary implications of the notion that social and spatial relations are dialectically interdependent. This is the idea that the spaces we inhabit also inhabit us, and the spaces we change also change us. This thesis pivots on two interlinked claims. First, that the uneven development of space has become the very texture of neoliberal social life and is therefore a substrate of contemporary cultural output.[1] In light of this, I argue that contemporary works of literature invariably register uneven development in their form and content and, thus, neoliberalism's order of normative reason. What I call interstitial literatures are self-reflexive about this registration and unified by their deployment of metafictional and metanarratorial devices, which shift the focus from product to process, to engage with issues of spatiality, since the social production of space is itself a *process*. The thesis' second claim is that the importance of uneven development and the production of space within contemporary literature is not limited to the text-in-itself, and to this end I elaborate the notion of socio-spatial reading, a method of literary analysis that locates texts firmly *within* social space. That is to say, the text is taken not as a product, but as a process of co-production by an array of social relations between reader, writer, text and context. This is underpinned by the notion that social and spatial relations are dialectically interdependent, and that texts are entwined within this socio-spatial dialectic in the sense that they are produced by, and productive of, social relations. Reading is itself a deeply spatial practice, even down to the physical act of moving back and forth across a page (rarely, in reality, does anybody relentlessly move from start to finish). As this thesis will show, the process by which the literary space is read into existence, and meaning is made from the text, is structurally similar to the social production of space itself.

In a capitalist world of deepening inequality and structural violence that persists 'by inhabiting a space, by producing a space', it is crucial to grasp the manner in which

[1] While uneven development has always been a consequence of capitalism, it transforms under neoliberal reason to act as a *showcase* of inequality. Unevenness becomes the spatial and therefore social expression of the logic of competition, and the production of space is seen to be driven by the impersonal mechanisms of the free market. I go on to discuss this in more detail.

capitalism's contradictory social relations are reproduced, and mutually reinforced, by its spatial practices (Lefebvre, *Survival of Capitalism* 21). This thesis sets out to explore how typically capitalist socio-spatial relations have changed in the transition to neoliberalism. Our major cities are dominated by skyscraper sprawl, finance capital spatialised into concrete that spirals ever-upward. In New York, Selldorf Architects' ultra-expensive 200 Eleventh Avenue apartment building offers En Suite Sky Garages served by personal car elevators. Selldorf see their architectural monstrosity as a text of sorts, explaining that it 'energizes the neighbourhood with a new architectural expression' (Selldorf). It seems, though, that it does little but energize rents. Poverty in the city is skyrocketing, with 1 in every 128 New Yorkers currently homeless, while in Manhattan, small businesses have all but been forced out, leaving nothing but empty storefronts (Baker, 'The Death of a Once Great City'). This state of affairs is not limited to New York City. In 2017, 8.6% of the global population owned 85.6% of global wealth, yet 43% of the world's millionaires resided in America (Credit Suisse Research Institute). The sheer inequality of these socio-spatial contradictions is right there in plain view. This hypervisibility does little to stoke a sense of injustice, instead shoring up a normative sense that these spaces are the inevitable and correct result of an impersonal market logic. Neoliberalism obfuscates the process by which space is *produced* by subjugating its political and social arrangements to the economic logic of competition. In 'Interstitial Literatures' I examine a range of literary texts that register a distinctly neoliberal spatiality that presents its unevenly developed spaces as results of legitimate competitive activity. My readings of interstitial literatures examine the processes by which space is produced, and dominated, by neoliberalism. But these readings also reveal other ways of inhabiting, and of thinking about, space itself. These texts are haunted by lost spaces, past and future, and the political possibilities inherent to a socio-spatial realm never wholly controlled, always in contestation, and always open to further transformation.

i. Geocriticism.

'Interstitial Literatures' is an intervention in the emerging field of geocriticism. Bertrand Westphal has been elaborating his concept of *geocritique* in France since the 2000 publication of his 'Pour une approche geocritique des textes,' though it did not reach the English-speaking world until Robert T. Tally's 2007 translation. This is a varied field of study unified by the notion that probing the way we think about space, be it geographical,

social, literary, or otherwise, is critical to contemporary literary studies, especially because the ways that we deal with spaces, with the world, are themselves often literary. Westphal's geocritical method is very different to my own. He 'probes the human spaces that mimetic arts arrange through, and in, texts, the image, and cultural interactions related to them' (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 6). Westphal's project is, in a general sense, a geocriticism of *place* over *space* itself, though he does purposefully conflate the terms. In examining the role of the text in the 'construction of a place', he moves from 'the spatiality of the text to the *legibility* of places' (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 6). Westphal suggests that 'in the twilight of structuralism', the fictional text returns to the world and perhaps, even, creates it (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 6). He imbues the fictional text with this impressive power while snatching it away from the author, since his geocriticism 'tends to favor a geocentered approach' in which 'the spatial referent is the basis for analysis, not the author and his or her work' (Westphal, *Geocriticism* 112-3). That is to say, the Westphalian geocritic would begin with London, and not Dickens. He seeks to (re)build the space of London from as many texts situated there as he can. There is much to be gleaned from Westphal's approach, but it does not in itself deal with the process of the *production* of space. His method will produce, or reconstitute, the spaces it analyses as real-and-imagined-spaces existing across time, and in this way demonstrate the relativity and malleability of the spatial. It does not, however, deal with interpenetration of the socio-spatial in everyday life.

My own geocriticism is closer to Robert T. Tally's, particularly his conception of literary cartography. He conceives 'writing itself as a form of spatialization' (Tally, *Spatiality* 5) and literature 'as a form of mapping' (Tally, *Spatiality* 2). He underlines the importance of literary cartography 'partly because of its direct applicability to the current [postmodern] crisis of representation' and also because 'to draw a map is to tell a story, in many ways, and vice versa' (Tally, *Spatiality* 4). If there is a literary cartography, he reasons, there must also be a literary geography, and he identifies not only the map-maker but map-readers as producers of meaning. Thus, for Tally, the reader of 'a literary map' is an active determinant of the 'often shifting and transient meanings to be found in the map' (Tally, *Spatiality* 79). Where Tally explicitly takes up the literary mapping and map-reading of real-and-imagined-spaces, I turn to exploring the ways that contemporary texts register uneven development in their form and content. I analyse the way space itself

appears, is produced by, and functions within a text, and argue that the process of reading enacts a structurally similar process to the production of space.

Socio-spatial reading, then, pursues geocritical literary studies through the analysis of space itself, conceptually and physically, rather than things-in-space. It clarifies the processes by which textual meaning comes to be made and remade and presents the text as distinctly socio-spatial, as produced and producing but reducible to neither. A text is at once object and subject, seemingly concrete but filled with subjectivities ranging from author and editor to reader which are themselves always attended by socio-spatial processes. More specifically, the reader's social space affects the reading, the author's social space affects the writing, and so on. There is a complex accretion of processes here. Consider, for example, that the reader's potential assumptions (or lack of them) regarding the author's social space can affect the reading process. All of these things are in flux, and in constant negotiation with each other. No text can be wholly pinned down, as it were, and so there are also a number of gaps, or interstices, to be found. Taking the socio-spatial constitution of a text into account provides the tools to analyse the production of space itself, and thus the ways that contemporary texts register, or respond to, the unevenly developed spaces of neoliberal globalisation. By approaching reading as a co-productive process, this thesis seeks to avoid presenting a purportedly uncontaminated critique from afar.

Because space is everywhere around us, it can be easy to miss. Throughout this thesis, the profound impact of neoliberal space on everyday life appears in various guises. By *everyday life*, this thesis means the routine, habitual, or normal daily experience that Lefebvre argues is 'defined by contradictions: illusion and truth, power and helplessness, the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control' (*Critique of Everyday Life* 43). In Chapter One I discuss two long poems that negotiate the everyday experience of a neoliberal space defined by uneven development and the interpenetration of the local, national and global. Juliana Spahr's *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* (2005) is a poetic exercise in making sense out of the experience of 9/11 and its political fallout from the vantage point of one of America's own semi-peripheral states, Hawai'i. Here, Spahr is both inside and outside of America. She is barraged by a global news cycle, often made up of acts of violence and unrest around the world, that does very little to inform a sense of geopolitics. Yet, while in some sense dislocated from the space of war

by the news, Spahr begins to feel her complicity in American warmongering as military ships dock in Hawai'i to refuel in the dead of night, connecting her directly with the global space. This poem presents an experience of neoliberal globalisation that is distinctly spatial, always simultaneously local *and* global, individual *and* social. Jeff Derksen's *The Vestiges* (2013) adapts the modernist form of George Oppen to mediate the experience of Vancouver, a postmodern city unevenly shaped by global finance. It links various different spatialities of Vancouver across time, highlighting historic moments when certain spaces were the locus for socio-political dissent and the future was one of possibility. But this is not a nostalgic longing. It suggests that just as the city space is shaped by global forces, it is reshaped every day by its inhabitants. Neoliberalism has produced the city in its own luxury-apartment riddled image, but this is no organic occurrence, and *The Vestiges* presents the possibility that it can be remade.

Both of these poems excavate the openings and closures of language and foreground the failure of words to be wholly transparent against the backdrop of a neoliberalism whose structural violence and inequality seems so certain. But it is precisely *within* the instability of meaning that both poems find methods of resistance. Their use of language is in various ways tied to spatiality, and thus both poems stress the inextricable link between the social and the spatial. Their disjunctive poetics register the fractious nature of a neoliberal global totality that only appears whole by way of obfuscation. In reality, it is an abstraction that only takes form within the spaces it produces. Yet these spaces can never be produced absolutely. There are always lacunae, and thus space, like meaning, is never wholly stable, and always open to further transformation. What is important here is that these gaps are never merely *empty*. All space is full to the brim with social relations, even the spaces between, the interstices.

The subsequent chapters each focus on a long work of fiction, Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* (1997), Margaret Atwood's *Maddaddam* trilogy (2003-13), and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1991). The shifting of spatial scales from poetry to the large novel, itself a gesture towards unevenness, is in part a formal homage to Joseph Frank's 1945 essay 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature.' Frank here takes up the neglected thesis of Gotthold Lessing's *Laocoon* (1766) that form in the plastic arts is necessarily spatial while literary form is necessarily temporal due to its use of language as a succession of words proceeding through time. Frank does not dismantle Lessing's

work for its dichotomisation, but adapts it to elaborate a theory of spatial literary form. In so doing, his analysis moves from Eliot's and Pound's poetry to Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1871-1922). In calling upon the spectre of Frank's essay, I want to enlarge the idea of a spatial literary form, which for Frank is often the linguistic and narrative disjunction of temporality, by arguing broadly that language itself is no less spatial than it is temporal. The acts of writing, reading and speaking are all deeply spatial processes. Spatial form need not be thought only as the disjunction of temporal procession. As such, I do not draw as much of a distinction between poetry and the novel as Frank does. Instead, I take up the socio-spatial poetics that I locate in Derksen's and Spahr's writing and use it to read not only the narrative spaces of novels, but the ways they (re)present the production of space and spatiality.

ii. The Long Neoliberal Moment

Neoliberalism is often described as a slippery term that lacks a substantial definition. This opens the term up for accusations that it is a catch-all object for critique.[2] The word provokes a great deal of ire for being an abstraction, and the potential ambiguities in its use. Yet abstraction and ambiguity are a part of language and disagreements about word use—especially with regards to politics—are normal. There is something particular about the term *neoliberalism* that invites frustration.[3] The complexity of neoliberalism stems from the fact that it straddles economic, political, cultural, and sociological fields. Yet as an economic theory and practice with roots in classical liberalism, it presents as scientific and, as such, must have an exact definition. If such a definition is not forthcoming, the logic goes, then the term lacks critical purchase. Neoliberalism mystifies itself in this

[2] In the press George Monbiot argues that neoliberalism is 'the ideology at the root of all our problems' while John Rentoul calls it 'gibberish' and Daniel Rogers describes it as the 'linguistic omnivore of our times.' The UK political pressure group Progress argued that use of the term reveals the left's 'deep intellectual fragility' and 'covers up intellectual laziness.' In academic publications, neoliberalism is described as 'a rather broad and general concept' (Steger and Roy 11) and a 'loose and shifting signifier' that has 'no fixed or settled coordinates' (Brown 20). Taylor C. Boas and Jordan Gans-Morse analyse the problematic aspects of neoliberalism's use and shifting definition in 'Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan.'

[3] And it certainly does invite frustration. Philip Mirowski describes the disconcerting reactions to his work on the history of neoliberalism. These reactions, he explains, take two forms: first that '"neoliberalism" is nothing more than the fevered delusions of [his] addled brain' and second 'that if such a thing does indeed exist, it is far too uneven and inconsistent to count as a serious analytical category' ('The Political Movement that Dared not Speak its own Name' 2). Mirowski provides examples of these reactions from anthropologists, historians, and economists, and suggests that 'there really is something structural about the aversion to confront one of the most important political phenomenon in the contemporary intellectual landscape' ('Political Movement' 3).

feedback loop. The key to providing a critical definition of neoliberalism lies in approaching it not simply as an economic theory but as an order of normative reason.

This thesis joins a burgeoning scholarship that defines neoliberalism as an order of normative reason or governing rationality, an approach which takes its inspiration from Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* 1978-9 lecture series.[4] Foucault lays the groundwork for understanding neoliberalism as a governmentality that applies economic values and metrics to every aspect of human life. He traces the development of 'this new art of government that is indexed to the problem of the market and market veridiction' from the eighteenth century onwards (Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics* 56). This historicised conception of neoliberalism starkly contrasts with commonplace definitions that see the neoliberal shift in the 1980s as a reaction to market crises that result in a restatement of nineteenth-century class power.[5] The issue with these definitions is that they're quite right in these assertions inasmuch as the 1980s provided circumstances in which neoliberalism could ascend. However, in conceiving this ascent as a *reaction*, these definitions unintentionally elide an intellectual and political history that is crucial to grasping neoliberalism's dominance.

Wendy Brown's *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (2015) and Will Davies' *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignity and the Logic of Competition* (2014) both take this Foucauldian approach. Brown argues that neoliberalism as an order of normative reason is politically disempowering because it reduces citizenship and the subject to *homo oeonomicus,* which 'approaches everything as a market and knows only market conduct; [and therefore] it cannot think public purposes or common problems in a distinctly political way' (39). Citizenship loses its political potential because politics itself is rendered in economic terms. By producing the normative reign of *homo oeconomicus* in every sphere, neoliberalism ensures that 'there are no motivations, drives, or aspirations apart from economic ones, that there is nothing

[4] See, for instance, Daniel Stedman Jones' *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the birth of Neoliberal Politics* (2012), Angus Burgin's *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression* (2012), Jamie Peck's *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (2010) Niklas Olsen's *The Sovereign Consumer: A New Intellectual History of Neoliberalism* (2018), and *The Road from Mont Pèlerin* (2009) edited by Philip Morowski and Dieter Plehwe.

[5] These oversimplifications of neoliberalism provide the foundations for many popular critiques, especially in newspaper opinion pieces by Paul Krugman (e.g. 'Capitalism, Socialism, and Unfreedom'), Joseph Stiglitz (e.g. 'Neoliberalism Must be Pronounced Dead and Buried'), and George Monbiot (e.g. 'Neoliberalism – the Ideology at the Root of All Our Problems').

apart from "mere life"' (Brown 44). This attempt to vanquish *homo politicus* is also an attempt at vanquishing 'the very idea of a people, a demos asserting its collective political sovereignty' (Brown 39). Instead, people are reduced in all their interactions to rationally self-interested economic actors.

Like Brown, Davies argues that neoliberalism is the 'pursuit of the disenchantment of politics by economics' (19). To this end, neoliberal intellectuals and policy elites deconstruct the idea of the common good by accusing the public of 'a potentially dangerous mysticism' that is starkly opposed to the empiricism of economics (Davies 19). Davies' fundamentally important insight is that the key institution of neoliberalism is 'not a market as such, but particular market-based (or market-derived) forms of economization, calculation, measurement, and valuation' (32). Neoliberalism's novelty lies in its transformation of *everything* into a market or market-like form. The result is that economic techniques and measures, which purport to offer a scientific exactness, are used to evaluate and drive anything and everything. This leads to the fetishism of a particular kind of *rationality* rooted in the idea of the self-governing free market. This produces a world organised 'by the pursuit of inequality, that is, by an ethic of competitiveness' (Davies 38). Inequality appears as a positive sign that the ethic of competitiveness is functioning.

Neoliberalism roots its normative reason in market-derived principles by approaching and evaluating everything, including citizens, as exhibiting market-like behaviour. This doubles as an attempt to evacuate political possibility and self-determination, since all problems are de facto economic problems. This thesis takes this conception of neoliberalism and builds on it with regards to spatial theory, arguing that the production of space is mystified by market-derived logic. Space becomes purely economic at all scales, whether physical as a local representation of economic standing, or abstract as a method of measuring and containing regional and national value. The uneven development of space, previously taken to be an undesirable but inevitable by-product of capitalism, is now reimagined by neoliberal reason as an expression of inequality and thus a positive indicator of competition.

In order to deal with neoliberalism approaching everything as a market, we need to know what the free market has actually come to mean to neoliberals. The history of

neoliberalism begins, more or less, with German and Austrian economists of the Ordoliberal School such as Walter Eucken.[6] Ordoliberalism was a reaction to Nazism that gained traction in the 1940s, and eventually informed the development of Germany's social market economy after World War 2. Ordoliberals saw a distinct role for the state but only as a guardian of the free market that would ensure its functionality. They saw the decline of the Weimar Republic into National Socialism as the result 'of a weak state permitting the gradual pollution of market mechanisms with social and political agendas' (Davies 74). In practice, the Ordoliberal conception of the state as a guardian of the free market really resulted in the loss of the German political state because "the German economy served as the basis for the legitimate state" (Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics* 89). Germany was first and foremost economic. Ordoliberals, then, view the free market in a fundamentalist sense where competition plays out and the price mechanism determines value with the caveat that the state must foster competition by blocking the formation of monopoly power.

Friedrich Hayek, often considered the grandfather of today's neoliberalism, was influenced by ordoliberalism. He too was writing in response to the horrors of Nazism and he too saw a role for the state in fostering competition in a free market economy. Yet the Chicago School economists he would inspire in his time there, like Milton Friedman and Ronald Coase, would at least superficially see no such role for the state. I will not dwell on the differences between ordoliberalism and Chicago School neoliberalism since, as Brown explains, 'the Ordo emphasis on extending the formal rationality of the market and the Chicago emphasis on extending its concrete mechanisms have come together in a contemporary governing rationality that features both' (60). It is, however, useful to spend some time on Hayek's conception of the free market because it, at least in some form, remains at the heart of neoliberal economics.

Hayek believed that the price mechanism offered the promise of coordination without sacrificing freedom, since 'price is not determined by the conscious will of anybody' (*Road to Serfdom* 98). He accorded a great deal of importance to this unconscious system at work in the free market because of his hostility towards central

[6] Foucault traces the intellectual history of neoliberalism and the influence of the Ordoliberals in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, most notably in lecture 5. For Foucault, Hayek is the the link between Ordoliberalism and later American Chicago School Neoliberalism.

planning. It was clear to Hayek that the most obvious way to avoid the horrors of fascism taking hold again was not to give power over to economic planners. Indeed, the figure of the planner is the recurring villain in all of Hayek's work, though it is never particularly well defined. Throughout *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), conscious planning is presented as an inevitable failure, and in strict opposition to Hayek's idea that the free market works unconsciously. Therefore, as far as he is concerned, yielding 'to forces which we neither understand nor can recognise as the conscious decisions of an intelligent being' is the only way to avoid the inevitable failure of planning (Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* 210).[7] This idea of the free market, as an impersonal mechanism able to coordinate 'the multifarious individual efforts in a complex society… [that] no individual can completely survey,' is fundamental to the development of neoliberalism (Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* 210).

The unconscious and impersonal nature of Hayek's free market provides the cornerstone of the Chicago School's neoliberal economics that began taking shape in the 1950s. Where Hayek and the Ordoliberals were writing in reaction to Nazism, the Chicago School economists like Milton Friedman and Ronald Coase were writing against the post-war Keynesian consensus. They extolled the virtues of the free market and argued for minimal government intervention. Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962) suggests that economic freedom is a precondition for political freedom, and that economic freedom would protect minorities since the free market cannot be racist, sexist, or otherwise prejudiced. Fundamentally, Friedman's work paves the way for the neoliberal hollowing out of *justice* by positioning market neutrality as inherently just.

Where Hayek and the Ordoliberals believed intervention may be necessary to avoid monopoly power, the Chicago School essentially accepted monopoly power on the basis that economists could produce economic models showing the future *possibility* of competition. Davies explains this dominant Chicagoan epistemology as one of Popperian scepticism, whereby 'objective knowledge is whatever has not (yet) been falsified, but

[7] Hayek collapses the fascist and the socialist into his figure of the planner, and the certainty of his writing style makes this seem like a tidy summary of the world's political-economic forces in the wake of World War 2. But this is a vast oversimplification on Hayek's part that veils the role socialism played in challenging fascism, and elides Russia's part in World War 2. He spends a disproportionate amount of space in *The Road to Serfdom* emphasising that Nazism is, after all, National *Socialism*. This is an early example of the now-common charge that Nazism was a form of socialism. Michael Parenti explores the political weaponisation of this charge, and its inaccuracy, in *Blackshirts and Reds* (1997).

could be' (89).[8] It relies on the authority given to the market by the Hayekian faith in the unconscious price mechanism, but shows no real regard for the price mechanism itself since the economist is able to evaluate, hypothesise, and essentially influence the market.

Crucially, Chicago School economics marked a shift from the Ordoliberal 'formal-structural emphasis on *competition as an essential property of markets,* to a psychological emphasis on *competitiveness as an essential trait of individuals*' (Davies 51). This leads to an increased emphasis on individual solutions to socially produced problems while simultaneously divorcing capital, and the market itself, 'from matters of politics, ethics, and responsibility' (Giroux 9). Particularly in the work of Chicago School economist Ronald Coase, this shift toward psychological emphasis is accompanied by an unsubstantiated presumption rooted in neo-classical economics that all human beings are motivated exclusively by competitive calculation and share *a priori* equality as they enter into any given competition.[9] This neoliberal subject exhibits what Deirdre McCloskey, in 'The Demoralization of Economics,' calls the 'Hobbes paradigm.' It is neoliberalism's extreme expression of *homo oeconomicus*. As the subject is reduced to mere human capital, it 'is at once in charge of itself, responsible for itself, and yet a potentially dispensable element of the whole' (Brown 110). Davies argues that these presumptions about human behaviour massively broaden 'the terrain of legitimate competition, and open up vast, new possibilities for legitimate inequality and legitimate restraint' (67). Competitive outcomes are, according to Chicagoan neoliberalism, always the best outcomes in aggregate, since the market will have processed all the necessary

[8] Karl Popper infamously proposed that we approach objective knowledge not as a matter of justification but one of falsifiability. See *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (1963). His position is that pure and certain sources of knowledge do not exist. But his logic, which suggests the truth of that which is not falsifiable, has come to produce these very sources.

[9] All of Coase's economic work relies on hypothetical models. One of his most influential short works, 'The Problem of Social Cost', argues that traditional methods of dealing with externalities that affect others, such as factory smoke injuring employees or causing pollution, lead to undesirable results. Instead, the market itself is best placed to deal with these issues through the magic of the price system. Coase is exceptionally utilitarian in his belief that everything can be financially costed, and that absolutely everything is connected by the market. He provides an arithmetic example, a fiction about two farmers impeding on each other's property, to explain his point. He concludes that the social costs of one farmer having a larger herd of cows will be 'weighed against the value of the additional meat production and, given perfect competition in the cattle industry, the allocation of resources in cattle-raising will be optimal' (5). He produces a fiction to exemplify his hypothesis and never bothers to explain how we might arrive at conditions of perfect competition, yet this is the kind of work that has formed the basis of economic modelling as an exact science under neoliberalism.

information. The Chicagoan understanding of competition is self-reinforcing, and dispenses with typically Ordoliberal concerns about how a market ought to function.

In a world of rationally self-interested individuals engaging in competitive behaviour, the economist takes on a special role. Every other actor, from judge to retail worker to politician to parent, is driven by rational self-interest while the 'neo-classical economist is elevated to a quasi-judicial status, from where he can evaluate socio-economic behaviour and data in an entirely disinterested manner' (Davies 89). This runs contrary to Hayek's assertion that an objective, impartial view of the world was impossible, which was the very reason he venerated the unconscious mechanisms of the free market. Yet it was only through the certainty provided by this idea of an unconscious and self-correcting free market system that Chicago School neoliberalism could elevate the economist in this way. Now that everything is economic, economists are uniquely able to explain it all.

Neoliberalism as it exists today did not develop coincidentally, nor in an academic bubble. At every step, from Hayek's time in America to the growth in power and influence of the Chicago School, financial interests and wealthy elites have been involved. In the 1930s, the American business class lost its credibility in the wake of the Great Depression, and was frustrated by Roosevelt's New Deal reforms. While the New Deal did not in any way mark a break with capitalism, its scepticism of laissez-faire policies nonetheless stoked resistance in the elite. They were standing against the Keynesian consensus before it even became a consensus. The American capitalist class's early efforts to fight the New Deal, such as their formation of the American Liberty League, fell to anti-elite sentiment (Phillips-Fein 27). They adapted by forming think tanks, like the Foundation for Economic Education, which purported not to *represent* business as such and instead advocated for the basic principles of the free market. This climate of moneyed resistance to Keynesianism was important to the success that Hayek found in America.

Hayek's appointment at the University of Chicago was made possible by Harold Luhnow, who took over his uncle's furniture wholesale business William Volker & Company. Luhnow shifted the company's philanthropic trust, the Volker Fund, away from local charity and towards supporting free market ideas. The Volker Fund paid in

full for Hayek's employment at the University of Chicago (Phillips-Fein 41-2). Businesspeople like Jasper Crane provided financial assistance for Hayek's Mont Pelerin society, which became an important connective between Chicago School economists, businesses, and politicians, while remaining a purportedly neutral academic space (Phillips-Fein 42). The Chicago Boys, a group of Chilean economists that introduced neoliberal economics under General Pinochet's fascist government, were trained by the University of Chicago with funding from the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation. Every step of the way, the development of neoliberalism has been propped up by wealthy supporters. Far from appearing suddenly in the 1980s as a political economic reaction and taking hold so forcefully, the reality is that the production of neoliberalism took much more time and money.

Neoliberalism in the twenty-first century is an order of normative reason that conceives of everything in market-based form and subjects everything to economic analysis. It relies on a specific notion of the free market that venerates competition. Neoliberal reason suggests that the only actions available to individuals are calculations of competitive positioning, and it imagines that competitors begin on equal footing. Since all truly competitive outcomes are inherently the best outcomes, inequality is not only justified but celebrated. Neoliberal reason suggests that state intervention into the market to alleviate inequality is inevitably damaging because it corrodes the self-correcting mechanism of competition. In practice, however, neoliberalism relies heavily on state intervention in support of businesses and capital interests while denying the value of this intervention on an individual level through welfare states. Neoliberals tend to skirt these contradictions by virtue of 'economic techniques themselves [having] become imbued with a quasi-sovereign form of authority – that is, they become ritualized and rhetorically powerful' (Davies 35). Attenuating this gap, between the economically measurable world and the transcendent neoliberal market, relies on the narrative capabilities of economists to translate (or, in other words, tell a story that explains) what the economy is doing.

The onset of neoliberalism in the 1980s does not mark a break with capitalism but a *psychological restructuring* of capitalism in an increasingly globalised and financialised world. It alters the way we think of and interact with capitalism and the products of capitalism. This psychological restructuring also alters the way we interact with and understand space, as well as producing distinct spatial forms. The rampant

inequality of neoliberalism shapes our towns and cities, but it also shapes our social and political landscapes.

As Francis Fukuyama has it in *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), capitalist economics and liberal democracy greeted us hand-in-hand at the end of the cold war to declare the end of history. There is no alternative. Fredric Jameson describes this closure of history in *A Singular Modernity* (2002) as the ontology of the present under capitalism. The sense that it is now 'impossible to even *imagine* an alternative' system is what Mark Fisher calls 'capitalist realism' (2). Capitalist realism 'presents itself as a shield protecting us from the perils posted by belief itself' (Fisher 5). This immanent realism, this state of *being realistic* and lowering our expectations, masquerades as the price of being free from Hayek's figure of the planner. The normative reason of neoliberalism does not require belief but it is nonetheless *produced*. In something of a closed feedback loop, neoliberalism conceives the world on economic terms, then appeals to the presence of its social and spatial products as evidence that the system is organically realising human nature. This derives from Hayek's unconscious free market mechanisms, and Coase's self-reinforcing conception of competition. It is only *within* this normative reason of neoliberalism that it becomes impossible to imagine an alternative to capitalism.[10]

Capitalism's universalising promise, given new form as a possibility through globalisation, asked us to believe in the equilibrium of the free market, in the repayment of debts, in the withering away of inequalities over time, and so on. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, makes no promises. Your own circumstances are your own responsibility, and the result of your calculated competitive positioning. On a social level, inequality would only lessen if that was the ideal result of competitive action. There are no guarantees for the future bound around ideas of the common good. Yet neoliberalism does ask us to believe in the future as an economic model (whether in terms of debt repayment or as evidence of the open possibility of competition). Though neoliberalism is frequently described as a series of endings, of history, of belief, and even of geography through the promise of a globally connected world, it outright refuses to confront its own

[10] Fisher argues that neoliberalism and capitalist realism are separate entities, but this is partially because he tends to think of neoliberalism as first and foremost economic theory. What he identifies as the capitalist realist atmosphere is better explained as an experience of neoliberal governmentality.

end. Yet we see quite clearly that if neoliberal globalisation is allowed to continue unabated, flagrantly ignoring the fact that the economic logic of the unconscious free market is fundamentally unable to deal with the social and environmental effects of its constant drive to accumulation and growth, it will be the end of the world as we know it, which Jason Moore convincingly argues in *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (2015).[11]

Capitalism has always produced an abstract space to survive, which for Lefebvre includes 'the 'world of commodities', its 'logic' and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and the political state' (*Production of Space* 53). Lefebvre notes capitalism's efforts to conceal the production of space in order to 'to erase any sign of the maximization of profit' (*Production of Space* 160). Neoliberalism, however, produces a space which instead seeks to enshrine the maximisation (and minimisation) of profit. Neoliberal spaces ooze competition and inequality whether in the form of an underdeveloped ghetto, a private multi-million dollar mansion, or the public space of an affluent city's cultural hub.

iii. The Production of Space

In Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1974), Marco Polo explains to Kublai Khan that 'cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else' (36). At this, the Khan contends that he has neither desires nor fears, and that his dreams are composed either by his mind or by chance. Polo counters that 'cities also believe they are the work of the mind or of chance, but neither one nor the other suffices to hold up their walls' (Calvino 37). It is not simply through contrivance or chance that we produce the spaces we inhabit. Space not only contains but is constituted by a network of affective and social relations, of desires and fears, of secret discourses, of politics and

[11] Timothy Morton argues in *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* that the end of the world has already taken place. His point is essentially that a kind of technological determinism took hold when Watt invented the steam engine which spiralled through industrial capitalism and has culminated in climate change. He opens the book asserting the end of the world (and questions what *world* means in this context) in a bid to get beyond apocalyptic thinking. There's merit to such an approach. But the problem with Morton's work, and especially Hyperobjects, is the leaps he makes across spatio-temporal scales are only possible because his terminological definitions are so loose. 'In a strange way, every object is a hyperobject' he eventually explains (201). Perhaps James Watt did set in motion the end of the world. But perhaps he did not. It does not change the fact that action to stop climate change must be massive and collective, as he argues in *Dark Ecology,* and will necessitate a radical shift away from neoliberalism.

economics, and so on. Space, here, at once real-and-imagined, is no mere empty container, but an active and protean process.

Such a rethinking of space is the subject of Henri Lefebvre's 1974 *The Production of Space*. He argues that critical interest must move from '*things in space* to the actual *production of space'* (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 37) with a 'view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it' (Lefebvre, *Reflections* 89). Too often is space ignored, abstracted, or depicted as a container in which time takes place. For Lefebvre, this is rooted in a problematic spatial epistemology. He argues that mental space, the space of the imagination or of the philosophers, comes to envelop social and physical spaces. This process expresses, unconsciously, the 'ideas of the dominant class' since its theoretical practice 'produces a *mental space* that is apparently, but only apparently, extra-ideological' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 5). This mental space, circularly, becomes the locus of a theoretical practice entirely divorced from social practice, and 'sets itself up as the… central reference point of Knowledge' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 5). In other words, physical and social space are imagined as mere reflections of a mental space that is wholly abstracted from them. Lefebvre contends that physical, social and mental space are inseparable and interdependent, and seeks to unify them with the thesis of the production of space. He suggests that space 'embodies social relationships' and that social space is a social product (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 27).

Western thought has tended to veil the process of the production of space through two co-dependent illusions. Ed Soja develops Lefebvre's analysis of the illusions of *opaqueness* and *transparency* in *Postmodern Geographies* (1989). The illusion of opaqueness distorts spatial theorization through 'short-sighted interpretations of spatiality which focus on immediate surface appearances' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 122). Spatiality, in this sense, is reduced to objectively measurable physical objects and forms. This perspective, rooted in Enlightenment thought, was to legitimate a presumed science of geography that would go on to underpin colonialism, particularly with regard to the necessity of *scientific* discovery and documentation. In Chapter Two of this thesis, discussion turns to Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*, the only novel in his oeuvre set in the eighteenth century.[12] It analyses the ways that notions of geography, science,

[12] It is by far Pynchon's earliest historical setting, with *Against the Day* beginning more than a century later in 1893.

space and nature rooted in the Enlightenment came to define the violent spatial practices of colonialism around the world, with a specific focus on North America. Neil Smith argues that the American colonial project was distinctly geographic and 'geographical reason and rationality were forged and harnessed … as a social and physical technology of empire' (*Endgame* 56). Theories of space that rely on this perspective 'always seem to mask social conflict and social agency' and present the politics, power, and ideology of spatiality as organically occurring (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 124). As Chapter Two will argue, the deep roots of this conception of space have done much to nurture the now prevalent idea that neoliberalism is a natural system without alternative.

The illusion of transparency, on the other hand, distorts spatial theorization through its long-sightedness. It is often the 'attempted philosophical negation' of the illusion of opaqueness (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 124). It sees right through the world, through the spatiality of social life, and projects it entirely into the realm of thought. This perspective takes the organization of space to be a projection from a mental ordering, and these ideas about space 'are then typically allocated to categorical structures of cognition such as human nature or culture at its most general' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 125). The problem here is that it suggests a certain, and simplified, process of reflection at work between the spatial and the social. When the illusion of opacity functions alongside the illusion of transparency, however contradictory it might be, it serves to further nourish the idea that spaces organically reflect a kind of natural social order. This logic underpins any tacit acceptance that there is no alternative to neoliberal globalisation, and the world it offers up in its own image.

Literary geocriticism must work to avoid reproducing the illusion of transparency, since it is all too easy to look to the text as a reflection, as a superstructural instantiation of the economic base. This is why the text must be analysed *within* the socio-spatial dialectic. Soja explains that 'social and spatial relations are dialectically inter-reactive, interdependent; that social relations of production are both space-forming and space-contingent' (*Postmodern Geographies* 81). Broadly, this is the notion that the spaces we make also make us. Thus, the experience of space is part of the production of social space itself, but is not reducible to it. The socio-spatial dialectic presents 'a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously spatial and social' (Soja, 'The Socio-Spatial Dialectic' 208). Taking the reading of a text

as an open-ended process, rather than strictly an act whereby meaning is either consumed or produced, reveals parallels between the production of space and the production of meaning.

To root a theory of reading in Lefebvre's work might at first glance seem foolish since Lefebvre himself writes that 'social space can in no way be compared to a blank page upon which a *specific message* has been inscribed (by whom?)' (*Production of Space* 142). His contention with this parenthetic aside is that that social space has no singular author. Social space is too saturated to be conceived as wholly readable in this way; it is 'over-inscribed, everything therein resembles a rough draft' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 142). Lefebvre goes on to stress the 'destructive (because reductive) effects of the readable and visible, of the absolute priority accorded to the visual realm' (*Production of Space* 146). His issue is, however, specifically with the assumed legibility of the visual realm, and therefore lends itself to a theory of reading as a somewhat indeterminate *process*. Such a theory must then disavow the 'priority of reading and writing' in Western culture in order to resituate these processes within the socio-spatial dialectic (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 146). There are numerous points where Lefebvre's description of space is entirely applicable to the reading process: 'activity in space is restricted by space; space 'decides' what activity may occur, but even this 'decision' has certain limits placed upon it. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also a certain disorder' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 143). This is precisely the case with the text. The production of meaning and knowledge is simultaneously ordered and disordered, both closed and open, and confined by the literal limits of the text as well as those imposed by the author and reader. The text is 'at once result and cause, product and producer' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 142-3).[13]

[13] This brings to mind Rita Felski's recognition 'of the text's status as coactor: as something that makes things happen,' which is addressed later in the introduction (12).

iv. Socio-Spatial Reading

Lefebvre presents the production of space as a triple dialectic, which Soja later refines into the notion of trialectic thought. The three terms of a trialectic are simultaneous and inseparable. The third term in the trialectic is not separable from its precedents or given precedence, thus this is a way of thinking in terms of both/also rather than either/or (Soja, *Thirdspace* 5). Lefebvre's trialectic of space is perceived-conceived-lived. *Perceived* space is the material, visible and measurable world. But it also contains spatial practice, the constant negotiation between daily routine and the networks of urban reality. This could be, for example, the way an imminent appointment might impact your route through a certain space. *Conceived* space is the space of architects, scientists and urbanists, a place for the practices of social and political power, and, as such, it is the dominant (and dominating) space in any society. *Lived* space is the experience of space; it overlays perceived space and 'is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 39). One of those most important implications here is the interpenetration of theory and experience, an idea that must be fundamental to any generative geocritical work.

Socio-spatial reading is, in essence, taking the text to be a trialectic process. A text is productive, but also produced, and not reducible to either one. The act of reading, since Barthes' 'Death of the Author' has been thought as a productive process. Barthes firmly situated the production of meaning at the foot of the reader, since 'a text's unity lies not in its origin but its destination' (*Image Music Text* 148). He argued that the goal of literary work was to make 'the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text' (Barthes, *S/Z* 4). Yet this production is a ceaseless positing of meaning 'always in order to evaporate it: it proceeds to a systematic exemption of meaning' (Barthes, *Image Music Text* 147). Barthes sees this as 'truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law' and, as he elsewhere explains, also to refuse capitalist ideology (*Image Music Text* 147). Yet under a neoliberal order of normative reason that subjugates science and law to an economic logic that itself refuses a fixed meaning, can Barthes' refusal continue to be revolutionary? The infinite possibilities of meaning-making necessitate Barthes' construction of a reading subject 'without history, biography, psychology', an empty 'space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost' (*Image Music Text*

148). This blank subject is surprisingly close to Coase's formulation of *homo oeconomicus* driven by competitiveness and entering into each competition with an *a priori* equality. Yet if, as Barthes suggests, an author imposes a limit on a text, then so it must be with a reader. Barthes is simply turning the writer/reader and producer/consumer dualism on its head.

Foucault imaginatively dispersed the author figure into a 'function of discourse,' tentatively though never explicitly gesturing towards the author as a constellation of social processes (*What is an Author?* 305). Umberto Eco revives the author, but as a textual strategy and a producer of model readers that are 'nothing else but [their] capability to cooperate in order to realize' that textual strategy (Eco, *Role of the Reader* 11). He simultaneously reduces author and (model) reader to variables-in-formulae while implicitly empowering the author to discipline and constrains an otherwise infinite language and unlimited semiosis. Where Barthes turned the reader-as-consumer/writer-as-producer binary on its head, Eco takes some careful steps towards a notion of co-production. He forestalls himself, however, arguing that this co-production is limited to works of metafiction (though he does not use the term) that are 'neither open nor closed' (Eco, *Role of the Reader* 256). Because these texts operate from what Eco suggests is a contaminated position *between,* rather than 'an uncontaminated critical point of view', they reproduce the processes that form 'ideologies [and] contradictory world visions' (*Role of the Reader* 256). Indeed, the uncontaminated critical point of view that veils the process of production is precisely the elevation of mental space that Lefebvre rails against. It is only ever an illusion. While all texts may not be self-reflexive, they all, in some form or another, inhabit the contaminated view and register the processes of production.

The issue is not the extent to which the reader or writer is, or is not, productive, but to get out of the quagmire of this binary entirely. Conceiving of reading as a trialectic process presents a path away from the either/or between reader and writer. It offers, instead, a turn towards the recognition of simultaneity in the interlinked processes of production and consumption that are present in the reading process and the formation of meaning itself. We might think in terms of text-writing-reading, with all three invoked simultaneously and inseparably in the reading process. The space of the *text*, akin to Lefebvre's *perceived space*, is, perhaps obviously, the physical text, the words on the

page, the cover, its genre and so on. But it also encapsulates the textual practice through which we approach it, which is characterised by a constant negotiation between daily reality and textual reality. In other words, the route we take through a text, and the way that we read, is influenced by daily life, by norms and assumptions, and even external factors like time constraints.[14] The space of *writing,* akin to Lefebvre's *conceived space*, is the dominant and dominating realm, in which the author demarcates textual horizons and, at the very least, attempts to imbue certain possibilities that discipline textual practice. The space of *reading*, akin to Lefebvre's *lived space*, is the experiential process of reading, and thus, the production of meaning through interaction with symbols and signs in a constantly-in-flux interaction of the *text* and the *writing*. This is a dominated process which a combination of affect and imagination seek to change and appropriate. As with Lefebvre's conception of space, a subject may 'move from one to another' aspect of this trialectic 'without confusion' and it is thus not constantly a passively experienced process (*Production of Space* 40).

The crucial point here is the interdependent nature of the trialectic. The text is not a self-contained object, as the new critics had it. But nor is the reader the lone producer of meaning, decoding a set of scripted conventions, or the author a scribe of immutable directions. Rather, a reader engages with a text that is haunted by its author. The process of meaning formation is influenced and limited, but not absolutely *controlled*, by text and context. This is partly what Tally is getting at with his notion of literary geography, which he defines as focusing attention on space and spatiality in texts, but also attending to the 'changing spatial or geographical formations that affect literary and cultural productions' (*Spatiality* 80). He includes in this 'the ways that literature registers the shifting configurations of social space over time' (Tally, *Spatiality* 80). This is all key to my geocritical approach, but I want to push a little further in thinking about the text, and its raw materials, *within* the socio-spatial dialectic. The process of meaning making is imbricated with social relations of language, narrative, and meaning, at all levels, even down to the worldviews of writer and reader. This begets an enormous chain of socio-spatial connections, but the point is to be selective. For example, the author-figure can even be produced, at least on a subjective level, through the reading process. That is to

[14] There is an empirical research project to be undertaken here to investigate and document the ways in which this negotiation between daily reality and textual reality takes place, though it is sadly beyond the remit of this thesis.

say, we might make assumptions about an author in reading a text, and this itself would impact the way we read the text. Accepting the situation of the text within the socio-spatial dialectic does not necessitate a grasping for the entirety of this complex network. This would be near impossible, since these relations are always open to further transformation. What it does enable is an apprehension of the text *as a process* in which there may be a multiplicity, though certainly not an infinity, of meanings. A text invariably registers, rather than reflects, its socio-spatial conditions of possibility.

v. Socio-Spatial Paranoia

This thesis has already positioned itself as an act of critique of neoliberalism, and perhaps it seems by extension a critique of literature and of spatial theory, and so it bears explaining how I conceive *critique*. After all, it is now an academic commonplace that critique in capitalist society can be co-opted by dominant powers.[15] The analytic work undertaken in this thesis occasionally veers towards what Paul Ricoeur called the hermeneutics of suspicion in *Freud and Philosophy* (1965), not least because it draws on a range of Marxist scholars, and Ricoeur considered Marx one of the masters of suspicion. A hermeneutics of suspicion looks beyond the surface of its critical object to decode meanings that are not self-evident. Eve Sedgwick challenged the productive potential of this type of criticism which, by 2002, had become 'now nearly synonymous with criticism itself' (124). The hermeneutics of suspicion is, she argues, a form of critique from a paranoid position that places 'an extraordinary stress on the efficacy of knowledge' and thus on the act of exposing or unveiling hidden violence (Sedgwick 138). Rita Felski explains that this kind of paranoid reading envisages the text as 'an object to be plundered, a puzzle to be solved, a hieroglyph to be deciphered' (53). But these acts of exposure through deciphering do not, in themselves, actually *do* anything or necessarily enjoin their reader 'to any specific train of epistemological or narrative consequences' (Sedgwick 124). It can even contribute to the growing 'ethos where forms of violence that are hypervisible from the start may be offered as an exemplary spectacle' (Sedgwick 140). Neoliberalism, in some regards, works in this paranoid mode. It unveils its own violence and turns it into a spectacle regularly, in forms that range from horror stories about U.S. healthcare to footage of police brutality to the ravages of debt, and so on.

[15] Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello discuss the role and co-option of critique in capitalist society in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (1999).

These acts of exposure ultimately constitute little more than a public warning that reinforces the importance of individual responsibility for competition and success. Sedgwick explains that paranoia has a 'rigid relation to temporality, at once anticipatory and retroactive, averse above all to surprise' and this could, very easily, be taken as a description of neoliberalism (146). Economists anticipate the future through economic modelling, then retroactively explain away crises that might have seemed unanticipated. Nothing (yet) surprises neoliberalism and its cold rationality.

Sedgwick's point is not that paranoid reading is inherently bad, but that it has become far too dominant. She looks to the alternate possibilities of reading from a reparative position which 'is to surrender the knowing, anxious paranoid determination that no horror, however apparently unthinkable, shall ever come to the reader *as new*' (146). A reparative reader seeks solace and renewal in a text. This is a shift in mood from the cynical certainty of the paranoid reader to a kind of optimistic openness.[16] Felski argues that a shift in mood does not necessitate a shift in the parameters of critique, which still views the critical object from a transcendental position, even when interpretation 'is a good-faith effort to draw out a text's implicit meanings' (57). Critique, then, is always an act of domination. A critic can self-fashion as an oppositional reader by 'imputing a repressive ideology to a work of art' and then 'teasing out its covert countermeanings' (Felski 66). But in this sense critique merely produces self-fulfilling hypotheses. It 'imagines itself taking a crowbar to the walls of the institution rather than being housed within them' (Felski 119). To get out of this bind, Felski proposes 'postcritical reading' which, among other things, refuses to 'subject a text to interrogation' or 'diagnose its hidden anxieties' (173). She draws on Latour's Actor-Network Theory to think of literary texts as *nonhuman actors*. This has the twofold effect of suggesting that, first, reading is a co-productive process with a text, and, second, the scale needs to shift down from the panoramic view that allowed a critic to look 'critically or dispassionately at the distant multitudes' (Felski 157). It is fundamentally important to avoid this transcendental critical distance since the social, Felski asserts, is 'not a preformed being but a doing'

[16] The idea of reparative reading paved the way for what James O. Pawelski and D. J. Moores describe as a 'hermeneutics of affirmation' in *The Eudaimonic Turn: Well-Being in Literary Studies*. The essays in this volume recognise the limitations of suspicious reading in dealing with positivity. This approach produces valuable work, but turning the tables on paranoid reading does not fundamentally alter the parameters of critique. Eudaimonia, and especially representations of it, can be negative, especially in an era where happiness is moulded into an arena for competition by Instagram influencers and self-help books.

(158). My critical approach in this thesis, socio-spatial reading, shares many of Felski's concerns and intentions.

Socio-spatial reading suggests that reading a text is a co-productive process that implicates readers (including critics) and writers *within* the socio-spatial dialectic. That is to say, as Felski suggests, that the social is a process or a *doing* rather than a *being*. This thesis does not abandon contextual reading since, as I suggested earlier, a text invariably registers its socio-spatial conditions of possibility. But it seeks to do such readings generatively, and not as acts of deciphering.[17] Close reading becomes a way of *thinking with* literary texts rather than against or through them.

The critique that the present study levels at neoliberalism is not intended in the paranoid mode of exposure. We already know neoliberalism produces extreme inequality and structural violence, even if its exact articulations are regionally specific. But this is not necessarily inequitable, especially when neoliberal reason sets the bar for equity. Knowledge of global inequality and structural violence can be burdensome and paralysing.[18] So this thesis does not seek to further expose the ills of neoliberalism, though of course it cannot ignore them. It instead turns to literary study to see how creative texts depict and engage with neoliberalism, how they register the rhythms of uneven development, and the ways in which they offer possibilities of thinking and imagining beyond the neoliberal governing rationality of economic logic.

vi. Uneven Development

Uneven development is the socio-spatial manifestation of the logic of competition at the heart of neoliberalism. Neil Smith, in *Uneven Development* (1984), argues that capitalism's production of space is driven by a contradictory tendency towards both differentiation and universalisation. The differentiation of territories and the universalisation of the world market 'proceed as a single process' and, therefore, capitalism necessarily produces uneven spaces (Smith, *Uneven Development* 110). This

[17] Although this thesis at times veers towards a paranoid mode of close reading in its subsequent chapters, this is never positioned as an unveiling of a text's hidden meaning. The close readings undertaken in this thesis are conceived as a process of co-production with texts. They are always open to further interpretation, but this does not mean they are unfinished or invalid. Rather, they are socio-spatially specific

[18] As it is in Juliana Spahr's poems analysed in Chapter 1, where knowledge of the global space produces in her feelings of guilt and complicity.

means that the terrible 'other' of capitalism, its drive for 'social and spatial differentiation – crisis, disruption, unemployment, spatialized impoverishment, war' and its stoking of a divisive unevenness along lines of race, gender, and sexuality, is all an intrinsic part of the system itself (Smith, *Uneven Development* 254). Hitherto neoliberalism, these socio-spatial differentiations tended to be concealed spatially (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 160) or displaced temporally as issues that the market will resolve in the future (Derksen *Annhilated Time* 37). Neoliberalism, however, does not veil its unevenness. Rather, it presents it as the spatial representation of inequality resulting from a Chicago School sense of competition. Economic crises are evaluated economically with no sense of the political or juridical, and an Ordoliberal kind of state intervention is called upon almost exclusively to preserve economic institutions, as with the 2008 bank bailouts. Unemployment is the fault of the unemployed making poor competitive decisions, even where unemployment is itself a crisis. While inequality in socio-political terms, like race, gender, and sexuality, is outright denied as a possibility because the market is neutral (Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* 108) and facilitates transitions 'from enemy to friend' (Hayek, *The Denationalisation of Money* 108-9). At the same time, the now globalised market is frequently presented as the realisation of capitalism's supposed tendency towards the equalization of social conditions and production.

Thomas Friedman's internationally best-selling 2005 book *The World Is Flat* makes this exact argument, that technology and the free market have come together to level the global playing field. Capitalism typically attenuated its contradictions by deferral to an as-yet unrealised but sure to come future of universality. Friedman, however, argues that this moment is already here, and the world has already been flattened. This is a distinctly neoliberal assertion in the Chicago School tradition of warped Popperian scepticism. So long as Friedman can make a strong rhetorical argument that this is the case, or produce a model that demonstrates its possibility, then it can be accepted as the case. Such an assertion of course requires one to completely ignore, among myriad other things, capitalism's propensity for crises, and the historically high rate of global poverty and hunger. Given a widespread awareness of inequality and unevenness, how does Friedman turn his assertion to the contrary into a best-seller? The answer is that he offers up a compelling and positivist narrative for the global economy. By gesturing to the impact the internet has had on economic possibilities, Friedman is able to present a levelled world *in economic terms* in the same way that Coase asserts

competitors' *a priori* equality. He focuses on the ways the internet has enabled new kinds of workflow software, outsourcing, and access to a historically unprecedented amount of information. These things can all be modelled or hypothesised as increasing competition and challenging monopoly power, since they widen access to the competitive market. The practical result, though, is that it gives already-wealthy companies access to new markets and more options for maximising profit (often at the cost of human capital).[19]

The contradictions between narratives like Friedman's and the obvious inequalities of neoliberalism are obvious. Rather than displacing or concealing its contradictions, as capitalism hitherto tended to, the governing rationality of neoliberalism constantly draws attention to them. These contradictions become normalised because the "true" functioning of the economy is only known to the neo-classical economist who translates and explains it to everyone else.[20] Under this neoliberal reason, typical signs of a dysfunctional economy ranging from poverty, widening wealth inequality, and grossly uneven spatial development, eventually come to signify a *functional* economy exhibiting competitive rationality.

Ed Soja argues that space can be made to hide consequences from us and insists that we must be aware of 'how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics' (*Postmodern Geographies* 6). This line of thinking is compatible with a critique of the neoliberal order of normative reason because it does not make the mistake of suggesting that neoliberalism *conceals* things like inequality. The uneven development of space normalised by neoliberal reason actually *showcases* inequality. Unevenness

[19] Take the Foxconn City industrial park in Shenzhen, China, which supplied cheap parts to a number of tech companies like Apple, Dell, Nintendo, and Hewlett-Packard. Labour practices were so bad here that a harrowing number of employees committed suicide and led the factories to introduce suicide nets to stop people leaping from the building. Many of the tech companies involved managed to come out on top of this crisis by positioning themselves as the investigators of their own supply chain, despite their purely economic logic causing the situation in the first place. *The Economist* magazine, an avowed champion of neoliberalism, made the argument that the suicides at Foxconn actually took place at a lower rate than the rest of China or the USA ('Light and Death'). This essentially makes suicide economic, and enables an arithmetic justification for Foxconn's employment practices.

[20] As neoliberalism has progressed, this role is no longer strictly limited to the neo-classical economist. Competitiveness experts like Richard Florida, as well as a plethora of market-focused think tanks, have emerged to narrate the workings of neoliberalism. Thomas Friedman's flat world theory exists in this sphere too. Their theories of competition are themselves *in competition* and, as such, only see traction and economic success if they promote worldviews that are sympathetic to neoliberal power. See Davies *Limits of Neoliberalism* (119-24) for a detailed explanation of the role that competitiveness experts play in neoliberalism.

becomes the spatial and therefore social expression of the logic of competition, and the production of space is seen to be driven by the impersonal mechanisms of the free market. Space is rendered strictly economic, and therefore "hides" by subjugation any political, juridical, or social consequences.[21] Uneven development has always been a consequence of capitalism, and it is intensified by globalisation across local, regional, national and global levels. The governing rationality of neoliberalism transforms uneven development into a purely economic occurrence. That is to say, unevenly developed space is hewn of the political human geographies and relations of power (aside from economic power) that define the socio-spatial for Soja. It is in this sense that uneven development forms the texture of neoliberal social life. Unevenness defines the result of any and all actions available to *homo oeconomicus* while reinforcing the logic of economic competition through which neoliberal reason compels us to understand the world. This shift, from a capitalist spatiality that sought 'to erase any sign of the maximization of profit' (*Production of Space* 160) to a neoliberal spatiality in which unevenness becomes a positive sign of competition, is fundamental to 'the normative economization of political life' that Brown diagnoses (201). Neoliberalism economises the production of space, thereby limiting the socio-spatial possibilities for *homo politicus* and facilitating its usurpation by *homo oeconomicus*.[22]

Tally explains the relation between power and space in a Foucauldian manner, where power is 'productive, capillary, flowing through the social body, and not a property to be held' (*Spatiality* 139). To be situated within the 'mobile flow of forces in a society is also to be implicated in a spatial array, where near and far, high and low, centre and periphery, constitute our social being-in-the-world' (Tally, *Spatiality* 139). This leads him to argue that both power and space are not wielded, and power does not 'proceed in a unilinear direction' (*Spatiality* 263). While space itself cannot strictly be wielded, spaces can be dominated. Gentrification, for example, has 'become a global urban

[21] We might, for example, think of the underdevelopment of a historically poor neighbourhood as a socio-political issue entangled with the pursuit of the common good and public welfare. But neoliberalism subjugates all of these concerns to a simple economic logic: the neighbourhood is poor because its inhabitants are not adequately competitive. But the option to compete is, of course, always open to them.
[22] The vast majority of recent protests or acts of public dissent have been entangled with the economisation of space (often in ways they do not quite address). Occupy, for example, was first and foremost an economic protest with a slogan appealed to economic statistics. Its occupation of public spaces was disavowed by establishments as invasive, or an eyesore, which are appeals to an economic understanding of space and its value. This is why its cries for *justice of some kind*, which appealed in a political mode but lacked any real political space, were easily dismissed as incoherent or fanciful.

strategy' that affects 'cities around the world… on all continents' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 263). Historically, too, space was weaponised against Indigenous populations by colonials. As Derek Gregory explains, the production of colonised spaces which at first took place through language and mapping, or in other words 'spatial writing', forced spaces 'within the compass of a European rationality that made it familiar to its colonizers and alien to its inhabitants' and effaced 'the possibility of an aboriginal spatiality' (Gregory, *Geographic Imaginations* 172-3). The relation between power, space and the social is, undoubtedly, protean, but we must keep in mind that while power does not proceed in a unilinear direction, it is extraordinarily *uneven*.

A critique of neoliberalism, particularly one that focuses on uneven development, necessitates an attendant focus on imperialism.[23] Neil Smith notes that any analysis of the production of space leads in the same direction as an analysis of the geography of imperialism because they share a common foundation in capitalism's contradictory impulses towards universalisation and differentiation (*Uneven Development* 131). Colonialism functioned in part as capitalism's transitory spatial fix, but 'as spatial integration at the global scale became real and not simply formal, external geographical space was denied its externality' which resulted in the 'development of underdevelopment, which lies at the heart of uneven development' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 187). This development of underdevelopment is intensified under neoliberalism in the name of competition. However, neoliberalism no longer seeks to extend the reach of the market across the globe and instead looks to extend the principles of the market to every sphere of life. Neoliberalism seeks to colonise by economics all non-economic spheres, though this is not as frighteningly all-consuming as it sounds since 'there is no single, ultimate doctrine of economic rationality which all public, political, or sovereign actions can be measured against, although economic experts will speak and act as if their doctrine is "neutral" and "objective"' (Davies 36). Imperialism in the form of underdevelopment remains at the heart of uneven development, which is for neoliberalism the visible expression of competition. But it is accompanied by a new

[23] This thesis uses Said's definition of imperialism as the practice, theory, and attitudes of the 'dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory' and of colonialism as the act of 'implanting settlements on a distant territory' (*Culture and Imperialism* 9).

economic imperialism with an unclear or abstract dominating center that attempts to rule economically over distant spheres of life.

This is why socio-spatial literary analysis shares traits with Said's contrapuntal reading. Geocriticism must take imperialism into account, not only because capitalism's historic production of space has consistently displaced Indigenous peoples, but also because the global neoliberal space 'is now openly referred to as empire' (Stewart-Harawira 2). Hardt and Negri's conception of this empire 'manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges. The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended together in the imperial global rainbow' (*Empire* xii-iii). This is of course only the case in the globalist imagination. The world is everywhere extraordinarily uneven and fragmented, rife with nationalism and characterised by hardening borders. Exploring the presence of the logics of imperialism in neoliberalism's production of space operating at local, regional, national and global levels is pivotal in apprehending the 'ontological underpinnings of the terms in which the world order is conceived' that Makere Stewart-Harawira argues *must* be transformed if theory is to go 'beyond resisting empire' (3). This forms the subject of Chapter 4, which probes the ways that critique of capitalism can be held back by Western philosophic ontologies, particularly those born of Enlightenment thought, that underpin both neoliberalism *and* colonialism. As La Escapìa muses in Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, 'Marx had been right about a great many things… But Marx had also been a European, and he and those following after him had understood the possibilities of communal consciousness only imperfectly' (290-1). The relationship between anticolonial and Marxist struggles is not always a smooth one, but it has the potential to be productive.

vii. Interstitial Literatures

Contemporary literature is a literature of uneven development.[24] This is not to claim that uneven development is the *subject* of any and all texts but, rather, a substrate of neoliberal life, and so too a substrate of cultural output. The Warwick Research Collective's (WReC) 2015 *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World Literature* makes a similar case from an entirely different vantage point. WReC's concern

[24] As detailed on p. 22, this thesis defines uneven development under neoliberalism as the socio-spatial expression of the logic of competition which is driven and justified by the supposedly impersonal mechanisms of the free market.

is, chiefly, the definition of world literature 'as *the literature of the world-system* – of the modern capitalist world-system, that is' (WReC 8). Their work takes place at the conjuncture of combined and uneven development, world literature, and modernism (WReC 6). They argue that 'modernity is to be understood as governed always … by *unevenness*' and that world-literature always, in some way, *registers* this fact (WReC 12). In this respect, this thesis works alongside WReC's book, but it is also a departure from it.

Whilst we agree, absolutely, that modernity is governed by unevenness, my focus is on texts that specifically deal with spatiality under neoliberal globalisation. All of the texts under study are in some way or another literatures of dissent against the structural violence of the present, and they are unified by their concomitant engagement with the legacies of colonialism and neoliberal spatiality. They exhibit, in different ways, a self-reflexive discomfort with critiquing neoliberalism from the centre of the world-system in a medium disseminated through globalised publishing oligopolies. This leads them to confront head-on their socio-spatial contexts, and exhibit the processes of their own production. Works of interstitial literature take place between real and imagined spaces. While they are primarily fictions, poetries, or speculations, they are rooted in the real spaces of history and attentive to the ways these spaces prefigure possibilities that our present need not necessarily have been neoliberal.[25]

There is the lingering question of what modernity itself is, since the works analysed in this thesis might be, and often have been, described as postmodernist. Yet they all bear striking formal resemblance to the 'irrealist' features that WReC identify in world-literatures *of modernity* (51). These 'anti-linear plot lines, meta-narratorial devices, un-rounded characters, unreliable narrators, contradictory points of view, and so on, have all been identified as the techniques and devices' of Euro-American literary modernism (WReC 51). But WReC contend that these techniques and devices are in fact 'discernible wherever literary works are composed that mediate the lived experience of capitalism's bewildering creative destruction (or destructive creation)' (WReC 51). These irrealist formal features are, therefore, present in interstitial literatures.

[25] There is definitely a case to be made that all literary texts take place (or can be read as taking place) between the real and the imaginary while remaining rooted in history. Interstitial literatures, though, specifically register a neoliberal spatiality defined by the uneven development of all spheres of life.

Fredric Jameson has argued for the conception of a 'singular modernity' that is inseparable from the global capitalist system, and has 'nothing of historicity or futurity about it' (*A Singular Modernity* 215). He does not, however, do away with postmodernity which 'does not designate a future either (but, when properly used, our own present)' (Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* 215). Jameson envisions postmodernism as an attempt to break from the canon of Euro-American late modernism rather than 'classical modernism, or even modernity, in general and as such' (*A Singular Modernity* 210). Interstitial literatures are postmodern in the sense that they specifically mediate the lived experience of *neoliberalism*, and chapter one explores the relationship between these two terms in more detail. These texts register their unavoidable connectedness to the now globalised world, as well as the economic logics that constitute neoliberal governing rationality. Jameson called for a model of political culture that would 'raise spatial issues as its fundamental organizing concern' alongside a hypothetical cultural 'aesthetic of cognitive mapping' (*Postmodernism* 49-50). Sure enough, the works of contemporary literature under study in this thesis do not only raise spatial issues, but engage fundamentally with the production of space itself.

Are these literatures the 'global cognitive maps' (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 53) that will allow us to locate ourselves in the present and then, perhaps, facilitate the displacement of 'the thematics of modernity by the desire called Utopia' (Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* 215)? These literatures merge the 'social as well as the … spatial scale' by presenting social space as socially constituted, and space as a product (Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 53). This is a move beyond the Althusserian formula which designates 'a gap, a rift, between existential experience and scientific knowledge' that ideology somehow fills in order to articulate these dimensions with one another (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 52). In approaching these interstitial literatures trialectically, as constituted by and constitutive of social space, we can rethink this gap, or, in other words, this empty space. Within the socio-spatial processes of neoliberalism, the rift between experience and scientific knowledge is collapsed into economic reason. That is to say that experience in, and of, an unevenly developed spatiality *forms* a certain knowledge of its organic inevitability.

Neoliberalism 'may appear as a fragmented phenomenon taking hold in particular localities' but it produces and inhabits the new globalised spaces of postmodernity and

'hence it sets the rules of how places interact' (Derksen, *After Euphoria* 90). It is not that the global world system is entirely unrepresentable, as Jameson suggests it might be (*Postmodernism* 52). Rather, it is that it necessitates representation of a different order, of a *process*. Jameson is right that there seems to be no cognitive map that satisfactorily coordinates the empirical position of the subject with the 'unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality' but that is precisely because this totality inheres only in abstract space (*Postmodernism* 51). While an empirical definition of global totality proves (inevitably) elusive, specific socio-spatial processes produced by and productive of neoliberal reason can be pinned down. These processes of neoliberal globalisation are the chief concern, in form and content, of interstitial literatures**.**

viii. Chapter Breakdown

Interstitial literatures register neoliberal spatiality in their form and content. We see that neoliberalism subjugates by economic means the political and social dimensions to the production of space. These literatures do not just represent space, it is not simply *there*, but they try to register and enact, in form and content, the socio-spatial processes of production and reproduction. This thesis does not overplay its hand; textual analysis will not save us. But these interstitial literatures provide escape into real-and-imagined-spaces, past and future, where such a thing seems once again possible. The argument for interstitial literatures put forth in this thesis is twofold, though both strands are threaded through each chapter. First the thesis is concerned with uneven development as the texture of neoliberal social life. In this sense I am particularly interested in the domination of space, the ways these texts present mapping, movement, life amidst local and global flows, the language of uneven development, and the physical manipulation of space through architecture and urban planning. From the consideration of forms of control and constraint, the thesis moves to its second concern with literary spatiality. This includes the notion that the text is taken not as a product, but rather a process of production co-constituted by an array of social relations between reader, writer, text and context. I explore the ways that interstitial literatures metafictionally and metanarratorially register this process, and its impact on ways of thinking about socio-spatial relations as themselves a process always open to further transformation.

Chapter One, focuses on the work of two post-language poets, Jeff Derksen and Juliana Spahr. Language poetry is characterised by its emphasis on disjunction, its interest in the process of signification, and its challenge to the author-position. Derksen and Spahr, in their shared critical focus on the logics of neoliberalism, both renegotiate the burdens and possibilities of the open text under the auspices of a globalisation that frequently deploys the idea of openness to nefarious ends. They shift away from the dualism of opening and closure, instead suggesting that texts are necessarily at once both open and closed. This is a paradigm shift to trialectics, from either/or to and/also. Their poems attend to the ways that neoliberalism as an order of normative reason shapes social and spatial experience through uneven development while gesturing towards its inconsistencies. They see neoliberalism's constitutive tension between rationality and irrationality expressed in its spatiality, and suggest this to be one of its weak points. This chapter enters into a form of critical dialogue with poems that are themselves geocritical, what might be called literature-as-theory, to develop the notion of socio-spatial reading, the process between reader, context and text by which meaning is forged.

Having established the intertwining of the production of space, meaning, and social relations, Chapter Two enacts a socio-spatial reading of Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon.* It argues that *Mason & Dixon* is a novel of historio-geographic metafiction, to expand Linda Hutcheon's term, and thus makes metafictional assertions about history, literature, *and space* as human constructs. The chapter traces a genealogy of neoliberal ways of thinking to Enlightenment thought, and argues that neoliberalism's economic scientism is as much a betrayal of the Enlightenment as it is a product of it. The novel puts uneven development front and center as Mason and Dixon unwittingly produce unevenness by drawing the Mason-Dixon Line in the service of commerce. The source of this unevenness is the Cartesian understanding of space as something to be mapped and owned, since it fails to account for its social dimensions because it cannot comprehend space in relative terms. The formal structure of *Mason & Dixon*, as well as the novel's focus on the social aspects of space, encourages remaining open to possibilities for change while gesturing to our ethical obligations to something more than the economic.

Chapter Three leaps to the speculative future of Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy. The pre-apocalyptic world is distinctly neoliberal and, I argue, the result of an

economic scientism that draws its authority from aspects of Enlightenment thought analysed in chapter two. I explore the idea that neoliberalism is the attempt to actualise a utopian ideal, and consider the implications of the "failure" of the apocalypse to wipe out humanity. The post-apocalyptic world is haunted by that which preceded it, and the threat of its return. This chapter argues, then, that a neoliberal conception of human nature as economic self-interest emerges as the core problem in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Atwood's novels suggest that there can be no break with neoliberalism, even by apocalypse, if we fail to confront the ways it has shifted our social and political ground, and warns us against accepting neoliberalism's conception of the human lest we mimic Crake's worldview.

Chapter Four, 'It all comes together in Tucson, Arizona' focuses on Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*. The chapter's title is a play on Soja's essay, 'It all comes together in Los Angeles', in which he analyses that city as the ultimate exercise in the neoliberal production of space. Silko's novel, though global in scope, fixes itself around Tucson, Arizona as a border-city, a place of transgressions and crossings, and a channel for great wealth both legal and illegal, though the distinction falls away as the link between neoliberalism and violent imperialism is tightened. Tucson comes to represent the instability of space, and the possibilities therein. Silko presents Indigenous cosmologies, different ways of knowing and being-within space, as antagonistic to, and absolutely incompatible, with the neoliberal ideological consensus. The novel is book-ended with a '500-year map', drawing space and time together relationally and relatively. This is a map to be interpreted as much as it is a map in the sense of a guide. It runs directly against the empiricism with which the colonists mapped the Americas, which cleansed all social being from space itself. Neoliberalism is here tied into a notion that the broader evolution of capitalism, alongside and within colonialism, has been ongoing since the sixteenth-century. Of all the novels under study, *Almanac* presents the most direct challenge to neoliberal spatiality. Acts of terrorism disrupt the smoothness of neoliberal spaces, revealing their disjunctive reality. Futures, pasts and presents exterior to capitalism are not simply imagined but lived through story.

Throughout the thesis I am interested in what literary spaces can do to register uneven development as, on the one hand, a manifestation of neoliberalism's logic of competition and, on the other, the result of an array of socio-spatial processes. These

interstitial literatures offer avenues for thinking about the ways neoliberalism's economisation of everything produces a socio-spatiality that disciplines a routine of mere life.[26] These texts prize the communal, eschewing the constant competition of neoliberal hyper-individuation that hollows out social space and political being. This thesis recognises the uneasiness of the present and refuses the idea that there is no alternative. The feedback loop by which uneven development signifies competition and justifies inequality is fragile. As time goes on, the economic explanations for the state of the world look less like scientific analyses and more like metaphysical nonsense. This does not mean we wait for the neoliberal system to implode, because it would take the climate with it. Co-productive engagement with literary texts has the potential to open up different ways of thinking about the socio-spatial dialectic and our place within it that goes beyond the confines of neoliberalism's order of normative reason. Of course, political-economic change will not come through works of literary theory or even *because* of such work. That will only come about through an active resistance against our interpellation into *homo oeconomicus*. It remains worthwhile to think about the ways our world could have been different, and yet might be, to escape the hopeless dirge of capitalist realism and prepare a politics that can be put to use when opportunities for resistance arise. 'Interstitial Literatures' seeks the points of coalescence between its literary analysis and the spatial claims that have characterised the last two decades of dissent against neoliberalism, from Occupy to Standing Rock, because future political possibility relies on an understanding and utilisation of space that goes beyond the economic.

[26] Brown uses 'mere life' in the Aristotelian sense, to 'signify the limited existence of those bound to producing and reproducing human existence' (232). This aptly describes the daily experience of most neoliberal citizens, as well as the inherently limited ambitions of *homo oeconomicus*.

CHAPTER ONE

'Yet, you are your tools': Jeff Derksen and Juliana Spahr's Socio-Spatial Poetics

All poetry is political
All poetry is politics
All politics is poetics
- Bernstein, *Recalculating*

The ideal effect [of political art] is always the object of negotiation between opposites, between the readability of a message that threatens to destroy the sensible form of art and the radical uncanniness that threatens to destroy all political meaning
- Jacques Ranciére, *The Politics of Aesthetics*

We live in a globalised world. The global marketplace stresses the smoothness of the global space, but the lived experience of space under neoliberalism is quite the opposite. Uneven development is the texture of neoliberal social and spatial life. Neoliberalism as an order of normative reason exhibits the inequality it produces through these uneven spaces as hallmarks of functional competition. Space becomes nothing more than an expression of the economic, which conceals the social process of its production. This chapter analyses two long poems that deal with the experience of neoliberal space, 'The Vestiges' by Jeff Derksen and *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* by Juliana Spahr. The long poem is in the world, but it also builds the poem as a world by creating rhythms of accumulation and cresting, thus it is a distinctly spatial form. Derksen and Spahr are both influenced by theories of the open text, which shifts the production of meaning to the reader. Their writing, however, refuses the dualism of opening vs closure, instead suggesting that texts are necessarily at once both open and closed. This is a paradigm shift to trialectics, from either/or to and/also. It is in this way that their poetry channels the 'negotiation between opposites' that Ranciére takes to be the ideal effect of political art (59). Derksen's and Spahr's poetry foregrounds the process of uneven development

at the heart of neoliberalism, which this chapter argues takes form in a socio-spatial poetics.

Both poets attend to the ways that neoliberalism as an order of normative reason shapes social and spatial experience through uneven development while gesturing towards its inconsistencies and irrationality. For Spahr, the uneven development of social being manifests in a contradictory relationship, one that is both connective and disconnective, between the individual and the collective, and between local and global space. For Derksen, the city represents a locus of globalising processes that is unevenly developed by the competitive market, and his poetry shows these processes not to be neutral or objective. We see in these poems the limits to neoliberalism’s conception of space as economic. These limits result from the core conflict neoliberalism has with its own prerequisite ethos, since ‘a wholly calculable, measurable world is only possible on the basis of particular non-calculable, immeasurable values or vocations’ (Davies 22).

i. Socio-spatial poetics

Derksen and Spahr are both poets, teachers, academics, and critical theorists. Their critical and creative writing is, perhaps inevitably, interrelated and co-productive, but this is not without its complications. As Spahr puts it: ‘I have often felt caught between an academic scene and a poetry scene that are often antithetical in desire and intents… I often felt that I could please neither master’ (*Everybody’s Autonomy* xi). In some sense, both poets’ writing operates in a postcritical mode, where poetry and theory, as well as reader, writer and critic, are all implicated in a co-productive process. It collapses any such dividing lines, recognising the interpenetration of the poetic and theoretic in everyday life. After all, ‘vernacular forms of concepts from critical theory are frequently found in the media contexts of entertainment journalism and in advertisements’ (Mancini 23). This interstitial quality to their writing has a heritage traceable to the postmodern L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry scene which they have both written about in their critical work.

The postmodern poetic turn in the 1960s stems from an antagonism towards what Charles Bernstein calls ‘official verse culture’ which, via publishing and reviewing practices, produces ‘an unreflected assertion of centrality’ (‘Interview’). Donato Mancini captures the failure of the mainstream to recognise, or even appraise, the divergent body

of work that emerged from this postmodern turn in his critique of (specifically Canadian) poetry reviewing, *You Must Work Harder to Write Poetry of Excellence* (2012). He argues that the critical lexicon of poetry reviewing from the 1960s right through to the contemporary is disproportionately concerned with:

> unified form; the national voice and address; the great work of art as moral exemplar; supra-political, moral concepts of aesthetics; a paradigm of mimesis and expression; an essentially passive grasp of form; a fixation on judgement as the critic's duty; the need to identify the true article of cultural value; formal unity as signifying veracity (21).

Mancini argues that this conservative and traditionalist ideal of poetry is a phantasmal 'super-synchronic temporality (i.e., all of literature as a single moment)' that serves to depoliticise 'actual poetry by removing it from the social sites of its production and reception' (Mancini 172). This ideal of poetry brings to mind a modernist conception, like that presented in T.S. Eliot's Tradition and the Individual Talent', in which he argues that the creation of a new work of art affects, simultaneously, all works of art that preceded it. But there is also a strikingly neoliberal hue to this idealised super-synchronicity, and Derksen has argued that 'the master narratives of modernity, imagined as shattered and unmanageable across the postmodern terrain, have nonetheless returned as the neoliberal master narratives' (*Annihilated Time* 252). As Davies has argued, the great achievement of nineteenth-century liberalism, building on Enlightenment thought, was to produce 'a sense of economic activity as separate to social or political activity' (31). The neoliberalism we have today as a governing rationality, then, produces a sense of economic activity as the *only* activity, in the sense that we can best understand all other activities, social or political, through an economic lens. So master narratives return in the authority claims neoliberalism draws from a transcendent sense of the economic and an idealised logic of competition.

Ron Silliman, in 'Disappearance of the Word, Appearance of the World' argues that language itself passed into a capitalist stage of development which 'is an anesthetic transformation of the perceived tangibility of the word, with corresponding increases in its expository, descriptive and narrative capacities' (10). In this sense then the 'poetic meaning' that is officially prized 'is an expression of meanings that somehow exist prior

to the poem' (Mancini, 21). Therefore the act of reading, especially as a critic, is simply a process of decoding. This recalls Felski's and Sedgwick's criticism of the hermeneutics of suspicion, whereby a reader can unearth hidden meaning from a poem. But what is hidden is nothing new; this sense of poetic meaning is prized precisely it reveals something that was already there. There is something at work here akin to the dual illusions of opacity and transparency that Lefebvre and Soja argue veil the process of the production of space. This kind of reading takes language to be opaque, since true meaning is right there to be grasped, while taking the text to be transparent, as its mimesis sees right through the world. Yet this veils the process of the production of meaning.

Postmodernist poetry stands in opposition to such reading practice, it 'is predicated, programmatically, on rejecting or circumventing these inherited critical imperatives' (Mancini 22). This kind of poetry 'directly challenges, attacks, or circumvents so many value categories formerly fundamental to the definition of art' (Mancini 62). Derksen's and Spahr's poetry builds upon this rejection of inherited critical imperatives, but it is distinctly responding to neoliberalism. So what are the intersections and overlaps between postmodernism and neoliberalism? Soja describes Reaganism and Thatcherism as 'reactionary postmodern politics' because they leverage a post-structuralist suspicion of objective knowledge (*Postmodern Geographies* 5). Neoliberalism relies on this postmodern worldview, while simultaneously offering economics *not* as objective knowledge but as common-sense or normative reason. In the same way that Jean-François Lyotard's diagnosis of the postmodern condition as a suspicion of metanarratives actually forms a metanarrative, under neoliberalism 'individuals find themselves in a paradoxical condition of sharing their renunciation of any shared narrative, denying themselves the use of social reason' (Davies 23).

Many postmodern poems are built 'on the very ambiguities in language that make language so serviceable for ideology' (Mancini 33). That is to say that language, too, is relative. This description stands true for the poetry that comes out of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E scene, particularly in the 1980s, which 'points again and again to how language is bound up with a repressive governmental apparatus and also with capitalism in general' (Spahr, *Everybody's Autonomy* 56). In the face of the repressive potential of language, and therefore of both reading and writing, language poetry emphasises reader autonomy. Lyn Hejinian argues for the 'open text' which is:

> by definition, open to the world and particularly to the reader. It invites participation, rejects the authority of the writer and thus, by analogy, the authority implicit in other (social, economic, cultural) hierarchies ('The Rejection of Closure').

Here the act of reading gains a political possibility; it is no longer passive consumption. Language writing emphasises the fact that meaning 'is not self-contained… but is inseparable from the language in process' (Messerli 3). This poetry foregrounds the processes of production and engages the reader in them, while its meanings always remain open to further transformation. For Charles Bernstein this writing, opting for expansion rather than reduction, has:

> a tendency that can pull the poem out of the realm of purely personal reference and into a consideration of the interaction among the seemingly competing spheres of politics, autobiography, fiction, philosophy, common sense, song, etc (Bernstein, *Content's Dream,* 240).

In other words, the poem gets outside of itself and into the world. It proves a useful form, then, in navigating neoliberalism's subjugation of these competing spheres to economics. Derksen's and Spahr's poetry draws on language writing's techniques of polysemy, parataxis, and deictic technique, to open the text up as a process of interface between the linguistic, spatial, historical and the social in the production of meaning.

The open text opens itself out to the reader and to the world. Bernstein's poem 'Truth in Pudding' suggests that this must be an interlinked and simultaneous process: 'Language is an event of the world, just as, for language users, the / world is an event of language. Even the world is a word' (*Recalculating* 4). The word is of the world, but the word also produces the world (for the reader, or language user, at least). Meaning is not produced exclusively within the text. Bruce Andrews explains that language writing 'resembles a creation of a community and of a world-view by once-divided-but-now-fused Reader and Writer' ('Text and Context' 35). In this definition, meaning is a process of co-production between reader and writer. Michèle Barrett argues that:

> Meaning is not immanent; it is constructed in the consumption of the work. Hence, no text can be inherently progressive or reactionary; it becomes so in the

> act of consumption. There may be an authorial 'preferred reading' but the effects may be different from, even opposite to, those intended. Whatever the formal properties of a work, its ideological content, its 'political' implications, are not given. They depend on the construction that takes place at the level of consumption (702).

This is true, to some degree, of all texts; the open text simply reveals the processes of this construction. Still, politically motivated poetry, while it cannot entirely control its political implications, can rearticulate (critically) the processes by which they are formed, and gesture to the contexts that might inform these processes.

Another extract from Bernstein's 'Truth in Pudding', which is essentially a poetic statement of poetics, reads:

> A fact is a frozen state of affairs. If I had to stipulate the facts of the poem, I would say there are no facts other than the words, and the
> words are not facts at all but what makes facts possible. The poem is
> the fact of its own making. The poet is the extension of the fact of
> the poem. (Bernstein, *Recalculating* 6)

This stresses, above all, the process of production. Meaning is always open to further transformation. Here, a fact is only 'a *frozen* state of affairs'; a fact is only crystallised in a specific moment, in a specific place. It could still be thawed out. The open text of language writing, then, operates *within* the process of production and simultaneously exposes this process of production. Thus, as Umberto Eco observes of metafictions, they are able to reproduce the processes that form 'ideologies [and] contradictory world-visions' (256). But they do this to show the very instability of this process.

It is important to point out, as Spahr does, that while post-structuralism has revealed the ways that readers construct meanings and texts, that this 'does not take place on an entirely blank slate' (*Everybody's Autonomy* 12). Meaning is co-produced by reader and writer and it is therefore contextually reliant. At times it can look as if language writing leans too heavily on the fundamental power of language, and the radical possibilities of reader autonomy, as with Bernstein's argument that 'it is through language that we experience the world' (*Content's Dream* 63). This argument runs the risk of

abstracting the experience of the world to the space of the imagination, in which physical and social spaces appear as mere reflections of a mental space that Lefebvre would argue is 'apparently, but only apparently, extra-ideological' (*Production of Space* 37). But language writing tries to avoid this abstraction with a focus on the materiality of language and 'the stuff of writing' (Bernstein, *Content's Dream* 63).[27] In fact, language writing is deeply concerned with the ways that language, meaning, and consequently worldviews, can become fixed and extra-ideological. It presents 'the dialogic social truth of language which ideology (necessarily) obscures' (Mancini 34). If it is social then it is also spatial, since social relations are embedded in space (Lefebvre, *Reflections* 89). This spatial aspect to language writing is often implicit rather than explicit. Hejinian notes that language, and the experience of using it, is 'spatial as well as temporal' and that 'the very idea of a reference is spatial: over here is a word, over there is a thing' ('The Rejection of Closure'). This definition of the spatial experience of language is limited by its conception of space as a fixed container (where a word meets a thing) rather than as a relative process.[28] But it is worth noting that here that, just like Bernstein's focus on the materiality of language, there are glimmers of the realisation that language and narrative have spatial underpinnings. What sets Derksen's and Spahr's poetry apart from its influences is a recognition that the not-entirely blank slate upon which the production of meaning takes place is the socio-spatial dialectic.

Take Derksen's poem 'Interface' published in his 1993 book *Dwell*. It works at the level of the sentence to emphasise polysemy and ambiguity, even while quoting from sources that seem transparently factual like economic statistics. It is through the aggregation of these one-liners that the possibilities of meaning open up; the poem encourages the reader to interface not only with it and the other poems in the collection, but with its socio-political contexts. Derksen's poem offers sardonic comments on globalisation like 'the fish instinctively know where the / international boundaries are'

[27] See also Steve McCaffery and bpNichol's *Rational Geomancy* (1992) and Ron Silliman's *The New Sentence* (1987)

[28] How does Hejinan's explanation hold up, for example, when use of language is non-referential? It cannot just exist "outside" of space. Wittgenstein's explanation in the *Philosophical Investigations* of the relationship between language and meaning as a relative one is useful here. Take, for example, his discussion of referring to an object while speaking by pointing and the ways in which we also "point" to sensations by directing attention to them (169). Reference is not inherent to language, and the production of meaning is not simply the result of thinking about the words. Wittgenstein says that 'nothing is more wrong-headed than calling meaning a mental activity!' (172). As this thesis argues, the production of meaning is a socio-spatial process.

and 'We can see a day when borders will mean nothing / more than knowing where to cut your lawn' (*Dwell* 1-2). This mocking cynicism turns darkly political when read alongside lines like 'Urgent Fury wasn't the movie, but the code name: / Grenada 1983' (Derksen, *Dwell* 5) which references the disturbing continuity between the names of Hollywood action movies and military operations (others include Enduring Freedom, Desert Storm, and Secure Tomorrow). This suggests that the statistics throughout the poem, which are presented without context, are likely related to militarism and border-making: 'Soviet Union 24.9%', 'United States 18.3%', 'Great Britain 17.1%', 'France 8.9%', 'China 6.3%', 'West Germany 5.4%', 'Italy 5.4%', 'Japan 3.5%', 'Sweden 2.5%', 'Poland 2.3%' (Derksen, *Dwell* 1-17). It is only later in *Dwell* once readers encounter the poem 'Lap Top' that a specific context emerges: 'The statistics of arms / sales in the 'world market' / are very distant / now' (Derksen, *Dwell* 20). Derksen plays on the distance between the two poems within the book to emphasise the imaginative disjunction between the local, national and global at work in the arms trade. Reading this extract over two decades later adds another layer of contextual meaning, since these statistics are distant in another way: 1989 was the last year in which the U.S. did not dominate the global arms trade (SIPRI Arms Transfers Database). The aggregation of one-liners allows (but does not compel) a reading of the U.S.'s rise to global hegemon in the throes of neoliberal globalisation as the cold war comes to an end.

Brian Jaeger calls this Derksen's 'modular form' which uses the 'modular unit to present research… in relation to globalization, ideology, language, and the socially-grounded subjectivities which language encloses' (31). He argues that Derksen's poetry tends take the 'form of metawriting which bares the device of its own formal method' and thus provides a means to 'practice a hybrid mode of theory/research/poetry' (Jaeger 38). Derksen's poetry is explicitly socio-spatial. It works spatially to emphasise polysemy (contextual signifiers across poems encourage rereading differently) while commenting on the spatial aspect of capitalist domination in the neoliberal globalised world (such as borders, global markets, or imperialist geopolitics). His poetry bares the socio-spatial dialectic to tackle the economic spaces of neoliberalism, and because of this it self-reflexively opens itself up to co-productive reading.

The productive reader that the open text of language writing poses is a controversial figure. A common criticism of this writing is that it performs a typically

'postmodern dissolution of the subject, and that this dissolution is in itself exclusionary' (Spahr, *Everybody's Autonomy* 77). This poses grave problems for marginalized subjectivities, potentially further denying them a voice. Spahr suggests that although 'performative models of subjectivity and ethnically and racially essentialist models of subjectivity gain prominence at the same time… these positions might be less antithetical than is often assumed' (*Everybody's Autonomy* 77). The postmodern denial of subjectivity is more specific; it is a denial of the dominant subject. Spahr is quick to point out that this does not mean that the subject of language writing is a negation or emptiness, and rather that 'language writing does focus on the human, but in a social context (rather than an individualistic one) (Spahr, *Everybody's Autonomy* 78). What this writing builds towards, and what Derksen's and Spahr's poetry manifests, is an anti-essentialist subject position within the socio-spatial dialectic, productive of and produced by (social) space. Theirs is a socio-spatial poetics.

As the thesis's introduction stated, socio-spatial reading moves away from conceptualising the reader as the sole producer of meaning. The reader-as-producer idea suggests that meaning is at once infinite and free, but also crystallises when a reader comes along and thinks it through. Meaning so conceived is an act of thinking, and if the productive reader is radically freed from meaning's edict this is only because—as Barthes did initially argue—the reading subject somehow transcends all socio-political contexts. We can avoid falling into this trap of conceiving meaning as either fixed and totalitarian or unfixed and subordinate to the reader's whims by thinking socio-spatially. The anti-essentialist subject position at work in Derksen's and Spahr's poetry emphasises the co-production of meaning, imbuing readers with evaluative agency and spatialising both the subject *and* the poem within social processes. These poems bare their formal devices, and foreground the processes by and contexts within which meaning is made and the poem is constructed. They openly reference theory, politics, contemporary events, and historical moments that contextualise the poem. This thus offers agency to the reader within the socio-spatial dialectic but not necessarily total freedom or control over meaning (if such a thing is even possible).

Lefebvre explains that 'what we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking body therein' (*Production of Space* 44). Neoliberalism, as an order of normative reason that presents

as non-ideological, is constantly renewed as common-sense understanding by appealing in a feedback loop to evidence of its logics in the very spaces it produces.[29] Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell argue that neoliberalism does not just drop down from supranational institutions, but, since the early 1990s, has inhabited 'the very social and spatial relations in which… regions were embedded' (380). A socio-spatial poetics self-reflexively enshrines these relations as its conditions of possibility in a bid to create space for a subject that is necessarily variable and social.

This is a direct challenge to the universal and unified subject that is 'burdened with language, the static carrier of history' (Derksen, 'Sites Taken as Signs' 3) and understands 'language as transparence, the neutral agent of representation and communication' (Jardine 45). Intensified under neoliberalism, 'the universal customer and the universal human subject become conflated' (Mancini 43). This results in the 'normative reign of *homo oeconomicus* in every sphere [which] means there are no motivations, drives, or aspirations part from economic ones' (Brown 44). A socio-spatial poetics rejects the possibility of a unified subject, opting instead to situate a necessarily variable subject at an intersection between social, political and economic processes across spatial scales. Recognising this intersection between local and global, between contextual and universal, is of fundamental importance since it is not:

> as though one had global (or conceived) space to one side and fragmented (or directly experienced) space to the other … for space *is* whole and broken, global and fractured, at one and the same time' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 356).

Just as it is for the text and the subject.

Through a dialogic close-reading of Spahr's and Derksen's poems, this thesis suggests conceiving of reading as a trialectic process, a turn towards the recognition of simultaneity in the interlinked processes of production and consumption that are present in the formation of meaning itself. This poses a reader's evaluative agency over conceptualising the reader strictly as productive (or consumptive). This chapter is

[29] Wendy Brown analyses in detail the way that 'neoliberalism governs as sophisticated common sense' in *Undoing the Demos* (35). Aeron Davis's *Reckless Opportunists: Elites at the End of the Establishment* contains plenty of evidence (some anecdotal) that even elites and economists do not have faith in the neoliberal economisation of politics.

especially interested in Spahr and Derksen because their work is directly influenced by language writing, and they explicitly situate the relationship between reader, writer and language within the spatial; in other words, they work with a socio-spatial poetic. As this chapter shows in sections two and three, their writing also renegotiates the burdens and possibilities of the open text, and autonomous reader, under the auspices of neoliberal globalisation which frequently deploys the idea of openness to nefarious ends and prizes individual autonomy at the expense of the communal.

As this thesis established in its introduction, the production of meaning and the production of space are structurally similar processes:

> activity in space is restricted by space; space 'decides' what activity may occur, but even this 'decision' has certain limits placed upon it. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also a certain disorder (*Lefebvre, Production of Space* 143).

The production of meaning is, too, simultaneously ordered and disordered, both closed and open, and confined by the literal limits of the text as well as those imposed by the author and reader. The text is 'at once result and cause, product and producer' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 142-3). Socio-spatial poetics cuts against Lefebvre's claim that 'the analogy between the theory of space (and of its production) and the theory of language (and its production) can only go so far' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 132). Lefebvre is, throughout *The Production of Space,* specifically talking about language as 'a structure of accumulated truths' (138). But a socio-spatial poetics takes issue with the possibility that language can offer such a structure. Indeed, it implies contextual meanings for precisely the same subject that Lefebvre argues space does: 'for someone who lives and acts in the space under consideration, a 'subject' with a body – or, sometimes, a "collective subject"' (*Production of Space* 132). In *Everybody's Autonomy* Spahr argues that the collective (while still autonomous) subject is central to language writing. Thus where Derksen's and Spahr's poems foreground the production of meaning, they also gesture towards the process of the production of space.

Neoliberalism mystifies (socially) productive forces while relying on dualisms presented through an economic lens (freedom/captivity, debtor/creditor, profit/loss, supply/demand) to obfuscate the real relationship between reality and appearance. The

logic of competition becomes a simplified and naturalised ordering principle. Derksen's and Spahr's poetry challenges the validity of neoliberalism's Cartesian dualisms and undermines its naturalisation. It is no surprise that their work has been deemed difficult or inaccessible, as has the majority of the literature under study in this thesis. As Bourdieu argues:

> by endeavouring to impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the prevailing modes of thought and with the doxa, [new poetics are] therefore bound to disconcert the orthodox by their 'obscurity' and 'pointlessness' (85).

It is fundamentally important, in the analysis of socio-spatial poetics, to shift this idea of difficulty and obscurity or to get out of the quagmire entirely. As Bernstein suggests:

> If reading poetry is not directed to the goal of deciphering a fixed, graspable meaning, but rather encourages performing and responding to overlapping meanings, then difficulty is transformed from obstacle to opening (*Recalculating* 8).

This is an analytic shift from the text as something to be deciphered to the text as a co-productive process. Derksen's and Spahr's poems demystify the production of space itself, opening up a vista in which the instability and artificiality of dominant social relations is apparent, and no longer a form of non-ideological knowledge. The following two sections of this chapter will close read *This Connection* and 'The Vestiges' respectively to analyse how the interstitial nature of their writing, coupled with a concern with neoliberal spatiality, manifests as a socio-spatial poetics that engages space as a process rather than a finished product.

ii: 'Ununited but together:' Juliana Spahr's Global Subject(s)

Spahr wrote *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* during her time living in O'ahu and teaching at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. The collection is comprised of two poems, the first and shorter poem a response to 9/11 and the second long poem a meditation on its aftermath. This collection is especially driven by the immediate spatial context of Hawai'i. Upon first moving to O'ahu, she describes going 'for days without noticing the horizon. Everything was all detail and specificity. Everything was local' (*The*

Transformation 28-29). There are hints here of an almost utopic disconnection from the global space. Yet the vicious globalising project of U.S. imperialism, the 'fresh history' of occupation that is 'remembered by everyone on the islands' is etched into this space (Spahr, *The Transformation* 30). So Spahr and her companions are led to confront their own position as 'haole'—a person who arrives from someplace else, though the word also describes a 'particularly noxious and invasive species' of plant (Spahr, *The Transformation* 13-4). Despite their political distance from the U.S. government, their disagreement with its policies and so on, 'here on the island in the middle of the Pacific they had no ability to pretend that they were occupied. Instead they were seen as occupiers' (Spahr, *The Transformation* 31). By recognising the socio-spatial formation of her identity on the islands, Spahr is led to confront the colonialism with which she feels complicit.

Poetry emerges as a way to confront this complicity since, as Pauline Butling argues, 'the poet is always both complicit and critical' (330). Spahr's disconnection from the U.S., both geographically and politically, led her to think about her intimacy with things she 'would rather not be intimate with', namely the military-industrial complex (*This Connection* 13). So she takes up what she terms the 'political lyric' because, the (collective) lyric subject, 'with its attention to connection, with its dwelling on the beloved and on the afar', lends itself to this critical poetic examination of unwanted yet unavoidable intimacy with U.S. imperialism (Spahr, *This Connection* 13). This collection of poetry is distinctly spatial, as the focus shifts between individual and social, local and global, private and public. Yet each poem has a *temporal* name, dates that situate them in specific historical moments. The poems flip the conception of space as a container where time takes place, and these crystallised temporal moments instead become containers where space takes place.

The first poem in the collection, 'Poem Written After September 11/ 2001', sets up the collection's dual concerns with spatiality and connection. Spahr sees connection as the crucial value of language poetry, rather than freedom 'which tends to imply that readers are somehow freed from meaning's mandate' (*Everybody's Autonomy* 59). It is worth pointing out at this juncture that, as Smith argues, 'freedom has been converted from an eighteenth-century promise into a twenty-first century threat' (*Uneven Development* 242). Smith is referencing America's militarist idea of "spreading freedom"

around the world, which is entangled with the free market. But it also brings to mind Davies’s explanation of Chicago School neoliberalism through which ‘freedom is recast as the freedom to exploit, rather than exchange’ (51). For Spahr, the productive reader is not freed by the act of reading, but connected by it to a collective of readers. ‘Poem Written After Septmeber 11/ 2001’ takes up the reciprocal relationship between connection and disconnection in human beings. It begins at the cellular level: ‘There are these things: / cells, the movement of cells and the division of cells’ (Spahr, *This Connection* 3). Cell division is, in many ways, the first moment of disconnection or spatial distancing. For Soja, human beings are uniquely able to:

> objectify the world by setting themselves apart. And they do so by creating a gap, a distance, a space. This process of objectification defines the human situation and predicates it upon spatiality, on the capacity for detachment made possible by distancing (*Postmodern Geographies* 132).

Spahr’s poem goes on to describe a body, ‘hands… and feet / and skin’ (*This Connection* 3) emerging from this cell division into:

> a shape of blood beating and cells dividing.
>
> But outside of this shape is space.
>
> There is space between the hands.
>
> There is space between the hands and space around the hands.
>
> There is space around the hands and space in the room (*This Connection* 3-4).

Yet this space is not pure distance or disconnection. Soja explains that:

> Objectification, detachment, and distancing… are but one existential dimension of consciousness. To be human is not only to create distances but to attempt to cross them, to transform primal distance through intentionality, emotion, involvement, attachment. (*Postmodern Geographies* 133)

And this is precisely what Spahr’s collection captures: the interplay between distancing and relation, between connection and disconnection. Even its title is a phonetic play on words between “this connection” and “disconnection.”

The poem continues to explore spaces that at once connect and disconnect, though it maintains its desire for collective subjects by exclusively using the pronoun *everyone*. The poem repeats a central refrain thus:

> as everyone with lungs breathes the space between the hands
> and the space around the hands in and out
>
> as everyone with lungs breathes the space between the hands and
> the space around the hands and the space of the room in and out (Spahr, *This Connection* 5).

Each repetition adds a new dis/connecting space that is absorbed and transcended (buildings, neighbourhoods, cities, regions, nations, and so on). In this way, the poem eventually zooms out to the mesosphere. The images, and the poem’s speaker, become literally distant. From this vantage point, there is a moment of almost pure connection: ‘everything turning and small being breathed in and out by everyone with lungs during all the moments’ (Spahr, *This Connection* 8). This idyllic image of a transcendent unity lingers for the blank half-page that follows.

Then, suddenly, the reader is pulled back down to the mesosphere all the way down to the level of bodies. It becomes clear that the poem has leapt from its cosmopolitan vantage point to ground zero of 9/11. The romantic notions of unity and connectedness are replaced by the very literal and gruesome connection of bodies through violence:

> The space of everyone that has just been inside of everyone mixing inside of everyone with nitrogen and oxygen and water vapour and argon and carbon dioxide and suspended dust spores and bacteria mixing inside of everyone with sulphur and sulphuric acid and titanium and nickel and minute silicon particles from pulverized glass and concrete (Spahr, *This Connection* 10).

Bodies and structures mix in the breathed space as the towers collapse. The closeness of bodies makes even poetic distance impossible. Even though the human bodies in this quotation are reduced—like the towers—to elements, they are nonetheless present. The literal connection of bodies through destruction raises a question: what bodies are breathed? Victim and perpetrator here coalesce, complicating political narratives that rely on polarization.

The destruction of the towers serves as a reminder of the politically motivated narratives that would be produced from them. The 'empty spaces where the towers had once stood' left a void of meaning which was to be filled with narratives that 'divest[ed] the nation of the moral responsibility for counter-violence (Jackson 29, 34). This rhetoric is plainly visible in George Bush Jr.'s 20th September 2001 speech, as he describes the aggressors as 'the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the twentieth century' and asserts that they will follow the same path 'to history's unmarked grave of discarded lies' (Bush, qtd in Jackson 42). He frames 9/11 within a war of ideologies, where America's supposed *truth* always wins. Congressman Tom Lantos quite directly linked the event with fascism, simply stating that 'September 11th was Pearl Harbour' (Jackson 42). These narratives rely on a super-synchronic temporality, where all of history is happening at once: fascism, communism and Al Qaeda's terrorism are collapsed into a singular recurrent enemy of the U.S. All social contexts are removed and thus the event of 9/11 and U.S. history more generally is depoliticised into a (continual) war between good and evil. This narrative then encourages connection through nationalism. But this, of course, only serves to enforce the disconnection of human beings through ideological stratification and imperialist warmongering.

It is from here that Spahr's following poem begins: desiring of connections and collective subjects, but wary of the unity available through distance and decontextualisation. It shifts from distant voice outside of the poem to a lyric voice of the collective subject, or subjects, embedded within the poem and in the space between relation and distance, connection and disconnection. In other words, this is a subject embedded within the socio-spatial dialectic.

To this end, the poem avoids indefinite pronouns, opting for definite personal pronouns like "I" and "we". The definite pronoun keeps readers' and Spahr's identity

intact where the indefinite does not. Spahr uses the word "yous" for similar reasons. This can be read as the pluralisation of the second-person pronoun "you", or a compound of you and us, or both. This word speaks to the reader specifically, but not uniquely, encompassing the poem's attempt to navigate the interstitial collective-yet-particular space. The frequent 'I' in Spahr's poem recalls Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself', particularly because his poem opens speaking of atoms like Spahr's opened with cells: 'every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you' (Whitman 1). This is echoed again in 'Poem Written from November 30/ 2002 to March 27/ 2003':

> Embedded deep in our cells is ourselves and everyone else.
>
> Going back ten generations we have nine thousand ancestors and going back twenty-five we get thirty million.
>
> All of us shaped by all of us and then other things as well, other things such as the flora and the fauna and all the other things as well (*This Connection*, 31).

Where Whitman's shared atoms gesture to a transcendental connection between the individual and the collective, Spahr is instead focused on a socio-spatial interconnectedness that is mutually shaping. This indicates a concern that universalisation is idealised, insufficient and problematic.

Throughout the poem, Spahr's "I" is not universalised; it is multiple, a 'subject position that could be inhabited by anyone' (Altieri 131). Given the autobiographical preface to the poem, we know its speaking subject is Spahr. The reader and its socio-spatial contexts are invited into, but not subsumed by, Spahr's subjectivity. Her "I" becomes a connective, collective sense of subjectivity. This lyric subject, as Heather Milne argues, reflects 'upon global intimacy, political agency, and ethical accountability in the context of geopolitical relations… [and] offers a model for lyric poetry that contests rather than reinforces the humanist subject' (Milne 204).[30] Milne takes some cursory

[30] Lynn Keller describes this as a 'post-language lyric' through which Spahr's poem tries to 'make the entire world' into the lyric subject (78). This, Keller argues, is a way of mediating the tension between individual and collective life because of the 'ancient ability' of lyric to 'affirm communal values' (83).

steps towards the idea of a spatialised subject in discussing the importance of the politics of location in Spahr's work (213). It is in a spatialised conception of subjectivity that the interplay between connection and disconnection comes to the fore. Rather than opposed concepts, they operate in tandem with each other. Thus, this lyric subject shifts away from universalising tendencies while enshrining the possibility of collectivised agency (or agencies) within the socio-spatial processes of neoliberal globalisation. This collective agency, as resistant or revolutionary, appears strongly in *This Connection*'s second poem.

'Poem Written from November 30/ 2002 to March 27/ 2003' oscillates between the local space in Hawai'i that Spahr shares with her beloveds and the global space mediated through a constant stream of news media. In the months leading to the invasion of Iraq, Spahr explains: 'I thought that by watching the news more seriously I could be a little less naïve. But I gained no sophisticated understanding as I wrote these poems' (*This Connection* 13). As Milne explains, 'turning to the news media for source material is a common thread in post-9/11 anti-war poetry' (214).[31] Spahr is, throughout the poem, constantly trying to read the news, but the barrage of information is relentless and disorienting. It contributes to the decentering effect of globalisation and the postmodern condition that Jameson cites. Moberley Luger argues that Spahr is writing 'witness poetry through a twenty-first century model of circulation' that, through simultaneity and connection, questions the requirement of 'being there' for witness poetry (193). Yet, if this *is* the case, Spahr's poem seems to suggest that in the age of globalisation we are now all inevitably made to be witnesses. In *This Connection*, there 'is no escape from the news' (Spahr 25). Yet the news is not a neutral mediator, and thus dictates this state of permanent witnessing.

The news ostensibly offers a connection to the global space, but its disorienting qualities point to the failure of cognitive mapping in the globalised world:

She traces echoes of Sappho and Ezra Pound in Spahr's poem, gesturing to a lyric tradition. While Spahr's allusion to these poems is certainly driven by a desire for communal values, it is also tied up in with a desperate grasping for a way of *making sense* of neoliberalism.

[31] Milne elaborates: 'Other works in this vein include: Dionne Brand's *Inventory*, Laura Elrick's *sKincerity,* Carole Mirakove's *Occupied* and *Mediated,* Kristin Prevallet's *Shadow Evidence Intelligence*, and Claudia Rankine's *Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric*' (214).

> The news refreshes every few minutes on the computer screen and on the television screen. The stories move… in a motion that I can't predict but I suspect is not telling the necessary truths (Spahr, *This Connection* 33).

It never builds to a sensible explanation for the nebulous events it describes. Spahr laments this: 'I want to tie it all up and tie up the world in an attempt to understand the swirls of patterns // But there is no efficient way' (*This Connection* 32). The connection to the global space that the news offers up is actually comprised of moments of disconnection, often through decontextualized violence: 'forty-seven dead in Caracas… // the four dead in Palestine… // [and] the three dead in Israel' (Spahr, *This Connection* 19). This muddling of connection and disconnection, where global media connectedness comes to emphasise distance and disjunction, is tied up in the logics of uneven development that govern neoliberalism. Namely, the contradictory drives towards universalisation and differentiation that Neil Smith identifies in *Uneven Development*. Ultimately, rather than authentically representing or mirroring the world, the news in this poem becomes a constant reminder of unevenness. In Lefebvre's terms, this experience of global space is channelled almost entirely through the realm of conceived space. The news does not tell 'the necessary truths', but it tells neoliberalism's economic "truth" of constant competition.

Yet the overwhelming nature of the news does warp Spahr's perspective on the world:

> the world suddenly seems as if it is a game of some
> sort, a game where troops are massed on a flat map of the world
> and if one looks at the game board long enough one can see the
> patterns even as one is powerless to prevent them (*This Connection* 20-1).

The world as a 'game' of competition, of winners and losers, of profit and loss, is a notion deeply embedded in neoliberal ideology, as Davies explains (119-24). This game appears on a 'flat map of the world', which is a Cartesian understanding of measurable space as something that can be conquered, which veils its social and political elements. From this board patterns emerge, of geopolitics, of conquest, of uneven development, but they seem inevitable. This is not, however, a poem of hopeless disorientation under neoliberal globalisation. For Milne, the poem 'ushers in a more complex understanding of

subjectivity that is equipped to address some of the complexities and complicities of intimacy in the context of a mediatized and militarized global culture' (217). Altieri argues that 'rather than achieve a position where it can reconcile opposites, poetry achieves a sense of a totality consisting simply in testifying to the inevitability of these opposites' (137). Between these two arguments lies the radical hope of *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs*. It navigates a socio-spatial subjectivity, produced by and productive of the local-global spaces of neoliberalism. Rather than reconcile opposites, the poem's yearning for connection suggests a network of socio-spatial relations that can break through the oversimplified Cartesian dualism of opposition as such. Resistance to neoliberal globalisation can be collective without transcending (or flattening) social contexts and individual autonomy.

Many critics have noted the 'literary connection between domestic life and foreign affairs' that Spahr establishes, with the news becoming an invasive force in social life (Reddy 147). Spahr's chronicle form (where each section is dated) offers up cross-sections of space-time. The news might be ephemeral in immediate experience, but chronicled in the poem it can become the subject of close reading. In the opening section, 'November 30, 2002', the very first news item is the 'Dow slipping yet still ending in a positive mood' (*This Connection*, 15). This is the tail-end of the post-dotcom-bubble stock market crash. This sets up the important context of neoliberal finance capital to the poem's attempt to document the subjective experience of the global space. The lingering question is that if the Dow is slipping, what could this positive mood be? The answer is the Iraq war, and once that gets underway in March 2003, the Dow begins steadily climbing. The financial markets, responding emotionally (a 'positive mood'), are hungry for war. A connection thus emerges between neoliberal finance capital and U.S. imperialism. Though the news presents a space of global connectivity defined by uneven development and constant competition, the poem's mediation of the news cycle suggests an affective quality to the market, undermining the general depiction of its transcendent neutrality and refusing economic scientism as normative reason.

By offering up fragments of information, and thus the possibility of re-contextualisation, the poem poses evaluative agency to the reader. Patterns emerge, but they are not linear. For example, we are consistently reminded of the complexities of international movement and the production and crossing of borders. The line 'When I

speak of the parrots I speak of the pair of pet conures / released sometime in 1986 or 1987 that now number at least thirty' refers to two pet conures that were allowed to fly free in Huelo, Maui (*This Connection* 16). These birds, an invasive species, reproduced, becoming a potential threat to crops and native forest. Thus, the state called for their removal (by lethal force). On the one hand, we can read this as metaphor about violent state responses to immigration. But on the other, it is a reminder of colonialism and Spahr's complicity-by-proximity in U.S. imperialism. It links with a later section:

> When I speak of the green of the parrots I speak of yous and me,
>
> beloveds, and our roosts at the bottom of the crater once called
>
> Lē'ahi, now called Diamond Head (Spahr, *This Connection* 17).

This opens up the possibility of reading the parrots in relation to colonialism. Lē'ahi was (re)named Diamond Head by British sailors who thought they had found diamonds there, though they had actually just found salt. The next mention of the parrots who, like Spahr and her beloveds, 'have entered into this habitat far away from / their origin because someone set them free, someone set them free' is complicated in such a reading (*This Connection* 18). This almost celebratory repetition that the parrots were 'set free' is warped into something unsettling. The meaning (and value) of *freedom*, especially when the U.S. invades countries explicitly with the mission of spreading freedom, is not at all simple. Foucault explains that the liberal art of government must produce freedom and therefore manages and organises 'the conditions in which one can be free' (*The Birth of Biopolitics* 63-4). In the neoliberal world, freedom and the free market are tightly connected. To be free is to be free to exchange or compete. But 'what is being named as freedom elides and even discursively inverts crucial powers of domination' and 'freedom in the realm of exchange sits atop a basement of exploitation and domination in the realm of production' (Brown 76-7). To be set free by neoliberalism is then in some sense to be colonized by the market.

Milne argues that the paratactical and non-linear litany of new headlines, and the constant stream of media images, 'flattens the significance of serious global events' (215). For example, a report of the melting Arctic Sea ice is juxtaposed with gossip about Winona Ryder and thus:

> the former is emptied of significance and the latter elevated in importance, reflecting the curious 'waning of affect' (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 557) and emptying out of meaning… in the context of late capitalism (Milne 215).

This flattening of events mimics the idealised global 'flattened world' of Thomas Friedman. Celebrity news in the poem is always about named individuals, yet the news of violence is always devoid of names, for example 'the ninety-five year old woman who was shot by Israeli / cops' (Spahr, *This Connection* 28). The streams of media images are not just flattening the significance of global events, but actively cultivating in viewers and listeners an affective attachment with (or at least interest in) the wealthy class of celebrities.[32] This reading is amplified by an earlier consideration in the poem of 'those who / encourage us to think of them as roosting with us, Mariah Carey / Jermaine Dupri, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Jay-Z' and so on (Spahr, *This Connection* 17). Celebrity media resonates uneven development by cultivating one-way intimacy with the leisured class as a firm reminder of the validity of the logic of competition.

This kind of close reading functions as a reader-centered counterpoint to the oppressive, and obsessive, nature of the news at the surface-level of the poem. It facilitates a response to the disorienting global space that goes beyond disempowerment by locating the interconnection of politics at every spatial scale. This is played out in the poem through the symbol of the bed, which comes to represent a sort of island: a boundary between the self and the world. Even as the bed is rhetorically shared, it is 'denied to others by an elaborate system of fences and passport-/ checking booths' (Spahr, *This Connection* 30). It is directly linked to the illusion of connection of the globalised world, since 'we believe that we want to believe that we all live in one bed / of the earth's atmosphere, our bed is just our bed and no one else's' (Spahr, *This Connection* 30). It acts at once as a place of safety and political paralysis: 'we do not know how to live our lives with any agency / outside of our bed' and yet 'how we live in our bed… has no relevance to the rest of the world' (Spahr, *This Connection* 26). Sophie Mayer argues that 'Connection, at once the narrative strategy needed for the poem to cohere and the political strategy urgently needed to divert war and violence, is found in

[32] The *importance* of the wealthy class has precedent in neoliberal theory. For Hayek, the wastefulness of the idle rich 'is everywhere the price of freedom' (*The Constitution of Liberty* 195). He even defends lavish displays, down to 'the most absurd experimentation in living' as a kind of potentially productive and socially necessary entrepreneurship (*The Constitution of Liberty* 195).

intimacy, whose enaction is also inaction' (58). Yet, as Milne adds, the bed is not mere refuge or escape from global politics, it is 'implicated in and shaped by these politics' (211). The implication of neoliberal politics and the U.S. military-industrial complex in the most intimate of spaces carries with it the realisation that the abstract global space of these politics is made and remade in the local.

By the end of the poem, neoliberal ideology has even ruptured into the intimate space of the bed:

> In bed, when I stroke the down on yours cheeks, I stroke also the
> carrier battle group ships, the guided missile cruisers, and the
> guided missile destroyers
>
> When I reach for yours waists, I reach for bombers, cargo,
> helicopters, and special operations (*This Connection,* 74-75).

Though the lovers are 'powerless to stop the military build-up to the invasion of Iraq, their awareness of military action not only affects their most intimate moments but also shapes these moments' (Milne 212). Yet there also emerges the sense that this shaping of spaces and moments can cut both ways. Soja argued that neo-conservative postmodernism leaves 'the very hope of resistance tinged with the absurd' (*Postmodern Geography* 74). It is, however, precisely within its restrictive intimacy that neoliberalism reveals itself. It is not something abstract or eternally distant. It is close, and it can be touched. This might seem to individualise a paralysing sense of personal political obligation and complicity. In the context of Spahr's poem and especially the socio-spatial lyric subject, however, it *collectivises* this obligation. The poem shows the illusory nature of neoliberalism presenting as a finished product that connects us with violence and inequality while throwing our cognitive map into disarray and disconnecting us from possible action. But in presenting this uneven texture of space and of social life, neoliberalism also presents its processes of spatial production.

Spahr's *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* navigates the abstract global space of late capitalism as it bears down on the collective (but not universalised) subject. As the global erupts into the local, like it does in the book's final image of intimacy with

military hardware, it seems almost inescapable. Yet the book emphasises that neoliberal globalisation, and its abstract space, is contingent on the local. Even the U.S. military-industrial complex is, for example, reliant on Hawai'i as a staging ground. The socio-spatial poetics of this collection poses evaluative agency for the reader, and by metaphoric extension a sense of agency more generally despite the overbearing nature of neoliberal globalisation. For Spahr, who is especially interested in connection and the communal, this agency manifests as collective agency. There is one section of the poem that presents a distinct sense of hope through collective action which is dated February 15, 2003, a day of global anti-war protests. It contains the longest stanza in the entire book, which consists simply of a list of cities in which people protested: 'Even those on Antarctica gathered together / Even we on this small island gathered' (Spahr, *This Connection* 54-5). Unlike other news items in the poem which emphasise distance, this section emphasises communality on a global scale. More specifically, it depicts localised gatherings in a globalised context: a material response to the abstract global space. This section of the poem repeats the line 'Here is today', emphasising the imminence of collective resistance. It is here that Spahr's lyric voice seems most poignant. The lyric's dwelling on the beloved and afar, on attachment and detachment, comes to the fore in this consideration of resistive collective action on a global scale. This is a kind of wrestling back of physical and social spaces from neoliberal hegemony. Neoliberal spatiality appears as an ongoing process of uneven development that must constantly be renewed. The two poems analysed here provide an acute way of seeing the revolutionary possibilities latent in the spatial, and a basis upon which to apprehend our intimacy with neoliberal globalisation's 'instrumental cartography of power and social control' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 63). Just as maps are drawn and redrawn, so can (social) space be made and remade within and beyond the confines of neoliberalism. *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* ultimately presents the world itself, mediated through the news cycle, as constituted by co-productive processes. The poems metaphorically suggest that while readers may not have total control over meanings and spaces, in the poem and in the world, we (and it is importantly a collective we) do have agency.

iii: 'Legislation over flesh': Neoliberal spatiality in Jeff Derksen's 'The Vestiges'

Derksen has identified 'neoliberalism as *the politics* that he is trying to grapple with, understand, debunk, ridicule, and shine a harsh light on' (*Annihilated Time* 252). He went

on, in 2006, to guest-edit a special issue of *West Coast Line* titled 'Poetry and the Long Neoliberal Moment' in which he identified neoliberalism as 'the powerful and common-sense ideology of globalization' (5). He is, in other words, recognising neoliberalism as an order of normative reason that conceives everything as economic. He explores this concept, and its relation to poetry, in his 2011 collection of essays *Annihilated Time: Poetry and Other Politics*. What is most interesting about Derksen's writing is his consistent interest in architecture and the ways that the spatiality of neoliberal globalisation appears in, and moulds, literature (especially poetry and poetics).[33]

Derksen's *The Vestiges* (2014) begins with a long poem of the same name which is about the neoliberalisation of space in Vancouver. Where Spahr's *This Connection* negotiates a place for the subject within the socio-spatial contexts of the global space, Derksen's 'The Vestiges' locates global space as it moulds, and is moulded by, the urban and the city. A vestige is a trace or remnant of something that no longer exists. As will become clear over the course of this section, its title is polysemic, with meanings ranging from the vestiges of modernism, to the vestiges of capital, surplus, labour and even neoliberalism. The poem breaks away from static representations of space and presents the city as an historic accretion of spaces that resolve into an unfixed, plural and agonistic urban space.

Capitalism produces spaces that are markedly uneven because its opposing tendencies towards both *differentiation* and *equalization* result in, and require, forceful uneven development. Neoliberalism, as I have argued, seeks to reveal rather than conceal this unevenness as common-sense evidence of competitive action. Globalisation, which for Derksen is driven by neoliberalism's governing rationality, 'focuses its transformational powers on cities, and therefore coheres dramatically in the textures and rhythms of daily life and the production of urban space' (*After Euphoria* 95). The rapidly changing spaces of neoliberalism, which are therefore readily visible in the urban space, are the result of a *continual remaking* of spaces in order to displace the irresolvable contradictions at the heart of the system: for example, between labour/capital and equalisation/differentiation. The incessant and uneven (re)creation of space in Vancouver exacerbates its long-standing property bubble and widens wealth disparity. In *After*

[33] For critical work that considers the implications of architecture in Derksen's poetry see Jaeger, Wiens and Rudy.

Euphoria, Derksen identifies 'minor globalized cities' that are 'altered and molded by the hands of neoliberal governance' (96). He explains that:

> the urban texture of such cities takes on the layers pressed into them from globalization—and the drastic reworking of the city in the global system—yet the layers of past planning, and the vectors of past ways of living (or culture) still resonate in the city space (*After Euphoria* 96).

'The Vestiges' is a poetic excursion into these layers and vectors of the past in Vancouver, and it necessarily takes up a socio-spatial poetics in order to engage (social) space as a process rather than a product or mere backdrop. But it also looks to moments of resistance and ways of living that spring up in opposition to neoliberal spatiality. Urban political resistance to neoliberalism is a major theme of the poem. The narratives of neoliberal globalisation promote unanimity and consensus in cities which are imagined as 'sleek globalised zones of consumption, creativity, and lifestyle' (Derksen, 'Troubling the Postpolitical City' 1). Jezko Fezer argues that 'this leads to a post-political, post-democratic situation in which spaces of democratic engagement that could otherwise resist and tackle neoliberal demands are swallowed up' (19). Yet this (attempted) neutralisation of the city-space has intensified spatial resistance (from, for example, G20 protests to Occupy to the Arab Spring). These distinctly political eruptions into the economic space of neoliberalism remind us that, as Lefebvre argued, space cannot be wholly controlled.

The socio-spatial poetic at work in 'The Vestiges', and the poem's concern with the intertwining of the production of space and the production of meaning, is clear from its very first image:

> Linear tankers lie
> on the harbour's horizon.
>
> The speed of globalisation (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 1).

The horizon is where earth and sky appear to meet, but crucially it can also refer to the limit of a person's mental perception, experience or interest. This horizon is characterised by cargo ships that appear to be lying on the line between earth and sky. The ships *lie*,

which indicates a certain stillness, but this stillness is itself a *lie*, a falsity, a trick of the eye at a distance. The tankers function as a symbol of neoliberal globalisation, transporting commodities from port to port. Their slow pace, the 'speed of globalisation', is a direct contrast to the usual comprehension of the rapidity of the global space, especially in financial terms. The possessive apostrophe on *harbour* indicates its possession of the horizon—the horizon is an extension of the harbour, which is here a tool for the material reality of neoliberal globalisation. Thus, the horizon that opens *The Vestiges* is characterised by neoliberal globalisation—the limits of perception and experience, or, in other words, of knowledge, are here *spatially imposed* as neoliberal, as capitalist. But the horizon is a trick of the eye, it is not really there, and thus serves to demonstrate the interface between the social and the spatial. That is, that our horizons of knowledge can be conditioned and influenced by space while conditioning and influencing space itself. 'The Vestiges' also here takes issue with the idea of looking (exclusively) to the horizon as the limit of knowledge. This notion underpins the rest of the poem, which instead looks at the spatiality of the present moment, and the ways it is constituted in and by the past, to create a counter-narrative to neoliberalism and demystify its obfuscating metanarratives.

The harbour also represents the spatial structuring of neoliberal social life, as it makes material the otherwise abstract global market:

> Shipped out of agreement zones
> in the global south, daily
> the stuff that
>
> appears as a unity.
>
> The texture of the everyday
> of every city, the remaking
> of its centre
>
> constant creative destruction (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 19).

The fast-paced seamless global market, or flattened world as Friedman put it, is here shown to be fiction. The consumer goods are shipped in slow cargo boats daily. This only gives the *appearance* of unity. Yet it structures the experience of the neoliberal city, a space that is constantly remade by global flows.

Derksen sardonically ties the time-space compression that characterises globalisation to violent U.S. imperialism: 'The Dirty Wars overturned time / and collapsed space! // And bodies' (*The Vestiges* 25). This is a reference to the Dirty War in Argentina from 1974-1983. The nine-year long period of state terrorism in Argentina was part of the U.S. backed Operation Condor. This operation, which took place across Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru was predicated on spreading neoliberal ideas about political economy while repressing political dissidents.[34] 'The Vestiges' reminds us of the role the Chicago School plays in this, quoting Reagan's 1973 radio address: 'It seems when Milton Friedman talked, / someone in Chile listened' (23). This is the same year that Reagan made his second unsuccessful bid for the presidency. Reagan's rhetoric, which completely erases the fact that Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état, and the subsequent Chilean experiment in neoliberalism, was a CIA-backed operation, chillingly prefigures the neoliberalism of his eventual presidency from 1981-9.

Derksen's poem suggests, then, that the time-space compression that characterises globalisation, and is often heralded as technological and political progress, is a direct result of crimes against humanity. The U.S. is not the only guilty party here, with Canada and the EU variously implicated, but it often leads the way. The point is that neoliberal globalisation is predicated on ongoing imperialism:

> The 'stunningly simplified
> strategic vision' exported
> makes a geography
>
> a pipeline as direct
> as New Land Acts (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 25).

[34] Members of the military juntas in multiple countries have been jailed for crimes against humanity, but the United States has received no backlash.

This 'stunningly simplified strategic vision' is Thomas Barnett's neoliberal and warmongering argument for one-world globalised interdependency predicated on the notion that 'disconnection defines danger' (n.p.). Here we are struck again, as we were in the analysis of Spahr's *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs*, by the problems of a global connectivity based on warfare that emanates from the U.S. as the heart of global empire. Derksen's mention of the pipeline likely references the Trans Mountain Pipeline that threatens to displace many Indigenous communities but can extend out to the oil pipeline as a symbolic hallmark of neoliberal connectivity in general. This poetic spiralling out to global geopolitics is traceable right back to Vancouver. The Trans Mountain Pipeline runs from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia which is directly adjacent to Vancouver. 'The Vestiges' never lets up on the continuity between local and global spaces, even while it is attentive to contextual specifics. Neoliberal connectivity (stunningly simplified) is all about the forceful acquisition and production of space for maximum profit without care for the human effects.

The concept of the *singular* is fundamentally important to neoliberalism, ranging from geopolitical one-world globalist ambition to its celebration of individualism (always at the expense of the communal). In 'The Vestiges', this is even visible in the architecture of the city. Derksen describes:

> Intensive ownership
> spiralling up, making air
> solid space
> for the singular (*The Vestiges* 2).

We can read this as commentary on the upward concentration of wealth under neoliberalism, and the frantic ownership of spaces. We might also read this extract as a description of a skyscraper. They are explicitly the structure of the singular, reaching ever upwards. They are usually hierarchised spaces, with the higher floors (office or apartment) being more financially valuable and offering a higher degree of cultural capital. The survival of capitalism has historically depended upon the 'production and occupation of a fragmented, homogenized, and hierarchically structured space' which is then also the structure of social relations (Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* 92). The

skyscraper is a distilled instance of this spatiality. It carries with it a sense that success is a movement ever upward and ever closer to the singular. That is to say, extreme financial attainment sets an individual apart.

The skyscraper, in some respects the literal ownership of air and sky, represents a spatial fix (or financial displacement) for the accumulative contradictions of the global market. Yet here air is *made* into solid space (space is produced) and therefore neoliberal spatiality appears once again as its weak-point laden with contradictions. Elsewhere in the poem, a section that references various politically motivated occupations (or squats) includes:

> The Woodsquat
> taught (history
> teaches) the weak points
> are lacunae to be taken (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 7).

The Woodward's squat was a direct action housing initiative in Vancouver in 2002 which lasted for 92 days.[35] The Woodward's building was, at this point, a disused enormous skyscraper in downtown Vancouver. The squat's most prominent demand was that Woodward be developed into socialised housing, particularly for Indigenous peoples, and the protest was defined by the politics of anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism and decolonisation.[36]

The squatters faced violent state response. The squat is credited (by Doug Ward at the Vancouver Sun, at least) with paving the way for the redevelopment of the building. The protests did secure some limited social housing in this redevelopment. But the new Woodward's was also riddled with artefacts of gentrification, ranging from expensive condos to corporate stores. This redevelopment was typically neoliberal in that it absorbed the critique levelled by the Woodsquat and included a small number of units of social housing. But it used the presence of these units economically, to market the redevelopment as socially conscious. This idea of social consciousness is built into the building itself: the ground floor presents a sanitised expression of radical politics by

[35] A comprehensive overview of the Woodsquat is available online, in comic form, by Trevor M.
[36] Much information about the Woodsquat is direct testimony. See, for example, The Vancouver Media Co-Op and the Woodsquat WordPress.

enshrining a completely different moment of Vancouver public dissent, the 1971 Gastown riots, in an enormous mural.

'The Vestiges' folds its depiction of capitalist spatiality into an appraisal of modernist architecture:

> Buildings as 'machines
> for living' even as
> they are built
> on a bubble.
>
> 'The machine is a means
> for producing surplus value' (*The Vestiges,* 4).

Le Corbusier's now famous phrase, 'a house is a machine for living in', is taken from his 1927 manifesto *Towards an Architecture*. It is emblematic of the hopeful utilitarianism of modernist architecture. Yet, as 'The Vestiges' suggests, even housing under neoliberalism is not always for living in and, especially in property bubbles, often left empty. Indeed, real estate is first and foremost an investment opportunity. The second quotation in this extract is Marx in *Capital*, and it unveils a bleak re-reading of modernist spatial utopianism in the context of capitalism. If a house is a 'machine for living' (Le Corbusier, 4), but a 'machine is a means for producing surplus value' (Marx, *Capital Vol. 1* 492), then housing under capitalism become a means for producing surplus value through accommodating the labour force and reproducing the social conditions of production. Le Corbusier, in that same manifesto, expresses the Enlightenment logics of scientific Reason that go on to underpin liberalism and neoliberalism (a relationship that Chapter Two explores in detail). He explains his utopian ideal thus: 'The Engineer, inspired by the law of Economy and governed by mathematical calculation, puts us in accord with natural law. He achieves harmony (Le Corbusier, 1). Le Corbusier wanted housing that provided for the necessities of life, but he imagines this as something that can be *calculated.* Neoliberalism has reinvented this modernist idea of architecture, but its only calculations are economic.

Jaeger argues that modernist architecture provides a structuring principle for Derksen's earlier poetry:

> just as space frames [interlocking struts that hold up long spans with few supports] are used to support a building, the text uses refrain-like, repetitive 'space frames' to organize and support the long poem form (32).

Explicit repetitive frames are absent from 'The Vestiges', but they are replaced by socio-spatial frames that often take the form of research expressed by quotation. Many of the sections hang on references to the spaces of Vancouver or research-based quotations that, contextualised, alter the way one might read not only that section but the entire poem (as the close readings in this chapter tend to evidence). The poem is defined by a rhythm of unevenness and accumulation, a self-reflexive expression of its neoliberal context. Moving from modernist architecture to modernist poetics, 'The Vestiges', an explicitly post-Fordist poem, is written in a late modernist form, borrowing from and repurposing aspects of two poems by George Oppen, 'Of Being Numerous' and 'Route.'

The epigraph to Oppen's 'Route' is from Lu Chi's *Wen Fu* (*The Art of Writing*): 'the void eternally generative' (Oppen 192). Gesturing on the surface to writing as an act of creating from the void, it also underscores a deeper theme to Oppen's writing: the void between unmade connections, between words and meaning. 'Of Being Numerous' and 'Route' are full of unfinished lines that drift into hyphenation, ellipses or question marks and yet Oppen states 'I have not and never did have any motive of poetry / but to achieve clarity' (Oppen 193). His point, prefiguring some concerns of language poetry, is that 'Words cannot be wholly transparent. And that is / the 'heartlessness' of words' (Oppen 194). The blank spaces between words, lines and stanzas, that is to say the interstices, are generative of meaning for Oppen. This has obvious resonance with Derksen's broader concern with space and spatiality in 'The Vestiges'. But Derksen's poem is not simply homage, as the epigraph quotation from Sven Lütticken to *The Vestiges* states: 'The true remake does not treat the past as a store of models to be followed but as a smouldering problem: the true remake is a haunted one.' If Derksen's poem is haunted by Oppen's work (rather than simply a remake of it), then it is important to note that Oppen's is haunted by Whitman. As John Lowney argues, 'Of Being Numerous' invokes Whitman (especially the late Whitman transformed by the trauma of war) to 'suggest the need to

question the cultural mythologies by which war is justified' (228). 'The Vestiges' similarly questions such cultural mythologies in an era of neoliberalism and Western imperialism-through-globalisation.

The spectral presence of Whitman alongside Oppen's 'shipwreck / Of the singular' (166) raises the question of the universal subject (as it did in the analysis of Spahr's *This Connection*). [37] 'The Vestiges' dismisses the possibility of a universal subject at the formal level, since it poses agency for the reader through techniques of disjunction and polysemy alongside traceable research (primarily through quotation). It also dismisses it in content, stating 'we are all / uneven, multiple / and multitude' (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 48). A collective subject, somewhat akin to Spahr's, emerges:

> Some thing beyond a
> subject, or a subject among
> others, the simple
> outcome of democracy's deficit (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 50).

And is tied directly to the deficit of participatory democracy, especially in city and urban spaces. The tentative language of this extract gestures to the representational challenges for literature in engaging with collective spatial politics, especially with regard to representing (social) space as a process, which both Spahr's and Derksen's poetry tackles.

Whitman's spectre also raises the question of the sovereign individual of liberalism, and how this has translated into neoliberalism. The neoliberal subject garbles the liberal promise of sovereignty, transforming it entirely into a burdensome sense of hyper-individualised responsibility. Brown explains with clarity:

> In place of the liberal promise to secure the politically autonomous and sovereign subject, the neoliberal subject is granted no guarantee of life (on the contrary, in

[37] The shipwreck of the singular is Oppen's concern that 'we cannot live without the concept of humanity, the end of one's life is by no means the equivalent to the end of the world… And yet we cannot escape this: that we are single. And face, therefore, shipwreck.' (Blau DuPlessis, 121; 265). Oppen is grappling with the tensions between the collective and individual subject that emerge in Spahr's and Derksen's poetry.

> markets, some must die for others to live), and is so tethered to economic ends as to be potentially sacrificable to them (110-1).

The promise of individual sovereignty under neoliberalism is tied up with economic value. The rich elite are blessed with autonomy at the expense of everyone else. Uneven development is the texture of neoliberal social and spatial life at every level, even that of subjectivity.

'The Vestiges' suggests that this unevenness is attenuated by the economic and corporatised sense of responsibility that neoliberalism places on the (non-rich) subject, which often takes the form of the monotony of everyday life under late capitalism:

> Another day
> of managing
> myself
>
> Another day of
> outflanking
>
> Another day of
> managing language
> and management language
>
> Another day of you and me
> 'under conditions
> not of [our own] making' (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 43).

The first three stanzas here indicate the corporate-influenced culture of self-management. But the monotony of yet 'another day' is tied up to globalisation (itself monotonous, as with the slow cargo ships) through the quotation from Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee and Stephen Linstead. They argue, in 'Globalization, Multiculturalism and other Fictions' that globalisation is the new global colonialism, and that the emergence of a global culture is actually a process of transition to a culture of consumption. They remark that it is absurd that 'richer nations continue to enjoy standards of living that are dependent on the

'austerity' measures of the poorer nations' (710). Placing this criticism within the context of Vancouver underlines the ways that neoliberalism has reproduced its colonial globalising strategies (of austerity) in the uneven development of urban and city space in the first-world. This is not to lessen the impact of imperialism, or draw a direct parallel from Vancouver to the third-world, but rather to underline that the visibility of inequality and unevenness at every spatial scale is the hallmark of neoliberalism. As Smith argues, gentrification has 'become a global urban strategy' that affects 'cities around the world… on all continents' (*Uneven Development* 263). In order to produce an economic sense of space, as tied up with the functioning of competitive market logics, neoliberalism folds colonial strategies into urban strategies.

'The Vestiges' depicts the ways that the neoliberalisation of space, and particularly the urban space of a city like Vancouver, works both top down (from supranational institutions) and bottom up (in social and spatial relations). This offers up a sense that neoliberalism is everywhere and in everything (economics, politics, culture, and social relations). But it underlines just how unstable neoliberalism actually is. In working through histories of spatial protest, which always faced violent police response, Derksen's poem gestures not only to the possibility of alternative spatial futures but the extent to which neoliberalism takes this to be a threat. To counter the relentless spatializing biopolitics of neoliberalism which oversimplify social relations, 'The Vestiges' presents the interwoven complexity of social and spatial life which is always open to further transformation. Derksen's poem references a number of socio-spatial eruptions: The Woodsquat, the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, the 1926 UK General Strike, the Hamburg Park Fiction squat, the 1949 occupation of Hotel Vancouver by homeless veterans, the 1934 worker's uprising's in Vienna's Ottakring district, the 1958 mass squat (over 3000 apartment buildings) in Caracas, the 1905 revolution in Russia that resulted from the typesetter's strike, and the 1968 Tlatelelco massacre in Mexico city. Many of these moments made steps forward but all were, somehow, shut down. 'The Vestiges' is not presenting a history of lost potential, but rather pointing to spaces and moments where alternative histories (and futures) were possible. It reinvigorates the socio-spatial as a protean realm of potential resistance, suggesting that there *can be* an alternative to neoliberalism.

The poem creates a texture of socio-spatial revolution that is theoretically informed. Alongside all of these protests and squats, Derksen quotes (often without attribution) from a wide range of theorists. To name a selection: Karl Marx, Henri Lefebvre (on autogestion and the production of space), Neil Smith (on uneven development), Giorgio Agamben (on bare life), Collier & Lakoff (on sheer life and neoliberal biopolitics), Foucault (on governmentality), Hubert Tonka (on the repressive nature of architecture), Marshall Bermann (on modernism's antagonism to modernisation), and John Holloway (on revolution as the struggle against power rather than for power). The point is not to test readers on their knowledge or confound with a dazzling array of references but spatialise these theories in the lived experience of Vancouver and everyday life more generally. As Lefebvre argues, 'the lived experience of space is not divorced from theory' (*Production of Space* 316). The socio-spatial dialectic operates not only as a cultural expression confined to the superstructure, but also within the economic base (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 81). The theoretical texture of 'The Vestiges' points to the ways that neoliberal spatiality, manifest in architecture and the structuration of urban spaces, deeply affects social life but requires constant biopolitical management and state-corporate governmentality. The struggle against power takes form in the struggle for space, and for the means of production of space that neoliberalism conceals. Derksen also quotes E.P. Thompson on the working class that 'did not rise like the sun at the appointed time. It was present at its own making' (14). Revolutionary activity, and struggles against power, is not a given. Though socio-spatial eruptions may be spontaneous, realising their potential lies in recognising and attending to the intertwining of the social with the spatial.

'The Vestiges' presents Vancouver as a city unevenly shaped by neoliberalism. The poem highlights historic moments around the world when certain spaces were the locus for socio-political dissent which carried with it a sense of possibility. But this is not a nostalgic longing. It suggests that just as the city space is shaped by global forces, it is reshaped every day by its inhabitants. The intensification of neoliberal governmentality over urban spaces only emphasises the deficit of participatory democracy, and fails to attain the level of control it would require to contain the emergence of socio-spatial contradictions. Neoliberalism has produced the deeply uneven urban space of Vancouver in its own luxury-apartment riddled image, but this is no organic occurrence, and 'The Vestiges' argues for the possibility that it can be remade collectively.

Spahr's *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* and Derksen's 'The Vestiges' reveal the processes of spatiality at work in neoliberalism, and the materiality of neoliberal ideology. They emphasise the importance of communal and collective forms of resistance to the individualising gaze of capitalist modernity. Yet is the promise for the neoliberal subject in the globalised world not already one of cosmopolitanism? As Michael Davidson puts it, this cosmopolitanism 'yokes together the elite and the abject, the globe-trotting businessman or wealthy tourist, as well as the migrant labourer, sex worker, and political exile (734). As Davidson implies here, the very texture of neoliberal cosmopolitanism is naturalised unevenness. The only real connection under globalisation is that of exchange:

> The quiet diplomacy
> of a world connected
>
> By things used
> every day and made
> elsewhere (Derksen, *The Vestiges* 18).

So while Derksen and Spahr recognise the importance of collectivity, they do so against a cosmopolitanism on neoliberal terms. They present the collective subject as 'Ununited but together' (*That Winter the Wolf Came* 21). Banerjee and Linstead locate a possible response to 'globalization from above' in 'a globalized resistance from below' (716), and this collective response is present in the content of Derksen's and Spahr's poems, namely their reference to protests and other socio-spatial eruptions. It is also present formally, as their socio-spatial poetics offer new spaces of resistance to globalising processes by, on the one hand, posing evaluative agency to readers against the loss of agency implied by no-alternative neoliberalism. On the other, they deny the transformation of the subject to *homo economicus* by striving for a socio-spatially embedded subject that is not reduced or universalised.

These poems offer a counter-political cartography of (social) space that subverts a political cartography which is 'always about the governing of subjects in and through spaces. Spaces become configured through strategies of governing and regulating people from near and afar' (Ong, 120). This is why the political lyric was so apt for Spahr (with

its attention to the near and afar) and why Derksen’s ‘The Vestiges’, in depicting the urban space of Vancouver, moves across the local and the global. Their poems depict space as process rather than static backdrop, both formed by and forming social relations. This chapter suggests that these poems are themselves acts of geocriticism, and that geocriticism is inherently bound up in social life and lived experience. Socio-spatial poetics draw attention to the nexus of interconnections at the heart of (social) space. But this registration of neoliberalism’s ideological underpinnings is not unique to these poems. It is a feature of contemporary literature as such, as a crystallisation of socio-spatial processes. A socio-spatial poetics renders these processes overt, and engages the subject within them. The following chapters work this socio-spatial poetics, and the idea of the reader not as strictly productive but carrying evaluative agency, into an analysis of postmodern novels and the ways they produce space and meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

'These times are unfriendly towards Worlds alternative to this one': Enlightenment Spatiality in Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*

Today crisis does not spring from the interface between society and an external nature but from the contradictions at the heart of the social production process itself
- Neil Smith, *Uneven Development*

'*Who sent you boys out here like this?'*
- Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*

Jeremiah Dixon and Charles Mason are not sure why they are drawing the Mason-Dixon Line, nor at whose behest. In Pynchon's novel, Dixon ventures to his fellow astronomer that they are 'both Subjects of the same Invisible Power? No? What is it, think ye? Something richer than many a Nation, yet with no Boundaries' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 140). This chapter argues that the invisible power is commerce or, more specifically and anachronistically, neoliberal globalisation. It reads a socio-spatial poetics into Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* to locate, across history, the kernel of capitalism's abstract global space in Enlightenment thought. This analysis is split into three sections. The first argues that the novel's well-documented parallactic structure provides an avenue for linking a novel about the Enlightenment with an argument bound up in contemporary politics, and suggests that *Mason & Dixon* is an historico-geographic metafiction. This first section closes with a look at the self-reflexive anxieties, of political efficacy, of authorship, and of responsibility, that inhere in the novel's narrative strategies. The second section enacts a spatial genealogy of Enlightenment through the novel, and positions cartography as a weapon of the Enlightenment. It contends that Enlightenment spatiality was put to work in the colonisation of America to erase the possibilities of alternative (irrational) worlds and forms the basis for the spatiality of capitalism. The third and final section analyses the colonialist and imperialist violence that this emerging spatiality demands in its relentless march of progress.

Pynchon began writing *Mason & Dixon* at least as early as 1975 and published it in 1997 (Gussow 2). The novel's gestation period runs across several major geopolitical events: the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the U.S-backed Operation Condor mentioned in Chapter One, the ascent to hegemony of neoliberal politics, and even the end of the

Cold War. Yet, in this period of great social change, *Mason & Dixon* is a turn to the past. It is Pynchon's deepest dive into the ocean of history, predating *Against the Day* (2006) by over a century. This is no act of distancing from precarious times into the fantasy of historical (re)narration. To the contrary, Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* maps points of congruence between the globalising neoliberalism of the 1980s and the cartographic colonialism of the 1760s. As Catherine Flay argues, this entails a movement away from the critical tendency to associate Pynchon with the American counterculture, since his post-Vineland novels depict capitalism 'as functioning on the basis of values associated with counterculture… [as well as functional] on the basis of any values which do not contravene the generation of profit' (782). This movement is already underway, with Sean Carswell drawing parallels between economic liberalism and neoliberalism in *Against the Day*, Doug Haynes showing *Inherent Vice* to be a novel of transition from Fordism to neoliberalism, and Andrew Rowcroft's suggestion that *Bleeding Edge* offers a critique of neoliberalism by capturing the unreality of finance capital. I think that, in light of this recent criticism, the Vineland break represents a move from countercultural Pynchon, lightly anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, and defined by the paranoid mode, to a specifically counter-neoliberal Pynchon that emphasises the importance of action over deliberation and holds fast to the possibility that value can be non-economic.[38]

Mason & Dixon, then, is a novel about neoliberalism, and more specifically it is an interstitial literature that registers uneven development in its form and content while exhibiting attentiveness to its socio-spatial conditions of possibility. As Davies argues, any critical analysis of neoliberalism must necessarily draw upon a 'genealogy of neoliberal ways of thinking, measuring, evaluating, criticizing, judging and knowing' (25). This chapter sketches one such genealogy, and its primary focus is on the ways that

[38] Joanna Freer's Thomas *Pynchon and American Counterculture* (2014) does an amazing job of contextualising Pynchon's pre-*Vineland* fiction with the American counterculture. She does identify some countercultural features in *Mason & Dixon*, 'its emphasis on love and community and its consistent critique of the oppressive behaviours of the powerful', but features it less prominently in her study because of its 'expanded historical perspective' (9). I think this points to Pynchon's counter-neoliberal shift, where such a historical perspective becomes useful in understanding and imagining alternatives to an order of normative reason defined by economics.

Freer makes a good argument that *Against the Day* exhibits countercultural traits in its use of fantasy as a political technique for 'developing patterns of thought less beholden to the societal norm' (79). Perhaps, though, there is something different about this kind of fantasy, which is an active process entangled with ethical work, to typical countercultural fantasising, which is often passive and dreamlike or driven by the paranoid pattern recognition of an acid trip. With that said, this is obviously not a question of counterculture or no counterculture in Pynchon's fiction. There is interesting research to be done on the ways that countercultural attitudes not only inform Pynchon's writing, but are actually built upon in his later novels.

Mason & Dixon's presentation of Enlightenment rationality shows it to have influenced and, in some respects facilitated, the certainty with which neoliberalism operates as an order of normative reason. Hayek's fascination with the capacity of the price mechanism to facilitate coordination without any conscious will is an appeal to an irrefutable, because incomprehensible, system. Davies argues that neoliberalism's authority claims are largely based on the idea of ideal competition (37), which is drawn from Hayek's conception of competition as a dynamic process that works through the unconscious mechanisms of the market. Neoliberalism's economic scientism is as much a betrayal of the Enlightenment as it is a product of it. The novel puts uneven development front and center as Mason and Dixon unwittingly produce unevenness by drawing the Mason-Dixon Line in the service of commerce, which hints at links between colonial cartography and a broadly capitalist conception of space as something to be mapped and owned. But *Mason & Dixon* also hints at the production of space as an ongoing process always open to further transformation, suggesting that the subject that sits at the heart of its parallactic structure, America, is also best understood as a process of becoming rather than a fixed product.

Mason & Dixon's narrative centres on America, but begins and ends across the ocean, alluding to the central role America will go on to play in globalisation. The concept of the 'global' is frequently described through landscape. Anna Tsing asks us, for example, to 'imagine a creek cutting through a hillside. As the water rushes down, it carves rocks and moves gravel; it deposits silt on slow turns; it switches courses and breaks earth dams after a sudden storm. As the creek flows, it makes and remakes its channels' (Tsing 49). She goes on to say that 'there are no stable landscape elements: Trees sprout up, transforming meadows into forests; cattle browse on saplings, spreading meadows past forest edges' (Tsing 49). Essentially, this imagery presents a globalisation that just happens naturally. Tsing rightly points out that in her own images, 'flow is valorized but not the carving of the channel' (49). Indeed it is precisely this carving of the channel, at a moment in which the global market is still emerging and in the early American space of bounteous nature, with which *Mason & Dixon* is concerned. The novel emphasises that channels, and especially those of the global, are carved by human agents and power structures.

The production of the Mason-Dixon Line throughout the novel symbolises artificial division and the production of inequality. To stake an early claim for this

chapter’s contemporary globalist analysis: the Mason-Dixon Line, especially given that the narrative goes south to the Cape Colony before heading to America, implies the global North-South divide. The inequality between the First- and Third-world is in the contemporary heavily tied to neoliberalism, through the International Monetary Fund and World Bank’s structural adjustment policies and development loans. Just as King Charles the first and second displace the indigenous population of America by chartering out land across the ocean that they have no right to, which is then solidified through scientific boundary-making, so too do the IMF and World Bank require many countries in the Global South to adhere to economic models that are at best ill-fitting and at worst purposefully destructive. Yet global inequality is reduced to a question of competitiveness. The colonial imperative—drawing lines, dividing, exploiting and justifying it through morally distancing discourses masquerading as rationality—is fundamentally the same.

Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon themselves represent another north-south divide, which is a subtle gesture to the social aspect of space. Mason is an Anglican from the south-west of England, whilst Dixon is a Quaker from the north. Mason is a melancholic wine-drinker drawn to the magical, whilst Dixon is an indulgent beer-drinking pragmatist. Burns argues that Mason’s and Dixon’s differences ‘echo a divided perspective that is the constitutive tension within America’s identity’ (5). This tension comes together in the Mason-Dixon Line: a border, a space of distancing and of disconnection. Yet, as Samuel Chase Coale puts it, through the course of the novel Pynchon deconstructs their polarized identities, ‘reveals Mason's lighter and Dixon's darker side’ (168). This is the first of many subtle indicators of hope in transgression; in reaching momentarily across a boundary. Mason and Dixon intersect, in some sense, as if they were points on a parallax.

i. ‘the Times are as impossible to calculate, this Advent, as the Distance to a Star’: Parallax and Parallels

Christy L. Burns argues that the parallax, the technique used by the titular astronomers to chart the transits of Venus and draw their eponymous boundary line, is the structuring principle of the novel. By way of the ‘parallactic method’, Pynchon presents a ‘full and yet contentiously dialectical representation of ‘America’ as it was in the mid-to-late eighteenth century and as it is now’ (Burns 1). Martin Eve elaborates that the action is

'situated at the junction of three temporal points: Dixon's supposed 1755 attack, Wicks Cherrycoke's 1786 post-revolutionary war storytelling and Pynchon's late twentieth-century perspective' (Eve, 98). For Mitchum Huehls, this means Pynchon is able to 'write about time without sacrificing, by spatializing, time's temporality or history's historicity' (Huehls, 'The Form of Historicity in *Mason & Dixon'* 26). Rather than sacrificing temporality or spatialising time, so to speak, the novel's parallactic structure indicates a shift to relativity, or space-time. This is an important distinction because, as this chapter later explains, *Mason & Dixon* presents a complex view of (social) space as relative in contradistinction to the Enlightenment view of space as fixed and undialectic.

How can a novel set at a historical moment that is not simply pre-Einsteinian but defined by an ascendant Newtonian worldview be said to indicate relativity? Simon de Bourcier argues that this tension is precisely the point of *Mason & Dixon*. The novel's anachronisms, alongside its engagement with eighteenth-century science, locates it in a 'heterotopic fictional universe in which pre-Relativistic and post-Relativistic worlds coexist' (de Bourcier, 185).[39] De Bourcier is careful to point out that other readings which connect Pynchon to relativity 'tend to assume that time in Einstein's universe is static, spatial time, with past, present and future all coexisting' (2). Static, spatial time, however, is distinctly Newtonian. In fact, the very idea of *spatialising* time relies on an understanding of space as a fixed container that is informed by both Newtonian physics and the Western philosophic tradition. By bringing a complex understanding of relativity to bear in his analysis of time in *Mason & Dixon*, de Bourcier paves the way for this chapter's conception of the novel's socio-spatiality.

The socio-spatial experience of entering the heterotopic fictional universe of *Mason & Dixon*, in which relativity clashes with its absence and subjunctive possibilities for the future coexist with the reader's knowledge of what actually happens, is itself relative. That is to say, reading the novel is a co-productive process not just between reader and text but also historical fact and fiction, impossibility and possibility, the real and unreal. *Mason & Dixon* presents a cartographic act that is informed by and reproduces

[39] Heterotopia is a concept Foucault uses to explain spaces that are somehow "other." He takes the example of a mirror, suggesting that is utopian since it presents a 'placeless place' that enables us to see ourselves where we are absent (*Of Other Spaces* 47). Yet the mirror is, at the same time, a heterotopia because it 'does exist in reality, where it exists a sort of counteraction' on the position that the mirrored image occupies (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* 47). By perceiving our absence in the mirrored image, we also discover our absence in the place we occupy at that moment. The heterotopia is in this way at once real and unreal.

a Newtonian understanding of space as a foundational moment for America and the emergent world system. In doing so, the novel invites consideration of the ways that the political, philosophic, and social implications of a Newtonian conception of spatiality persist even after the advent of Einstein's theory of relativity, which is all too often misperceived as, exclusively, a theory of time.

The parallactic temporality of *Mason & Dixon* forms the bedrock of much critical response to the novel.[40] For Samuel Thomas, alongside the Mason-Dixon Line itself, it provides a strategy for (re)reading Pynchon's novels. It enables Thomas to draw 'a line across history' (and neatly across Pynchon's oeuvre) from the Enlightenment to contemporary consumer society (Thomas 153). Though it is a 'fatal continuum' (Thomas 153), this line—both of the Enlightenment and from the Enlightenment—is not simple (or even always linear). Thomas puts it succinctly, explaining that 'one does not "understand" Auschwitz through the Age of Reason… but they are bound together through a "nonarbitrary homology"' (154).[41] Pedro García-Caro sees this same line in a similar context when he presents *Mason & Dixon* as a critique of 'American colonial history and the ensuing national formation of the United States' (García-Caro 102). Martin Eve's interrogation of this parallactic structure draws out continuities between Pynchon's and Foucault's sense of the Enlightenment. Foucault urges us to refuse binary thinking, in which you either accept the Enlightenment tradition of rationalism or seek to escape it. Rather, 'we must try to proceed with the analysis of ourselves as beings who are historically determined, to a certain extent, by the Enlightenment' (Foucault, 'What Is Enlightenment?' 9). In threading capitalist and neoliberal spatiality back to the Enlightenment, this chapter is not casting a judgement but, rather, tracing the way that *rational* systems and ways of thinking have cohered in our *irrational* present of neoliberalism.[42] This is itself a kind of parallactic way of seeing.

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[40] See Elizabeth Hinds's introduction to her edited collection, *The Multiple Worlds of Pynchon's Mason and Dixon* (2005), as well García-Caro's contribution to the volume. Also note that Julia Jordan's work on the autostereogrammatical has shifted the parameters within which Pynchon criticism can approach the parallax; this is dealt with in more detail over the following pages.

[41] This idea of a nonarbitrary homology is drawn from J.M. Bernstein's *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics* (2001). Bernstein explains that, for Adorno, 'the systematic separation of universal and particular distorts both; because both are distorted by their separation, because neither is what it pretends to be without the support of the other' and condenses this into 'a nonarbitrary homology or elective affinity between disenchanted theories, on the one hand, and rationalized social practices, on the other' (18).

[42] For Thomas this is 'contemporary consumer society' (153) and for García-Caro it is 'United States imperialism' (102). Eve's reading is more complicated, placing 'reason – the despotic enlightenment' into a two-way dialogue with its historical counterpoints' (100). Neoliberalism and the global market

Julia Jordan's work on the role of the autostereogram in *Mason & Dixon* offers an entirely new framework for thinking about parallax. There are 'two ways of successfully looking at an autostereogram. In the first, the two lines of sight from either eye converge above the image; in the other, they converge beyond or below it' (Jordan 271). In either instance, the 'brain has to overcome its desire to focus' to achieve the 'moment of revelation, where images become multi-layered and munificent, [which] is known as parallax' (Jordan 271). The autostereogram lets us think about the novel's parallactic structure in terms of *process*. It offers a 'model of vision where the image itself seems to be an agent: we can provoke it, we can coax it, but nothing is guaranteed' (Jordan 271). The autostereogram plays on the dual illusions of transparency and opacity that Soja identifies in our understandings of space. It creates a hyper-determined surface which 'disturbs our assumption that meaning resides in depth' while simultaneously living up to its promise, 'sharing its secrets and showing what was previously hidden' (Jordan 272). Yet successful accomplishment of the autostereogram 'functions as a fantasy of knowledge: the certainty it affords is a dangerous epistemological illusion' (Jordan 273). *Mason & Dixon* invites paranoid reading, and then rewards such a reading by calling it into question. The paranoid reader finds the depth they expect to find, but is confronted by an epistemic quandary about the certainty produced by such expectation. Jordan's work facilitates a subtle but important shift from viewing *Mason & Dixon* through parallax (as product or result) to autostereogram (as process). This provides a foundation for a socio-spatial understanding of the novel and of knowledge production as processes of continual becoming that remain open to further transformation.

The parallax provides a way of reading *Mason & Dixon's* formal qualities, an argument that Jordan also makes (272). The novel's 78 episodes are contained in three sections. Taking these sections to be the constituent parts of parallactic measurement, the central chapter, titled 'America', becomes the object that will be viewed from two different lines of sight. Thus 'America the Sun' is the object under observation (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 707). This signals America as the novel's central subject. Chapters one and three then come to represent the different perspectives that will offer us a triangulated

emerge, but as a Foucauldian 'composite, mythicised abstraction' (107). Nonetheless, for Eve, Pynchon holds the Enlightenment directly responsible for 'twentieth-century totalitarianism' (109).

view of America, and they take place before and after the drawing of the Mason-Dixon Line, respectively.

Let Mason explain the parallax to us, as he does to the Vroom girls who are unsure 'if they should even be understanding this or… even caring' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 93). Given that the parallax (as a structure) is a key component to *Mason & Dixon,* this aside is charged with the metafictional. It calls, not without some mockery, to the paranoid reader that might comb the description for its revelatory secrets as I am about to. Mason continues:

> The further apart the Obs North and South, that is, the better. It is the Angular Distance between, that we wish to know. One day, someone sitting in a room will succeed in reducing all the Observations, from all 'round the World to a simple number of Seconds, and tenths of a Second, of Arc, - and that will be the Parallax. (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 93)

Mason is channelling the Enlightenment pursuit of empirical knowledge; one day we will know, 'and that will be the Parallax' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 93). Burns points out that this might kind of mapping might, 'in some ways, be another imperialist effort' while emphasising that the 'parallactic method subjectively frames the supposed objectivity of science' (Burns 15). If the object under observation is America, Pynchon's novel suggests, no wholly objective reading is available because America is a signifier that is never at rest, always open to further transformation. Huehls argument that the concept of perpetual motion is important in reading *Mason & Dixon* supplements this autostereogrammatic conception of America. Perpetual motion 'forces the observer to rely on the instant, but the instant stabilizes time only when treated as a withdrawal from time' (Huehls, 'Form of Historicity' 31). In the same way, America is only a stable concept when crystallised into narratives (which will always be selective and ideological). *Mason & Dixon* is no exception, but it is self-reflexive about the process. For Jameson, this stabilisation is tied up with the impossibility of distinguishing 'space from time, or object from subject' (*The Seeds of Time* 8). He sees that subjectivity has become an objective matter, 'it is enough to change the scenery and the setting, refurnish the rooms… for a new subject, a new identity, miraculously to appear on the ruins of the old' (Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* 8). Yet, as Lefebvre evidenced, this relation of the

subject to space, which is always social, is not as simple as that. Where Jameson sees miraculous appearance, Lefebvre sees the process of (social) space as (social) product. So what Mason terms the 'Angular Distance between… that we wish to know', then, is precisely what this thesis has conceptualised as an interstice, the space at once in-between and intervening. While the Angular Distance between remains unknown, and the autostereogram remains unsolved, knowledge remains a process rather than product. *Mason & Dixon* suggests that we only ever come to know this interstice contextually, embedded within the socio-spatial dialectic.

In a novel that plays up the tensions between the objective and the subjective and points 'at the epistemic biases of the discourses of progress and science' (García-Caro 103), it is meaningful that Pynchon places two *people,* Mason and Dixon, at its heart. As Theophilus Savvas points out, the novel is named *Mason & Dixon* and not *The Mason-Dixon Line* after all (53). However much human agency appears in the novel to be limited, or at the very least unavoidably complicit with structures of power, Pynchon squarely positions social being at the novel's center. In fact, this very sense of unavoidable complicity gestures towards the individual embedded with—interwoven with—socio-spatial contexts. This, alongside the novel's concerns with temporality and spatiality, presents a point of conjuncture with Soja's trialectic of 'space, time, and social being: a transformative re-theorization of the relations between history, geography, and modernity' (*Postmodern Geographies,* 12). There are apparent formal similarities, if imperfect ones, between Pynchon's tripartite autostereogrammatic structure and the trialectic formulated by Lefebvre and Soja. Brian Jarvis argues in *Postmodern Cartographies* that Pynchon's fictions depict the ways that mapping acts as a sign, and an action, of hegemonic control, though Jarvis' book was published too close to *Mason & Dixon* to have any sustained engagement with the novel. This chapter locates this same critique of mapping in *Mason & Dixon* but goes further and suggests that this novel of Pynchon's, in particular, is interested in the production of space and the ways that we conceptualise spatiality.

If history is, as Cherrycoke puts it, 'a great disorderly Tangle of Lines, long and short, weak and strong, vanishing into the Mnemonick Deep' then it is as much social and spatial as it is temporal (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 349). This vanishing into the 'Mnemonick Deep' presents history as a form of memory and therefore entangled in

social being, while the novel as a whole underlines the spatiality of line-drawing.[43] Cherrycoke's pithy description of history reads a lot like Soja's definition of 'spatial deconstruction' which aims to expose 'the dishevelled tangle of threads that constitutes the intellectual history of critical social thought' (*Postmodern Geographies* 73). The task of spatial deconstruction is to 'reinscribe and resituate the meaning and significance of space in history and in historical materialism' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 73). *Mason & Dixon* implicates the literal production of space, in the form of the Mason-Dixon Line, in the production of history. Thus this chapter reconceptualises the novel not as historiographic metafiction but as historico-geographic metafiction. That is to say *Mason & Dixon* does not just make 'metafictional assertions of both history and literature as human constructs' (Hutcheon 124), it also makes these assertions about *space*.[44]

The novel, as many critics argue, frequently interrupts its own historicity.[45] It does this by depicting eruptions of pure fiction into the narrative, as with the episode of the Ghastly Fop that Cherrycoke reluctantly includes at the children's insistence, and through its use of anachronisms. Savvas names some of these: Cherrycoke's name, 'the presence of coffee house clearly meant to resemble Starbucks; a web of Jesuit communications prefiguring the World Wide Web…; the presence of *Feng Shui* etc' (55). These anachronisms do present history as a narrative, but they also offer up points of genuine historical continuity into the present. As Brian Thill points out, for example, coffeehouses were 'politically important places of sociability in England and thereafter in the American colonies' by the mid-seventeenth century (57).[46] Such points of continuity and

[43] Geoffrey C. Bowker's *Memory Practices in the Sciences* considers the ways that scientists attempt to produce a 'perfect memory of the past' (4). He argues, much like *Mason & Dixon* does, that the past is not a linear series of events but a product of human agency, which he tends to refer to with spatial language, e.g. leaving marks and traces. He contends that the technologies used for ordering memory and the past determinate what can be remembered, and they actively engage in the 'forgetting of other sets [of facts]' (12). So the past is always constituted and reconstituted in the present.

[44] I classify *Mason & Dixon* this way with the caveat that Eve's argument about Pynchon's 'degradation of the ethical function that this mode is supposed to entail' is right on the mark (108). He continues that 'forces both good and evil can exploit counter-narratives for their own ends and historiographic metafiction cannot simply rely upon a proliferation of discourses to bring about social justice' (*Ibid.*). This bears more than a few similarities to the problems of the open text and the productive reader that were explored in Chapter One.

[45] See Eve's explanation of the way *Mason & Dixon*'s narrative thwarts 'a straightforward progression through historical phases' (97), Huehls's argument that the the novel superimposes 'linear and cyclical models of time into one textual form' ('Form of Historicity' 25), García-Caro's analysis of Pynchon using 'historical materials and characters in order to reinscribe into the birth of the nation the cultural erasures and the epistemic violence involved in the narration of American exceptionalism' (103) as well as Thomas (21) and Hinds (16).

[46] Markman Ellis's *The Coffee-House: A Cultural History* (2004) is an unparalleled resource on the important role the coffee-house played in urban life since the first one opened in London in 1652.

discontinuity collapse lived experience into both the real *and* the imaginary, simultaneously. *Mason & Dixon* presents space in a similar way. Mason and Dixon draw the Line, which really is there, but they also on multiple occasions step into spaces that do not quite make sense. Take, for example, Mason's wandering through a 'Transition between Two Worlds' to a space where the flowers are 'brighter indeed than the Day really allows' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 180).

Mason & Dixon raises questions about authorship as well as authenticity. Wicks Cherrycoke provides the novel's framing narrative, although this is complicated by a (seemingly) extradiegetic narrator and Cherrycoke's constant renarration of others, sometimes only 'in a representational sense, ghostly as an imperfect narrative to be told in futurity' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 195). Huehls explains a particular moment of the novel in which 'an unnamed narrator narrates the narrator Cherrycoke's exemplary narration of Dixon's narrative' ('Form of Historicity' 34). For Huehls, the experience of reading subsumes this chronology, which is also the 'linear duration of straight, measurable time that historicizes the story' ('Form of Historicity' 34). What this narrative path reveals to us more than anything, though, is the layering of socio-spatial contexts that intersect with any act of reading or writing. *Mason & Dixon* is not an open text, as with the language writing analysed in Chapter One, but it is clearly not closed either (though, as this thesis maintains, no text truly can be). Eco characterises metafictional texts as 'neither open nor closed' and argues that they can reproduce the processes that form 'ideologies and contradictory world visions' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 256). *Mason & Dixon* bares the socio-spatial processes that mediate narrative and meaning. It does not, like Spahr's poetry in Chapter One, present an inhabitable subject position but neither does it offer up a universal subjectivity.

Cherrycoke is an interstitial character, at once Pynchon and not Pynchon, at once in control of the narrative and himself narrated. From the novel's beginning, there are clear continuities between Cherrycoke and Pynchon. Pynchon is well-known, mythologised even, for avoiding the public eye, and Cherrycoke recounts the crimes of his youth thus:

> 'twas one of the least tolerable Offenses in that era… the Crime they styl'd 'Anonymity.' That is, I left messages posted publicly, but did not sign them. I knew some night-running lads in the district who let me use their Printing-Press,-

> -somehow, what I got into printing up, were Accounts of certain Crimes I had observ'd, committed by the Stronger against the Weaker (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 9).

Pynchon's oeuvre, just like Cherrycoke's public messages, displays a consistent humanist streak in its depiction of (the injustice of) crimes committed by the strong against the weak.[47] Cherrycoke stands as a sort of authorial self-insert, drawing a parallel between this humanism and Pynchon's authorial voice. Though, as García-Caro puts it, the coincidence in time between the rise of poststructuralism (in the wake of the death of the author) and early reactions to Pynchon's work has too often concluded that 'the point about his novels is precisely the process of avoidance of an authorial voice' (104). Yet here we have Cherrycoke, at once a potential proxy for Pynchon and a mediatory conduit for a multiplicity of narrative voices. At the very least, Cherrycoke's presence problematises any suggestion that it might possible to avoid an authorial voice. As Cherrycoke elaborates on his time in jail, this is tied into the idea the unavoidability of authority as such (contrary to Barthes' hopes of freedom in the readerly text). He explains that 'my name had never been my own,--rather belonging, all this time, to the Authorities… as 'twere a Ring upon the Collar of a Beast' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 10). The joke, of course, being that his name anachronistically *does* belong to the authorities, or at least to the Coca-Cola Company.

Through Cherrycoke, *Mason & Dixon* is self-reflexive about its neoliberal conditions of possibility. After all, Cherrycoke can only relay his tale thanks to the hospitality of Mr LeSpark, an arms dealer and capitalist *par excellence* who believes, above all else, in the 'workings of the Invisible Hand' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 411). Thus Cherrycoke's story must 'be understood in terms of buying, selling, profit and loss' (Thomas 46). But, in this case, so must Pynchon's. García-Caro argues that Pynchon's insider-status, as a 'white man from the Northeast with his background' should not 'be at the service of defusing his effort to dissent' (106). Yet Cherrycoke's alienation from his own name and implicit subservience to LeSpark leads quite directly to the realisation that

[47] In Pynchon's later novels, as I have argued, his humanism takes on a distinctly counter-neoliberal hue. Take, for example, the time-traveller Mr Ace in *Against the Day* who seeks refuge in the novel's present from a future of 'worldwide famine, exhausted fuel supplies, terminal poverty – the end of the capitalistic experiment' (Pynchon, *Against the Day* 467).

Pynchon's name (and even his anonymity) has turned into a marketing tool.[48] This does nothing to defuse his dissent, but it gestures to the complexity of selling that dissent by highlighting his own complicity in the system (much like Spahr's *This Connection* ponders her complicity with the U.S military-industrial complex). As Derksen puts it: 'The structure I hate also hates me, but it makes me, / and that's where the problem starts' (*Dwell* 2). As the introduction to this thesis argued, it is not possible to completely avoid being complicit with neoliberalism, and its economy of guilt can be paralysing. *Mason & Dixon* presents the act of storytelling (by both Cherrycoke and Pynchon) as entangled with, but not inherently corrupted by, neoliberalism.[49]

Thomas points out that these questions of complicity haunt Mason and Dixon, through the 'forward momentum of the Line' (46). They wonder who they are working for (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 347) and it becomes clear through the course of the novel that they are working in the interests of commerce and finance, which they come to recognise: 'Didn't we take the King's money, as here we're taking it again?' (*Mason & Dixon* 693). They realise that they have ultimately surveyed 'a Line between their Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 692). Thill suggests that the novel appeals to a reader's own sense of complicity. He suggests that *Mason & Dixon's* oft-quoted episode in which Dixon whips a slave-driver (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 699) is pure spectacle. He argues that it is alluring in its catharsis of injuring the slave-driver, but it does not indicate a moment of non-complicity with the structures that produce slavery in the first place. There is, for us just like Mason and Dixon, no escape from complicity with the culture of global commodities. Thill argues that, rather than momentary violence, the possibility of eradicating the horrors of slavery lies in a 'radical awareness' (56) of the extent to which these systems are tied up with various modes of consumption and thus commodities should appear to us as 'signifiers as subjection' (75). But the problem is that they already do, for us in the twenty-first-century and for Mason and Dixon.

Entire markets have congealed around the concepts of *ethically harvested* and *responsibly sourced.* They are ultimately selling ethical salvation, a little peace of mind

[48] Pynchon's name is an old colonial name, at that. His earliest American ancestor, William Pynchon, was an early New England settle and the 'leading spirit' in the founding of Springfield, Massachusetts (Morris 2).
[49] Pynchon's authorial presence in *Mason & Dixon* functions similarly to the way Felski envisions the postcritical reader: within, and not outside, of a subject.

in a moment of ostensibly non-complicit consumption. But there is always complicity; the structures cannot be avoided.[50] Which is why Thill is perhaps a little dismissive with Dixon's act of violence, deeming it 'good drama, but poor politics' (67). While definitely not a moment of pure ethical action, Dixon's act can be framed as a social eruption of a festering sense of injustice, a reaction to his own political disempowerment. As Cherrycoke's narrative put it, 'Here in Maryland, they had a choice at last', suggesting that hitherto this moment they had none (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 698). Thill points out that it is 'too small an act… ultimately too easily absorbed by its opponents and devalued' (74). Devalued by its opponents, perhaps. Yet it is *not* devalued by Mason, who comes to 'admire Dixon for his Bravery' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 698). In the end, given a choice, 'Dixon chose to act, and Mason not to' and he did 'what each of us wishes he might have the unthinking Grace to do, yet fails to do. To act for all those of us who have so fail'd' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon 698*). Does good politics not need, in some sense, good drama too? These moments of social eruption, within and against constraining contexts, are deeply political actions; they are attempts to stop deliberating from afar. It is only *through* moments like this, and their politicisation, that the 'awakening of the socially conscious consumer class' that Thill yearns for could ever take place and, perhaps, result in the 'radical reorganization of economic power' (74).

A mass awakening carries with it absolutely no guarantees of change (after all, the burgeoning market for ethical consumption capitalises suggests we are already awake, and capitalises on it).[51] Indeed, as Eve argues:

> Mason and Dixon are not foiled because they are unaware that overarching structures determine them but because from Pynchon's psychological, humanist essentialism it is deduced that they are intrinsically incapable of non-complicity (123)**.**

In present political terms, it is pointless to seek out a pure non-complicit subject. Questions of complicity, far from a wake-up call to injustice, can function as paralytics.

[50] As Timothy Morton suggests in *Dark Ecology*, these feelings of complicity are intensified in the twenty-first century with an immanent knowledge of climate change: 'every time I start my car or steam engine I don't mean to harm Earth' (20).
[51] This kind of idealised awakening takes place in the paranoid mode that Sedgwick (124) and Felski (66) critique, and will not necessarily elicit action.

The aporetic state that Eve correctly locates in Pynchon's works is pessimistic but not necessarily hopeless. Pynchon's pessimism is shored up in *Is It O.K. To Be A Luddite?*:

> There is now a permanent power establishment of admirals, generals and corporate CEO's, up against whom us average poor bastards are completely outclassed… We are all supposed to keep tranquil and allow it to go on, even though, because of the data revolution, it becomes every day less possible to fool any of the people any of the time.

Pynchon's impressive prescience regarding the importance of data (in ways he could not have known) is rightly tempered with a concern with the power of the military-industrial complex. Data whistleblowers, like Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, have shattered any possibility of fooling anybody, but *exposure* has not resulted in any political or economic change. Perhaps, though, this pessimistic reading is what Pynchon intended. Us 'average poor bastards' *are* no longer fooled, but remain outclassed by the power of the establishment. After all, as he writes in *Gravity's Rainbow*, 'we do know what's going on, and we let it go on' (712). The neoliberal moment in this regard is characterised by what Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer saw as the problem of the monopoly: 'as its violence becomes more open, so its power grows' (*Dialectic of Enlightenment* 95).

The real data-power now lies in the hands of corporates as our (social) beings are reconstructed algorithmically as pure consumers for the purposes of marketing and advertising. Still, we are only 'supposed to… allow it to go on' (*Is It O.K. To Be A Luddite?)*; Pynchon is pessimistic but not outright hopeless. It is in this sense that Dixon's desire, and his willingness, to *do something* takes on a political shape; it must be contextualised as a particular within a universal. Yet, as recent history teaches us, with no genuine progressive outlet for a politics of disillusionment, the major reactions to post-political consensus have been usurped by the far-right. To name only a select few instances, this ranges from the election of Trump in the U.S and the vote for Brexit in the UK to the rise of Matteo Salvini's Lega party in Italy, the resurgence of the AfD in Germany and the (neo-nazi associated) Swedish Democrats in Sweden. This happens for because the left, as Foucault argues in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, offers no art of government by which to challenge the neoliberal dominant.

Earlier in *Is It O.K. To Be A Luddite?* Pynchon points to the eighteenth-century as a moment (the last moment?) of resistance, of epistemic alternatives, to the Age of

Reason and its 'emerging technopolitical order that might or might not know what it was doing.' We see with hindsight how this emerging technopolitical order of empirical reason paved the way for the gestation, through Hayek, Ordoliberalism, and the Chicago School, of our current governing rationality of neoliberal economic scientism.[52] This turn to the eighteenth-century in *Mason & Dixon*, in which there was genuine if 'irrational' resistance, foregrounds 'subjunctive Hopes, for all that *may yet be true*' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 345). In this way, *Mason & Dixon* suggests that our present could very well have been different, and the path to the neoliberal order of normative reason was not a deterministic one. Against the postpolitical consensus (emerging as Pynchon is writing the novel), this renewal of subjunctive hope is what Slavoj Žižek would call an authentic politics, 'the art of the impossible—it changes the very parameters of what is considered 'possible' in the existing constellation' (*The Ticklish Subject* 199). *Mason & Dixon* exposes the very artificiality of the otherwise naturalised socio-spatial relations of neoliberalism by tracing their development back to the Enlightenment.

Mason & Dixon seems to suggest that our acts of ethical self-fashioning, like the realisation of complicity and the development of conscience, are not inherently good or even ethical. As Eve argues, in Pynchon's writing, 'work upon the self is intrinsically contaminated and cannot be clearly delineated from the wider, impinging systems' (124). Yet it is in this very contamination that this chapter locates such possibility through the socio-spatial dialectic. In other words, following this thesis's underlying argument that (social) space is not just socially productive but socially produced, these wider systems might also be contaminated by work upon the self. The following section analyses *Mason & Dixon's* presentation of Enlightenment spatiality, and its fundamental importance in the formation not only of America but also to the gestation of neoliberalism as a governing rationality.

[52] Which has, ironically, morphed into the kind of metaphysical nonsense that the Age of Reason railed against.

ii. ''Tis the Age of Reason, rrrf?'

'There is ever an Explanation at hand, and no such thing as a Talking Dog', a talking dog tells Mason and Dixon in Portsmouth on the day that they first meet (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 22). The Learnéd English Dog continues: 'Talking Dogs belong with Dragons and Unicorns. What there are, however, are Provisions for Survival in a World less fantastic' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 22). This is a comic episode; the Dog chastises people for the 'deliberate use of [the word] 'drooling'' and asserts 'I am a British Dog, sir. No one owns me' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 22-3). But it is symbolically charged, presenting an Enlightenment science (in which everything can be explained) that borders on the absurd. The Learnéd Dog goes on to explain his 'praeternatural' traits more or less as the result of evolution:

> Once, the only reason Men kept Dogs was for food. Noting that among Men no crime was quite so abhorr'd as eating the flesh of another human, Dog quickly learn'd to act as human as possible,--and to pass this Ability on from Parents to Pups. So we know how to evoke from you, Man, one day at a time, at least enough Mercy for one more day of Life… I am but an extreme Expression of this process. (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 22)

What would otherwise be in the realm of the fantastic (a talking dog!) is presented as entirely plausible through the scientific language of Enlightenment reason. Interestingly, the Learnéd English Dog refers to his species as 'tail-wagging Scheherazades… nightly delaying the Blades of our Masters by telling back to them tales of their humanity' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 22). This description has parallels with Cherrycoke's narration of Mason and Dixon's story to earn his room and board from LeSpark. The Dog survives by telling tales of humanity to humans. He tells a tale of human rationality, emphasising the possibility that everything can be evaluated and known, even when this is patently absurd.[53]

The Dog leads Mason and Dixon to Hepsie, a fortune teller of sorts. She correctly predicts that their frigate to Bencoolen will be attacked by the French. This is again a muddling of the rational and irrational, since Hepsie is described as 'Lloyd's of

[53] There are parallels between the Learnéd English Dog and the competitiveness experts that Will Davies identifies, as narrators of neoliberalism. They both adapt rational discourses, Enlightenment Reason and economic scientism respectively, to present irrational arguments infused with an air of certainty.

Portsmouth', a reference to the London-based insurance market (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 22). This could simply suggest that Hepsie's prediction is calculation of risk. But the opposite, and conjoined, reading is that the financial market itself is in the realm of the arcane. Later, Mason returns to look for Hepsie and the Dog but 'can find no trace of either… Nor will anyone admit to knowing of them at all' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 29). These moments in *Mason & Dixon* that enter the realm of fantasy are self-aware and self-critical. As Thomas argues fantasy 'casts doubt about itself but it also casts doubts about the instruments of reason' (33). From the beginning, *Mason & Dixon* highlights the tensions between the rational and irrational, and between the Enlightenment desire to see everything and things that cannot (always) be seen. As absurd as this moment is, it is actually a moment of some historicity. There really were Learnéd Dogs touring the country in the eighteenth century that were purported (or, at least, advertised) to read and write.[54]

This episode presents *Mason & Dixon's* variable contestation of the Enlightenment discourse of reason. The ontologies and epistemologies of the Age of Reason appear, in producing their own sense of determinism, as the beginning of the end. Or, in the context of the 'new world' of America, the end of a (new) beginning. The overarching logic of Enlightenment reason, and that which has morphed today into the supposed neutrality of the market, is the 'indifference of the universal to the particular' (Thomas 28). These universalising principles are haunted by the (often unacknowledged) inequalities and colonial injustices that inhere in their production. In *Mason & Dixon,* the Enlightenment desire to seek universal laws or truths becomes entangled with the desire to know and map the world. My point is that rationality can never be transcendent, and thus reason cannot take an uncontaminated view. This was Lefebvre's problem with a western philosophic tradition that ignored space, Eco's dilemma with the open text, and Felski's issue with critique. A socio-spatial reading of *Mason & Dixon* suggests that mapping and boundary-drawing, in the colonisation of America and in general, is never detached from an idealised space of pure scientific inquiry and, as such, produces space defined by the illusion of transparency. The understanding of space this engenders in the

[54] The November 1753 *Mercury* announced: 'Of all the extraordinary curiosities that have ever been exhibited to the inspection for the curious, none have met with such a general approbation and esteem as the learned English Dog, now at the Angel Inn in this town: for he actually reads, writes, and casts accounts; answers various questions in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, geography, the Roman, English, and sacred history' (qtd. in Everitt, 182)

eighteenth century is entangled with the development of commerce, and it goes on to inform the capitalist production of space. As Thomas argues, the Mason-Dixon Line 'prepares the ground for an institutionalized indifference to human life per se' (28). The act of mapping in this way denies the social aspects of the spatial, and this lays the epistemic groundwork for neoliberalism's transformation of space into pure economics.

The Line is, without a doubt, an act of violence. It is described as a 'hateful assault' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 542), a 'tree-slaughtering Animal' (678), an 'Avenue of Ruin, terrible as the Path of a Whirl-Wind' (679*),* a 'geometrick Scar' (257), 'the very Shape of Contempt' (615) and so on. It might also be weaponised:

> this Line… these Market Stones set at regular intervals,—a cascaded Array of Units each capable of producing a Force,—I do suspect we have the same structure as a Leyden Battery,—and, need I add, of a Torpedo (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 600).

The Line is here cast as a technology; its danger lies exclusively in its usage and is not an innate quality. *Mason & Dixon*'s second chapter, 'America', begins with Timothy Tox's poem 'The Line' (258). The inference here is that America begins with the Line, or more specifically with the drawing of lines. The line represents the pre-eminent technology of the Enlightenment: cartography (and, as we will see, specifically in the context of its ambition to universality).

Captain Shelby, another surveyor that Mason and Dixon meet, wields 'his Instrument like a Weapon' before declaring that 'pure Space waits the Surveyor,— no previous Lines, no Fences, no streets to constrain polygony however extravagant' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 586). Shelby offers a glimmer of the notion that America is bounteous open plain for the taking; a not too subtly colonial perspective, as if nothing were there before. This very idea, *Mason & Dixon* suggests, is suspect, given that Shelby's surveying instrument is wielded as a weapon.

It is in this sense that America emerges as a national experiment peculiar to the Enlightenment. Smith argues that:

> America was a geographical project *par excellence*--geography, not history, was destiny… Here lay a whole new 'state of nature' available for use and possession by Adam Smith's entrepreneurs, guided by the divine principles of Lockean

> justice, their eyes on the prize of Kant's cosmopolitan promise--again, we are the world (*Endgame* 45).

When Mason wonders whether 'progress Westward were a Journey, Returning unto Innocence' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 427) he reiterates Locke's view that held 'America as another Eden' (Savvas 56). Herman Lebovics argues that Locke was not only the 'wise organic intellectual… of the seventeenth-century British elite [but also] of future generations of the British ruling class' (568). As such, Locke emerges as the first 'philosopher of the emergent world system.' (Lebovics 568). Globalisation, which is so intimately tied up in the contemporary with neoliberalism has its roots in Enlightenment geography.

Specifically, globalisation has its ideological roots in a Cartesian geography that seeks to map and control the resource-laden opportunity represented by colonial America. So the drawing of the Mason-Dixon Line comes to (literally and metaphorically) represent the production of a specific type of space through boundary-making. It is a local/regional expression of what will become the abstract space of capitalist modernity. This spatiality later comes to define America, as Smith argues,

> the slippage between narrow national self-interest and claims to represent global good emanate… from the ways in which the Enlightenment universality ambition was put to work in the context of a specific national experiment (*Endgame* 43).

This contradiction becomes clearer and clearer to Mason and Dixon throughout the novel, as they realise their socio-spatial contexts and the implications of the Line. There is no such thing as the 'pure space' that Captain Shelby describes (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 586). Only once space is conceptually hollowed out in this way can it then morph, by way of neoliberal reason, into a purely economic form.

The drive to dominate nature that would come to define liberalism and the attitude of modernity is worked through in the colonisation of America, and the Mason-Dixon Line comes to represent a foundational narrative of such domination. The 'trees and rocks, rivers and rainstorms' that Mason and Dixon move and remove in surveying the Line are all 'external nature waiting to be internalized in the process of social production' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 11). Their cartography is an act of civilising (in the colonial sense), and it not only splays out a nature/civilization dichotomy but plays its part in

producing such a conception of nature (as something outside) that would persist into the nineteenth century, particularly in America.[55]

In *Mason & Dixon,* this ideological tension with nature sets civilisation against the wilderness. As Smith puts it:

> the wilderness is the antithesis of civilisation; it is barren, terrible; even sinister, not just the home of the savage but his *natural* home. The wilderness and the savage were as one; they were obstacles to be overcome in the march of progress and civilisation (*Uneven Development* 20)

When Mason and Dixon first arrive in the Cape of Good Hope, they are confronted by 'the unreadable Map-scape of Africa [that] had unaccountably emerg'd' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 58). Its illegibility makes it dangerous; it is (as yet) beyond reason. It 'seems like a solid Continent… [but] is in fact an Element with as little mercy as the Sea to our Backs' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 59). Indeed, it is the 'new Hemisphere, this haunted and *other* half of ev'rything known, where spirit-powers run free among the green abysses and the sudden mountain crests' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 58). The novel's titular astronomers are here confronted with a time and a place for which the Age of Reason may not have an explanation at hand (aside from mere externalising). Beyond the confines of the Dutch East India company's town, 'with a precarious Hold upon the Continent, planted as upon another World' there lies 'nowhere to escape to' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 58-9). That is, nowhere mapped, nowhere known, and thus nowhere safe. Yet the wilderness here, in some sense, comes about as a product of the town, which has been 'planted… by the sepia-shadow'd Herren XVII back in Holland' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 58). The very act of mapping or declaring known actually produces the problem, so to speak, of the unmapped wilderness, or the dangerous unknown.

It bears mentioning that, on their voyage to the Cape, Mason and Dixon pass across the equator line, 'thro' the Gate of the single shadowless moment, and into the South, with a newly constellated Sky' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 56). The notion that a north/south divide acts as a gateway, almost to another world, hints at the power of latitudinal lines before Mason and Dixon even arrive on the American continent and get to work on their own. It also, by inference, ties the production of latitudinal border lines

[55] Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) takes the nature/civilisation binary to be the 'root conflict of [American] culture' (365).

into the geopolitical construction of the North-South divide between First and Third world that feeds capitalist accumulation through exploitation. No surprise that Mason and Dixon first encounter slavery at this point in the novel, and continually hereafter. The inherent imperialism of Enlightenment spatiality, and its continuing presence in contemporary globalisation, is explored in the final section of this chapter. For now the focus is on the significance of the unmapped space of the wilderness.

In literatures of conquest, the wilderness is often the unseen. Alexis de Tocqueville, having visited Michigan Territory in 1831, observes that Americans:

> may be said not to perceive the mighty forests that surround them till they fall beneath the hatchet: their eyes are fixed upon another sight: the America people views its own march across these wilds… subduing nature (78).

The border between civilisation and wilderness is solidified in the colonisation of America; there is nothing there until it has been mapped and conquered. In the century before de Tocqueville's visit, the space beyond the frontier was imbued with mythical qualities. Cotton Mathers depicted Massachusetts forests as the lairs of 'fiery, flying serpents' (qtd. in Murdock 364). The subjugation of this '*other* half of ev'rything known' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon 58)* by Mason and Dixon's relentless Line is what Thomas explains as 'one of the Enlightenment's small grey victories over the subjunctive' (38). Enlightenment reason 'outlaw[s] the principle of magic' (Adorno and Horkheimer 13) by erasing the spaces of magic and sorcery which are 'opposed to (but presupposing) religio-political space' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 35). For García-Caro, the loss of myth and magic 'is accompanied by an increasing hesitation about the righteousness behind the scientific projects in which they are involved' (114). Rather than deducing universal truth, Enlightenment rationality (here in the form of geography) instead produces a sense of truth (as remainder) by abolishing the subjunctive and demarcating the irrational.[56]

The subjunctive hopes of *Mason & Dixon* are, however, never defeated. Savvas argues that Pynchon 'continually rends the fabric of his novel, to provide nested spaces of the subjunctive' in a bid to counter Mason and Dixon 'collapsing the world into a singular reality, reducing it to certainty' (60-1). These are the 'routes of Escape, pockets of Safety' in the 'Margins' that Dixon identifies in the Cape (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*

[56] There are echoes of Popperian scepticism in this description.

69). But even these nested spaces are not always safe from market forces. When Mason wanders through a 'stone Perimeter' between worlds, he encounters one Mr Mournival who sells (rather forcefully) Mason a moment with an Ear in a Pickling-Jar, to which he must whisper his 'fondest Wish' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 179). This episode is certainly outside of Enlightenment rationality (or is it mere tourist trap?), but it is never beyond commercial control. When Mason is hesitant to pay to speak to the ear, Mournival advises him: 'I am empower'd to use Violence, I've a warrant from the Company' (*M&D,* 178). The power of the contract, of the warrant, it seems, extends everywhere. Mason's earlier observation proves true, that the Dutch East India Company 'is ev'rywhere, and Ev'rything' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 69). This contamination of the subjunctive space, that which might (yet) be otherwise, with that which *currently is* does not diminish its radical qualities. As Thomas argues, a genuine space of resistance can only appear between 'the fugitive and the rationalized', and such a space would 'force us to re-examine [our] material reality with fresh eyes' (30). Though Thomas is following a different train of thought, this *space between* is very much a socio-spatial sense of resistance. The historio-geographic metafictional aspects of *Mason & Dixon* positions the novel itself as a space of resistance that asks us to 're-examine [our] material reality' and how it came to be in social, spatial and temporal terms.

Mason's encounter with commerce in this semi-fantastical space is a direct result of the Enlightenment production of nature and space. As Thomas succinctly puts it: 'With nature conquered and superstition defeated, what remains is commerce' (39). It is the externalising and conquering of nature through human work and mastery that, somewhat paradoxically, actually allows Enlightenment (and subsequently Liberal) thinkers to seek out and appeal to universal laws. From Adam Smith onwards, the 'priority of agricultural production, and with it external nature, was denied' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 30). Yet from this void emerges a completely externalised abstract nature. This elevated sense of external nature that is somehow separate from and indifferent to human activity is precisely the kind of abstraction that Hayek employs in his formulation of the market, which provides the foundation for the economic scientism that that pervades neoliberal normative reason.

A specific conception of human nature also appears to us from this abstraction, fully-formed. First as Hobbesian man with its 'perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power that ceaseth only in Death' (Hobbes 161). Human nature defined by self-

interest makes its way through the work of Locke, Montesquieu, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. Ronald Coase leans on this heritage when he presents a universalised subject hewn of any non-economic attributes, which will eventually become neoliberalism's *homo oeconomicus* as Wendy Brown suggests in *Undoing the Demos*. Smith forcefully argues in the first section of *Uneven Development* that human nature is a social product. But the current dominant conception of *homo oeconomicus* appeals to a heritage that it itself betrays for its validity. Essentially, human nature is presented through Soja's dual illusions of opacity and opaqueness.

The actual mapping and marking of the Mason-Dixon Line is only possible when space is perceived through the illusion of opaqueness, 'the Cartesian cartography of spatial science' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 7). Yet once it is mapped, like any borderline, the map-space is perceived through the illusion of transparency which 'dematerializes space into pure ideation and representation' which 'prevents us from seeing the social construction of affective geographies' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies 7*). These dual illusions present a world-space ripe for a Cartesian mapping that imagines itself non-ideological, and then expects these spaces to reflect the map. Throughout the latter part of *Mason & Dixon*, the geomancer Captain Zhang repeatedly warns Mason and Dixon of the Line's 'star-dictated indifference to the true inner shape… of the Land' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 601). There is even a moment in which Mason hints at the social qualities of space (as product and producer): 'of course [the Line]'s a living creature, 'tis all of us, temporarily collected into an entity, whose labors none could do alone' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 678). The Enlightenment production of space in *Mason & Dixon* is, to Zhang's dismay, always indifferent, to the human, to the land, and to the socio-spatial. Thus this space so-conceived is the beginning of the 'fragmented, homogenized, and hierarchically structured space' of capitalism (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 91).

There is no shortage of capitalist intervention into the production of space in *Mason & Dixon.* Every aspect of the cartographic project, and all of the enterprises of Enlightenment project, is explicitly tied to capital, as a number of critics have shown in detail.[57] Umberto Rossi argues that the:

[57] See Thomas (39), Lensing (135), and Thill (50-75).

> circulation of goods, foods, knowledge, news, clothes, individuals, drugs constitute[es] one of the main themes of *M&D*, and makes it readable as a great allegory of today's globalization whose aim may well be to deconstruct the commonplace according to which globalization stems from late modernity/postmodernity (21).

Commerce is shown also to corrupt science itself. Take Nevil Maskelyne, whose assent to Astronomer Royal is a direct result of his willingness to accede to capital (and, too, his contacts, such as Clive). Yet all is not as he imagined it would be, and he explains the conditions in which he works to Mason:

> "Instead of the old Arrangements, we've now a sort of… Contract… rather lengthy one, indeed… in return for this,--" gesturing 'round, yet keeping his elbow bent, as if unable to extend his arm all the way, "—they own my work, they own the products of my thinking, perhaps they own my Thoughts unutter'd as well. I am their mechanickal Cuckoo, perch'd up here in this airy Cage to remind them of the first Day of Spring, for they are grown strange, this Cohort, to the very Wheel of Seasons" (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 727)**.**

Maskelyne's science, and that of the Royal Astronomical Society by extension, is subservient to a 'Contract'. Though Maskelyne is imprisoned in an 'airy Cage', he seems 'unable to extend his arm all the way' which signifies far tighter restrictions imposed on his being (and thinking). While geographic knowledge is deployed throughout the novel to serve the interests of the elite, here astronomy, representing a pure kind of curiosity in the stars, serves only to anchor these elites that are disconnected from the world back to the turning of the seasons. In this episode we see the confrontation between Enlightenment objectivity, as it were, and the kind of pure-eyed imaginative amazement that (at the best of times) characterizes Mason and Dixon's stargazing. Mason presents to Maskelyne a report that includes him experiencing 'a curious optical re-adjustment' and beholding the stars 'in the *Third Dimension* as well,— the Eye creating its own Zed-Axis' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 725). He sees (in prophetic manner): 'as once beneath a Star, an Infant that must, again, re-make the World,— and this time 'twas a Sign from Earth, not only from Heaven, showing the way' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 726). Maskelyne is dismissive: 'I'm not terribly sure this ought to be in your report', and the passage is struck out (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 726). Reason can ill afford these

imaginative flights of fancy, not least when in the service of commerce and its ever greater striving toward absolute efficiency.

Early on in the novel, just before the pair travel to America, Mason observes to Dixon that 'Charter'd Companies may indeed be the form the World has now increasingly begun to take' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 252). *Mason & Dixon* imbricates the rise of capitalism across the Age of Reason, and especially in the formation of America. It squarely centralises the shift to the capitalist mode of production by way of the Enlightenment as the source of contemporary inequity. The chartered companies are, in the novel, never trustworthy, and their motivations are always obfuscated. It suggests that, perhaps, hope for humanity does not 'lay in making reforms to the present system (since it was not capitalism as such that was at fault)' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 47). Yet in its depiction of the processes by which nature and space come to be produced through Enlightenment logics, *Mason & Dixon* is anti-teleological (not only with regards to determinism within capitalism). If the social priority of nature 'is not something that must be infused from the outside, but something that already exists in the social relation with nature', then this implies a 'historical future that is still to be determined by political events and forces, not technical necessity' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 48). This lets us get out of the bind produced by the idea that capitalism is natural and 'to fight it is to fight human nature' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 29). *Mason & Dixon* offers up the denaturing of capital, this movement out of determinism. It leaves, to the reader, evaluative agency. And, through the sense of guilt or unease that Thill and identifies, also turns this evaluation inward. But this inward evaluation is contaminated by the structures we live among; by our embeddedness within the socio-spatial dialectic.

Of course, we know exactly the space that will be produced in the wake of Mason and Dixon's Line as America ascends to global hegemon. Reading Pynchon's novel, we are cast like Mason observing a comet and wondering if it is a visitor 'from the past, from an Age of Faith, when Miracles still literally happen'd?' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 728). *Mason & Dixon* suggests, maybe, they just might. In dramatising America's beginnings in the throes of the Enlightenment, the novel suggests that things could have been different. As a historio-geographic metafiction, *Mason & Dixon* bares the socio-spatial processes that are at work in the production of capitalist space, and emphasises that these processes always remain open to further transformation. As Said argues, 'how we formulate or represent the past shapes our understanding and views of the present'

(*Culture and Imperialism* 4). By reformulating the past, *Mason & Dixon* renews our subjunctive hopes in the present that these spaces might yet be remade. In this remaking, Soja's reworking of Marx's dictum serves as a warning:

> We make our own history and geography, but not just as we please; we do not make them under circumstances chosen by ourselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the historical geographies produced in the past (*Postmodern Geographies* 129).

The most imposing of these circumstances, which haunts the entirety of *Mason & Dixon,* are the legacies of imperialism and colonialism that are at every historical juncture linked with the advent of capitalism and the global market.

iii. These Old Imperialisms

Makere Stewart-Harawira argues that through the 'emergence of American unilateralism as the predominant characteristic of the contemporary global era we are 'witnessing the revival, or the overt emergence of, American empire' (2-3). As this chapter has thus far shown, the American tendency towards national self-interest that runs simultaneous to its claims to represent the global good is intimately linked to the nation's emergence in the ventricles of Enlightenment thought. These same logics form the bedrock of American empire, and have underpinned American imperialism throughout the twentieth-century. In some very important respects, globalised capitalist imperialism transcends the U.S. But the abstract space of capital still tethers itself to the national space, benefitting economically from international striation and (partially) unstable geopolitics. *Mason & Dixon* presents an America that was corrupted from the very start by the Indigenous genocide that has been written off into history and neatly forgotten (or worse, justified by the narratives of the frontier and wilderness) and its fundamental part in the slave trade which has been enshrined, by way of its abolition, as a great historic moment.[58] Yet *Mason & Dixon's* parallactic structure points to the ways that our comfort in the present world system need not continue to rely on the subjugation of Indigenous peoples and slavery.

[58] For a discussion of the ways that these colonial ideas about the frontier and wilderness, as well as acts of cartography also have a distinctly ecological effect see Lee Rozelle's '"What Phantom Shape, Implicit in the Figures?": Liminal Monsters, Paranormal Places in Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon.*'

An oft-quoted moment in the novel has Dixon lamenting to Mason: 'No matter where in it we go, shall we find all the World Tyrants and Slaves? America was the one place we should *not* have found them' (*M&D,* 693). It is frequently read as one of the moments of tempered subjunctive hope. America should have been different, but it was not. The ideal of America 'has become… a thing of the past' (García-Caro 121). Yet *Mason & Dixon* really presents America, at this particular historico-geographic conjuncture, as precisely where one *would* find slaves. The point is that the nationalist narrative of American exceptionalism has always been divorced from its reality. The ideal of the nation is quite separate, even, from that of the founding fathers, well over half of whom owned slaves. It does not take long, once Mason and Dixon arrive on America's shores, for them to run into George Washington attended by Gershom, his 'African servant' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 278). Dixon is uncomfortable with the affair, and Mason less so.

The injustice at the heart of America hits them soon after. They visit one of the sites of the Conestoga Massacre. Specifically, a jail in Lancaster Town in which persecuted Native Americans were held in protective custody. On 27 December 1763, two months prior to the titular heroes' visit, frontiersmen of Scots-Irish origin known as the Paxton Boys broke into the jail, murdering and viciously dismembering six adults and eight children. Mason and Dixon pick up a tour guide in Lancaster Town, and Dixon suspects that he 'may be in the pay of the Paxton boys' to keep an eye on the pair (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 341). Their tour guide asks: 'Here for a look at the Massacre Site, are you, Gentleman? I can always tell. Some bring Sketching-Books, some Easels, others their Specimen-Bags' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 341-2). This conjures up images of visitors to a museum, or a historical monument, yet it is only two months after the atrocity. The depiction of the massacre as tourist event is shored up by the anachronistic 'mind one's belongings' that their guide utters (reminiscent of the pickpocket warnings that abound in contemporary tourist destinations). In this extract, *Mason & Dixon* depicts the commodification of history itself (which, of course, in some sense *Mason & Dixon* the novel is too). The guide, Jabez, offers the surveyors a narrated tour, but they stop short of visiting the jail with him. If Dixon's suspicions about the guide's employers are right, this would be a tour in which the injustice is essentially narrated by its perpetrators. History, after all, is too often told by the victors, the murderers, and the colonists.

Mason slips out early the next morning to visit the site of the massacre alone: 'He is not as a rule sensitive to the metaphysickal Remnants of Evil… yet here in the soil'd and strewn Courtyard where it happen'd… he feels 'like a Nun before a Shrine,' as he later relates it to Dixon (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 346). The atrocity is affectively etched into the space, pressed into its layers of history. Just as the Indigenous genocide is etched into the nation-space of America. Dixon visits the site later that day and:

> sees where blows with Rifle-Butts miss'd their Marks, and chipp'd the Walls. He sees blood in Corners never cleans'd. Thankful he is no longer a Child, else might he curse and weep, scattering his anger to no Effect. Dixon now must be his own stern Uncle, and smack himself upon the Pate at any sign of unfocusing. What in the Holy Names are these people about? Not even the Dutchmen in the Cape behav'd this way. Is it something in this Wilderness, something ancient, that waited for them, and infected their Souls when they came? (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 347)

Not only is the atrocity affectively etched into the space, but there are also physical traces. The brutality of the scene harrows Dixon. More than anything, he is shocked at the possibility any human could do this. Given this chapter's argument that the wilderness is produced through mapping the known versus the unknown, there is a subtle suggestion that the infection of the soul to which Dixon refers was produced *by* colonial activity.

Mason and Dixon end up in the tavern with a group likely to be the Paxton Boys the night before their visit. 'You can't just come minuetting in from London and expect to understand what's going on here', Mr Slough tells the pair (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 343). As if it excuses the massacre, he continues with a rather sketchy explanation:

> 'This is about Family, sure as the History of England. Inside any one Tribe of Indians, they're all related, see? Kill you one Delaware, you affront the Family at large. Out here, if it's Blood of mine, of course I must go out and seek redress,— tho' I'll have far less company.'
> 'Each alone lacking the Numbers, our sole Recourse is to band together.'
> (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 343).

By presenting some skewed fictional account of Indian tribal relations, the Paxton Boys paint themselves as the victims (even though, in their example, the instigation of violence

is theirs) by virtue of being outnumbered. Dixon protests that the Indigenous peoples were said to be 'harmless, helpless people' and these particular victims (more children than adults) were literally trapped in jail (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 343) Jabez counters, bluntly, that 'they were blood relations of men who slew blood relations of ours' (*Mason & Dixon* 343). Dixon wonders why they did not go after the actual perpetrators. '"This hurt them more" smiles a certain Oily Leon' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 343). His smile at murdering children is depraved. This depravity prefigures strategies the American military will use against the Indigenous population over the course of the next century and beyond. Take the Battle of Washita River, for example, in which Custer was outnumbered (as the Paxton Boys claim to be) by the Southern Cheyenne. A major part of Custer's strategy revolved around the capture of women, children, the elderly and the disabled, to use as human shields and hostages in order to 'neutralise' Cheyenne resistance (Fox 297).

Yet, when Mason suggests that the Paxton Boys 'must hate them exceedingly', they simply reply 'No… not any more. That Debt is paid. I'll live in peace with them,—happy to' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 343-4). This cold economy of debt, in which the murder of innocents can be taken as payment, paints a bleak picture of the economic logic that will come to dominate the global space over the next centuries. It turns out that their willingness to live in peace might well be because the Paxton Boys are themselves safe from retribution. Dixon asks about the endlessness of this cycle of violence, 'mayn't they now feel oblig'd to come after you?', and he is confronted with colonial power over space. 'Not this side of the River' comes the reply, 'nor this side of York and Baltimore Road, 'Tis all ours now. They answer to us here' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 344). Control over space, explicitly created here through colonial mapping, removes agency from the Indigenous population. The boundary-line, particularly of York and Baltimore Road, essentially *produces* a them/us dichotomy. Oily Leon goes on, 'we've clear'd them a fine safe patch, from Delaware to Susquehanna. Now they may prance about foolish as they may', a statement that, for the reader, conjures the impending reality of reservations (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 344).

Something deeper is at work in Leon's condescending characterisation of Indigenous peoples prancing about foolishly. Said writes:

> neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination (9).

The inferiority (even infancy, as they are given a fine safe patch as if children) that Leon casts onto the Indigenous population contains the seeds of the deeply racist ideological formations that will take hold, often as justification after the fact, in the continued colonisation of the Americas. In *Mason & Dixon*, it is Indigenous resistance to the relentless progress of the Line (and thus the relentless progress of European ideology) that convinces the astronomers to halt the Line, because it is 'exactly what Capt. Zhang and a number of others have been styling it all along—a conduit for Evil' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 701). They realise, too, that the Line was ultimately a 'Cadastral Survey by its nature corrupt, of use at Trail's End only to those who would profit from the sale and division and resale of Lands' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon 701*). They realise, essentially, though they would never have put it this way, that they produced capitalist space.

A little earlier, Mason jokes that the he and Dixon are 'Twins, ever in Dispute,—as the Indians once told us the Beginning of the World' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 689). Mason is referencing an Indigenous origin story. There are many versions of this particular story, but they all feature twins that are opposites in every way and literally shape the geography of the world. In one version, as Thomas King tells it, the twins are 'A boy and a girl. One light, one dark. One right-handed, one left-handed' (18). The right-handed Twin creates flat land, while the left-handed Twin 'stomped around in the mud, piled it up, and created deep valleys and tall mountains.' (King 19). It is their differences that forge the landscape. More broadly, this opposition drives the creation of the natural world itself: 'The right-handed Twin created roses. The left-handed Twin put thorns on the stems. The right-handed Twin created summer. The left-handed Twin created winter. The right-handed Twin created sunshine. The left-handed Twin created shadows' (King 20). As this chapter has shown, Mason and Dixon, as they draw and map the Line, are cast as agents shaping the (new) world in the coming age of America. Yet Mason and Dixon do not correlate directly with the Twins. The twins produce space, and they produce the natural world, but they do so as a part of this natural world; it is a reciprocal

interaction. This runs contrary to the actions of Mason and Dixon who, as mostly unwitting agents of empire, produce the Line by *overlaying* a cartography. Here are two different ideologies of nature; a textual suggestion that the Enlightenment cannot erode all other ontologies. Cherrycoke's narration elsewhere distinguishes between the Indigenous 'Subjunctive World and our number'd and dreamless Indicative' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 677). Subjunctive hopes lie in alternative worldviews (which the Enlightenment and capitalist-colonialism try and fail to annihilate). Chapter Four investigates the distinct politics of space that has characterised Indigenous resistance to colonisation across the Americas.

The genocide of Indigenous peoples is foreshadowed in *Mason & Dixon* in the Dutch East India Company (VOC) town that the astronomers first visit. At first, this was merely meant to be a waystation for the VOC. The colony grew because, when initially established in the mid-seventeenth century by Jan Van Riebeeck, slaves that the VOC had requested did not arrive in time, and the labour requirements of the passing ships became too great for the company. This led to settlers establishing farms of their own, and selling the crops to the Company. The growth of the settlement resulted in conflicts with the local indigenous population, the Khoikhoi, whom the Dutch had at first attempted to keep on good terms. The Khoisians (commonly referred to as Bushmen and Hottentots) initially treated the Dutch with a friendly attitude. They saw them as a ready source for trade, and bartered with them regularly. As the colony grew, in what will become the same old story of colonialism and imperialism across the globe, the Khoisians were violently displaced. By the eighteenth century, nearly all of the Khoisians were eradicated by smallpox, to which they had no natural resistance. The survivors were westernised, and learned to speak Dutch. As Shula Marks argues, most historians 'dismiss them in passing' (55). Cherrycoke describes the Cape Colony's as precarious, and it is clear to the reader with historical hindsight that this precarity relates to the fact that some years later the Cape will be occupied by the English, and then handed over to the French; a truly colonial space. The fact that the novel, a 'tale about America' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 7), begins with a journey to the Dutch-occupied Cape not only foreshadows the Indigenous genocide and slave trade that Mason and Dixon will find in America, but suggests that America is a nation produced within (and thus will later echo) the very logics of colonialism.

In the Cape, Mason and Dixon are exposed to the exploitation of African labour and resources by the Dutch which will later be exported to the American colonies. Mason is embroiled in a plot by his and Dixon's hosts, the Vroom family, to impregnate their slave Austra, because of his valuable Whiteness. Austra explains to Mason that 'the baby, being fairer than its mother, will fetch more upon the Market,— there it begins, there it ends' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 65). The hostess Johanna Vroom, and her daughters, all take turns arousing Mason's desire, but he is only able to touch Austra. Desire here is turned for-profit, and Mason contemplates 'the field having shifted from Motives of Pleasure to Motives of Reproduction and Commerce' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 66). Mason is not special, as Austra explains, 'ev'ry white male who comes to this Town is approach'd by ev'ry Dutch Wife, upon the same Topick' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 65). It is made commonplace, an expression of market demand for fair-skinned slaves that drives the Cape Colony's culture. Austra's name is a clear play on *austral,* meaning *of or relating to the Southern hemisphere*, a gesture to the market that will form around the exploitation of the global south by the global north.

What Mason does not understand at this point, but Dixon does, is that it is 'Slavery, not any form of Desire, that is of the essence' in the relentless sexual advances of the ladies Vroom (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 68). Indeed, as is abundantly clear by this point, slavery is the essence of much of the novel, and the Mason-Dixon Line itself. As Elizabeth Hinds put it, Mason and Dixon encounter 'everywhere, everywhere, slavery… slaves of every color and caste' (4). Much later in the novel Mason, in a bid to convince Dixon not to mark his French-looking north-point on the map of the boundaries because it appears too political, explains that 'East and West are of the Essence' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 688). The linguistic link across hundreds of pages, that the latitudinal Line and slavery are both 'of the Essence' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 688, 68), stresses that the notion of perpetual progress and the slavery that will keep it perpetual is essential to the colonial project, to the formation of America, and to the emerging global market.

By the end of the novel, Mason and Dixon realise that slavery is the 'shameful Core' of the world, pretended to be 'ever somewhere else, with the Turks, the Russians, the Companies, down there… they're murdering and dispossessing thousands untallied, the Innocent of the World, passing daily into the Hands of Slave-Owners and Torturers' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 693). Moreover, they realise that the Mason-Dixon Line is a precise expression of this system that divides humanity into tyrants and slaves, and that

they have surveyed 'a Line between the Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 692). After the episode at the massacre site in the Lancaster City jail, Mason says 'In Time, these People are able to forget ev'rything… In America, as I apprehend, Time is the true River that runs 'round Hell' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 346). Yet he also exclaims 'Acts have consequences, Dixon, they must' and characterises the murderous acts of the Paxton boys as a 'Debt they have taken on' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 346).

We, reading in the contemporary, know this debt is never repaid. But this episode is not just a gloomy exposure of injustice. It contains within it the kernel of a mode of resistance to neoliberalism. Precisely because we know that the debt is not yet repaid, we understand that Mason's desperate plea that acts must surely have consequences is also directed at us. Ali Chetwynd has argued that Pynchon's post-*Vineland* writing has increasingly focused on ethical questions of obligation. This is a marked shift from the paranoia that characterises his earlier writings and, as Chetwynd suggests, has come to dominate Pynchon criticism to its detriment (926). Viewing the novel in this way reframes, for example, Dixon's whipping of the slave-driver, which Thill dismissed as too small an act, as an ethically valuable moment of action that breaks free of irresolvable deliberation. The paranoid questions that Mason and Dixon ask about their employer, the effects of line-drawing, the role of the chartered companies, and slavery, are all 'clearly rooted in abstract thinking about obligation' (Chetwynd 930). Recognising this shift is fundamental to my treatment of *Mason & Dixon* as an interstitial literature that is self-reflexive about its neoliberal conditions of possibility, but seeks alternatives to neoliberal normative reason. Chetwynd explains that 'the necessity of recuperating the organic obligation' organises the plots of Pynchon's recent narratives (946). This recuperation constitutes an act of resistance to neoliberalism, because it relies on decisions that take place outside of the cold economic logics of competitive positioning.

The 'America' section of *Mason & Dixon* closes with an alternate ending for the novel that precedes its actual end. This ending is, essentially, one in which Mason and Dixon were not confronted by ethical questions of obligation. Cherrycoke styles it 'Opera in the Italian Style', in which Mason and Dixon's 'Tale as Commemorated might have to proceed a bit more hopefully' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 706). We might think of it as the Hollywood ending; it is full of action and riches. Mason and Dixon proceed west, pursued by 'Sir William Johnson, play'd as a Lunatick Irishman, riding with a cadre of

close Indian Friends' who are 'never quite successful in attacking even the rearmost of the Party's stragglers… Yet at any time, we are led to believe, the pursuers *may* catch up' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 706). Given the sheer force of the injustice that has bled through the previous 700 pages or so, this 'hopeful' ending is cut through with irony. Mason and Dixon run into a 'strange tribal sect bas'd upon the worship of some celestial Appearance' that turns out to be Uranus (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 708). In true colonial fashion, they steal this knowledge, 'the Career-maker each has dreamt of', and return east to 'certain Fortune and global Acclaim' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 708-9). This entire episode is predicated on their exploiting Indigenous peoples. Mason goes on to explain to Dixon the riches they would receive for observations of this new planet: '*nothing would lie beyond our grasp*. We would be the King's Own Astronomers, living in a Palace, servants to obey our desires! Weighty stipends, unlimited Credit! Wenches! Actresses! Observing Suits of gold lame!' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 709). Dixon is sold, and eastward they go.

On their return journey, people are surprised to see them, mothers hide their children, and others reprimand them at length: 'You weren't ever suppos'd to be back this way,' 'How dare you come back now, among these Consequences you have loos'd like Vermin?' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 710). The problem is not that Mason and Dixon are returning, but that they are returning without the sense of obligation that they gained through the novel. None of this really matters to Mason and Dixon, though occasionally they must wait 'until Dark to creep cautiously eastward again' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 711). They are greeted as if celebrities by a 'Joint Delegation from the American and Royal Societies', a 'Consort of Crumhornes… playing Airs and Marches' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 712). They go on to 'inscribe a Visto upon the Atlantick Sea' and in so doing also solve 'the Question of the Longitude… as a sort of Bonus' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 712). The narrative here teases oncoming globalisation, and the shipping lines that Derksen's *The Vestiges* presented as its materiality. From Mason and Dixon's visto emerges:

> a Sea-Road of a thousand Leagues [and] up and down its Longitude blossom Wharves, Chandleries, Inns, Tobacco-Shops, Greengrocers' Stalls, Printers of News, Dens of Vice, Chapels for Repentance, Shops full of Souvenirs and Sweets,— all a Sailor could wish,— indeed, many such will decide to settle here,

> 'Along the Beacons,' for good, as a way of coming to rest while remaining out at Sea (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 712).

Soon the Land-Speculation Industry seeks to purchase the whole Sea-Road. Sure enough, it is sold, and on the map goes 'St Brendan's Isle' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 712). Mason and Dixon retire here, now savvy capitalists who wrote 'a number of foresighted Stipulations into their Contract with the Line's Proprietor' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 713). On St Brendan's they reside 'like Ferryman or Bridge-keepers, ever in a Ubiquity of Flow, before a ceaseless Spectacle of Transition' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 713).

This alternate ending to the novel has been read as a symbol that Mason and Dixon belong nowhere (Sears, 119), as a reclamation of subjunctivity 'as a mode of being within time that nevertheless lacks the future's possibility' (Huehls, 'Form of Historicity' 42) and sometimes not as a subjunctive episode at all (Tanner 237). In Cherrycoke's ending, Mason and Dixon retire to this borderland that, in many respects, looks quite like the Line they drew in America. They are neatly cast into history *as* the Mason-Dixon Line, just as the real-and-imagined Mason-Dixon Line (for all its ideological baggage) is an inscription into space of the lives of Mason and Dixon. This 'Spectacle of Transition' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 713) that they reside before is America in the age of Enlightenment, and it is the emergent global space. The problem with this whole episode, and what really gives away its unreliability, is that our protagonists are suddenly unencumbered by all their actions and the consequences thereof. But that is because Cherrycoke only spins half a tale, which is taken from Mason's verse epitaph that he is writing in the preceding episode:

> 'He wish'd but for a middling Life,
> Forever in betwixt
> The claims of Lust and Duty,
> So intricately mix'd,—
> To reach some happy Medium,
> Fleet as a golden Beam,
> Uncharted as St Brendan's Isle,
> Fugitive as a Dream.'

This is the part that Cherrycoke embellishes for the operatic ending. But the epitaph continues:

> ‘Alas, ‘twas not so much the Years
> As Day by thieving Day,—
> With Debts incurr’d, and Interest Due,
> That Dreams were sold to pay,—
> Until at last, but one remain’d,
> Too modest to have Worth,
> That yet he holds within his heart,
> As he is held, in Earth.’

Any dreams of riches unencumbered not only by the injustices he has seen in America but also by his own part in perpetuating them are cast aside here. These debts are existential; they are those that Mason owes through his unwitting service of empire. The last remaining dream, we can surmise, is to be reunited with his lost love Rebekah. This is a dream of love, which is quite unlike the hollow dreams of fame and fortune that characterise operatic ending. Through Mason’s full epitaph, the novel insists on the necessity of recuperating the organic obligation (Chetwynd 930). Are these debts repayable? Certainly Mason wants them to be, as with his outburst regarding the Paxton boys. In some sense they are debts to the America that never was; the America of magic, possibility, and the unknown.

This chapter has argued that *Mason & Dixon* shows that the economic scientism of neoliberalism’s order of normative reason is at once a result and a betrayal of Enlightenment rationality. The drawing of the Mason-Dixon Line results in unevenness because it is driven by a Cartesian understanding of space, as something to be mapped and owned, that fails to account for its social dimensions because it cannot comprehend space in relative terms. This particular production of space, entangled with colonial acts of subjugation, comes to define the dual ascent of America and capitalism from the eighteenth century well into the twentieth and thus lays the groundwork for neoliberalism to present space as nothing more than an economic category. *Mason & Dixon* alludes, however, through its images of parallax and autostereogram, to the priority of *process* over *product*, to possibilities for change and our ethical obligations to something more than the economic. It presents the hope that we might liberate spaces and remake them

with a necessary recognition of the communal, but reminds us that this is a case of taking action, not merely deliberating. The following chapter, in an analysis of Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy, thinks about what will happen if we instead continue on a Line ever westward.

CHAPTER THREE

'The people in the chaos cannot learn': Apocalyptic Humanity in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy

> *A wealthy class that is in part a leisured class will be interspersed with more than the average proportion of scholars and statesmen, literary figures and artists.*
> - Friedrich Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*

> *Since when had Crake been a cheerleader for the human race?*
> - Margaret Atwood, *Oryx & Crake*

Early in the first novel of the *Maddaddam* trilogy, *Oryx & Crake*, the protagonist, Jimmy-Snowman, is wandering the post-apocalyptic wasteland when suddenly 'from nowhere, a word appears: *Mesozoic*. He can see the word… but he can't reach the word… This is happening too much lately, this dissolution of meaning, the entries on his cherished wordlists drifting off into space' (43). There is something striking about the physicality of this image, where a word, and a word that defines geological time no less, can drift off into space. Here we have annihilated time in a post-apocalyptic landscape where all that is temporal dissolves into space. But it is strictly human time, and the march of a projected History, that disintegrates. The Mesozoic is a *human* category for an *inhuman* time that lasted for nearly 200 million years, dwarfing the 6 million years of human ancestry. This specific word's sudden appearance from nowhere and drifting off serves as Atwood's stark reminder of human ephemerality. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy's apocalypse, time's arrow has run its course. Yet there is not a disappearance of human meaning but a *dissolution*. What is this space into which meaning dissolves? Taking this as a textual invitation to read a space full of drifting meaning, this chapter analyses the socio-spatiality of *MaddAddam* and the implications of its uneven development of narrative space. The chapter's first section explores neoliberalism as an attempt to actualise a utopian ideal and argues that the "failure" of the apocalypse to wipe out humanity suggests there can be no break with neoliberalism without some sense of social and political alternative. The second section argues that the trilogy's fictional world is defined by an atmosphere of capitalist realism, and analyses Atwood's use of metafictional

devices to express anxieties about the capacity of post-apocalyptic fiction to contribute to socio-political paralysis in the face of neoliberalism. The final section argues that a neoliberal conception of human nature as economic self-interest is presented as *MaddAddam's* core problem. The idea of relentlessly competitive *homo oeconomicus* produces and is produced by the pre- and post-apocalyptic spaces. It drives Crake to see humanity as unsalvageable, but this is because his scientific worldview of arithmetic rationality cannot account for, renew, or repurpose the social and political dimensions of life. The trilogy thus warns against mimicking Crake's worldview by accepting neoliberalism's normative reason, and suggests the importance of collective rather than individual forms of response and resistance.

The Maddaddam trilogy extrapolates current environmental and (bio)technological concerns to the near future. It presents a viciously capitalist society of enormous inequality where the rich live in gated and secured Compounds while the poor live in the 'pleeblands' outside. In this world everything, including the human body, is commodified. The society is ruled by corporations, and their privatised police the CorpSeCorps, and dominated by a perverse sense of scientific progress through innovation, particularly as it pertains to beautification, gene-splicing and, most of all, immortality. The Compound-based scientists create a plethora of animal hybrids to meet the demands though *not* the needs of society. These range from the wolvogs, intended as guard dogs but ultimately too vicious, and pigoons, bred to grow replacement organs and at some point spliced with human brain tissue, to the liobam, a species 'commissioned by the Lion-Isaiahists… to fulfil the lion/lamb friendship prophecy' that ended up using its lamb-like innocence to trick its prey (*Year of the Flood* 112). The trilogy's plot tells the story of a man-made apocalypse, though it is strictly an apocalypse of human nigh-extinction. The world, and other lifeforms including the gene-spliced animals, live on. The JUVE virus that kills humanity is manufactured by the genius scientist Crake who tricks members of the anti-establishment bioterrorist group MaddAddam into furthering his scheme. Crake perceives himself to be solving the problems of scarcity and overpopulation, which come about due to human greed, through the JUVE virus. Alongside the development of the virus, Crake also manufactures the post-human Crakers, a species meant to replace humankind with its problematic tendencies gene-edited out. His scheme is, for the most, successful, but a few humans do survive.

Atwood's *Maddaddam* trilogy has a trialectic structure between what *has been* and what *might have been.* In short, *Oryx & Crake,* the *what-has-been*, depicts the inevitability of extinction while *The Year of the Flood* depicts what *might have been* through the nature-focused God's Gardeners. The synthesis of extinction and survival in *Maddaddam* portrays a cautious possibility, what *might be*. The entirety of the *Maddaddam* trilogy is told from its post-apocalyptic "present", any pre-apocalyptic narrative takes place in flashbacks. Our real-world present, which is the trilogy's past, becomes a moment of possibility. The *Maddaddam* trilogy issues a call for action through speculation. A tension between inevitability and possibility haunts the entire trilogy. The trialectic is given form in the name of *Oryx & Crake*'s central character. In the pre-apocalyptic world, he is known as Jimmy, and in the post-apocalypse of human extinction, he is known as Snowman. In the final novel of the trilogy, *Maddaddam*, he comes to be known as Snowman-the-Jimmy, unifying the *has been* of the catastrophic pre-apocalypse and the *might have been* of the God's Gardeners into an active present in which some humans survive in union with the post-human Crakers. The narratives of *Oryx & Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* converge, meeting at the beginning of *Maddaddam*. Many of the narratives *within* each novel are, too, characterised by convergence. But these convergences into unity are frequently undercut by narrative unevenness, which I explore in more detail in section two. The eventual revelation of survival at the end of the trilogy gives a sense of salvation to the apocalypse in the unveiling of a new world (and one that makes explicit the horrors of the old). The tension of textual uneven development, between equalisation and differentiation, characterises Atwood's trilogy which, at its core, presents a desire for human unity with nature simultaneous to the concern that human nature itself stands in the way.

Oryx & Crake tells the story of the last man on earth after this apocalypse, Jimmy-Snowman (the last, at least, as far as we know). The novel is entirely focalised through him, moving between fragmented memories of the pre-apocalyptic world, in which he is known as Jimmy, and his present experience of the post-apocalypse, where he goes by his pseudonym Snowman.[59] Jimmy-Snowman spends most of his present-time telling stories to the Crakers, in a bid to help them understand the world. Over time, he witnesses the development of religion in the Crakers, wherein he appears to them as a prophet sent

[59] To avoid confusion, this chapter will always use the compound Jimmy-Snowman to refer to him.

by their creator, Crake, and the mistress of the animals, Oryx. The novel takes the form of a whodunnit, where pre- and post-apocalypse converge over the course of narrative to the revelation that Crake's manufactured the apocalyptic event. Through Jimmy-Snowman's pre-apocalyptic memories, we are presented with a view of privileged life life as he, along with Crake, lives in the socio-economically elite Compounds which are walled-off from the poorer pleeblands. He and Crake are close friends, and Crake introduces Jimmy-Snowman to the MaddAddam chatroom, which hosts a game, Extinctathon, that revolves around the naming of extinct species. Crake and Jimmy-Snowman both pursue the same woman, Oryx, whom they saw in their childhood as a sex slave in online pornography. Ultimately, Crake "attains" Oryx, but she nonetheless sleeps with Jimmy-Snowman. He later wonders about her motivations, given Crake's apocalyptic plans. If she had ulterior motives, he was, and is, oblivious to them, and this opacity, this inability to see things as they are, becomes a motif in the novel. Crake and Jimmy-Snowman are otherwise symbolically opposed. Crake is the genius scientist for whom logic trumps everything. He goes on to receive a prestigious education at the Watson-Crick institute and becomes elite among the elite. Jimmy-Snowman is a failure as far as the Compounds are concerned and goes on to become a student of the humanities. He attends the last remaining humanities university, Martha-Graham Academy, which is crumbling. Jimmy-Snowman crumbles too. He drinks too much and relentlessly pursues women only to act emotionally unavailable. The neoliberal pre-apocalyptic world in *Oryx & Crake* sees little to no economic value in the arts and humanities, and there is no other value metric. Yet Crake views Jimmy-Snowman as empathetic and insists he survive the apocalypse, alone, to help orient the Crakers. Jimmy-Snowman never suspects Crake and, after the apocalypse, chastises himself for missing the signs. The apocalypse was always fait accompli for Jimmy-Snowman. Just as he begins the novel waking up to the post-apocalyptic landscape, so he always was. It has always been too late. We eventually learn that Crake oversaw the creation of the apocalyptic JUVE virus and encysted it into BlyssPluss, a youth-prolonging, libido enhancing, STI-immunity drug. The novel ends when Jimmy-Snowman comes across what appear to be other survivors and decides whether or not to reveal himself to them (aggressively or otherwise). The reader does not know his decision, nor if these other figures are other human survivors.

The second installation of the trilogy, *Year of The Flood*, immediately invalidates the notion that Jimmy-Snowman might be the last human in the post-apocalyptic world. The novel takes place at the same time as *Oryx & Crake* but is set outside the elite Compounds in the pleeblands. The novel alternates between the perspectives of Toby and Ren, two female survivors. Their narrations, like Jimmy-Snowman's in *Oryx & Crake*, oscillate between memories of the pre-apocalyptic past and their present post-apocalyptic experience. Their narrative is frequently broken up with prophetic speeches and hymns by Adam One, founder of the environmentally conscious religious group the God's Gardeners. Adam One and the Gardeners correctly predict and await a species-ending event which they call The Waterless Flood. The Gardeners teach the dangers of technology through a mixture of nature, science and religion, spending their time tending to vegetables and bees on the rooftops of slums in apocalyptic preparations. Their eco-religion, developed across the novel, provides an opposing narrative to that of the economically-driven Corporations, but its creative use of scripture and dogmatic tone raise questions about its radical possibilities. Toby and Ren both join the Gardeners in the pre-apocalyptic narrative, Toby by choice while Ren is taken there as a child. Toby ascends to the status of an Eve, a leader in the group, but is forced to leave when the vicious painballer Blanco, a spectre from her past, raids the garden. Ren leaves the Gardeners when her mother flees back to the Compounds. She ends up dancing at a strip club come brothel, Scales and Tails. Some of the Gardeners, led by Zeb, split away from the rest to sidestep Adam One's pacifism. They become the bioterrorist group MaddAddam and use the chatroom of the same name as an organising and recruiting platform. Toby spends most of her time in the post-apocalyptic present tending to a garden at the AnooYoo Spa where she witnesses, from afar, Jimmy-Snowman leading the Crakers but assumes she is hallucinating. Ren, in the post-apocalypse, is trapped in Scales and Tails until Amanda, another of Toby's Gardener students, rescues her. They run into other Gardener kids, Oates, Shackleton and Crozier, who are pursued by Blanco. Blanco catches up, murdering Crozier and raping Amanda and Ren, though Ren escapes. Ren and Toby's present-time narratives converge until, finally, they meet and embark on a quest to recover Amanda from Blanco and his crew. They find them just as a feverish Jimmy-Snowman emerges, gun in hand. The novel ends with Blanco and his associates subdued while Ren tends to Amanda and Jimmy-Snowman.

The final novel in the trilogy, *Maddaddam*, begins where *Oryx & Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* meet. *Maddaddam* is focalised through Ren's first-person diary entries and Toby, who has taken on Jimmy-Snowman's mantle of explaining the world to the Crakers through story. As with the previous novels, the narration moves between present and past. In the present, Toby, the other members of MaddAddam, Jimmy-Snowman, and the Crakers survive as a community as they search for Adam One and deal with the threat of Blanco's crew of painballers. The past narrative is mediated through Zeb telling stories to Toby of his pre-apocalyptic experiences. Zeb grew up with his brother Adam (later to become Adam One), and they are in many ways binary opposites. Adam is methodical where Zeb is impulsive, Adam is 'the good one who was bad at good things' while Zeb is 'the bad one who was good at bad things' and even their names are 'bookends, as in the alphabet' (Atwood, *Maddaddam* 140-1). Their shared resistance to the status quo which results in the formation of the God's Gardeners and MaddAddam is forged in reaction to their abusive father, known as The Rev of the Church of PetrOleum. Through Zeb's stories of The Rev, we see the exploitative workings of the Church of PetrOleum which, essentially, comes down to worshipping oil and money. Zeb explains his friendship with a young Crake, the beginning of the God's Gardeners, his work with MaddAddam, and Crake's eventual betrayal. In the present narrative, the survivors find Adam One in the hands of the painballers. In order to apprehend the painballers, the survivors have to ally with a society of pigoons who have developed a hierarchical and symbolic culture of tehir own. Only the Crakers can communicate with the pigoons, and they translate for the humans. By the end of the novel, the survivors have reached a diplomatic pact of mutual non-aggression with the society of pigoons (and this pact includes, in a small sense, the demarcation of borders, to stop the young pigoons ruining the survivors' gardens). Throughout this narrative, we witness further formation of the Craker religion through Toby's stories. The Crakers start learning to read and write and begin telling their own stories. The final section of *Maddaddam*, in the wake of Toby's death, is focalised through a Craker named Blackbeard who tells the story of Toby to the others. This switch in focalisation gives a sense of a present-in-motion, a possible future that stands in opposition to the bleak stasis that begins the trilogy in *Oryx & Crake. MaddAddam* ends with the successful birth of human-Craker hybrids, which a human survivor explains to the Crakers as 'a thing of hope' (474).

i. Neoliberalism and critical utopia

The pre-apocalyptic world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy is distinctly neoliberal. In this world, inequality reigns, the public sphere is completely destroyed, and the humanities have no value. Economic logic dominates, and has subordinated a particular idea of scientific progress through biotechnological "innovation" that transforms 'humanism, human dignity, and life itself [into] tools for value creation, marketing, and monetization' (Narkunas 2). This is not so much an imagined future as it is an extension of our present. Atwood herself describes the trilogy as a speculative fiction which 'employs the means already more or less to hand, and takes place on Planet Earth' ('The Handmaid's Tale and Oryx and Crake in Context' 513). Chris Vials has argued that the trilogy depicts the realisation of the fully self-regulating market as a 'utopian ideal' which 'turn[s] all human beings and physical landscapes into pure commodities, [and] annihilat[es] the natural environment and the very basis of human society' (236). This thesis has explained that subjecting every sphere of life to the market (Davies) and morphing citizens into *homo oeconomicus* (Brown) is precisely what neoliberalism does. So what does it mean to think of neoliberalism as an attempt to actualise a utopian ideal?

According to Tom Moylan, the utopian impulse is entangled with the ideological, offering 'at least the promise of specific gratifications in return for "willing" behaviour consistent with the ideology in question' (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* 18-9). In the twentieth century, utopia had already been 'seduced and enslaved into the service of the system itself' (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* 19). The idea of a 'homogeneous utopian vision' serves only 'the present structures of power' (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* 27). But a utopian *impulse* that resists closure and systemisation can 'constantly shatter the present achievements and compromises of society and point to that which is not yet experienced in the human project of fulfilment and creation' (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* 27). For Vials, it seems that the fully self-regulating free market is a 'homogeneous utopian vision' (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* 27).

Neoliberalism projects political discourse as ambiguous and economic indicators as explicit and transparent (Davies 19). Rather than present a pre-determined future, however, neoliberalism suggests it will be dynamically shaped by our competitive decisions. At the same time it uses economic modelling, in which future behaviour can be hypothesised, to emphasise our "freedom" in the present even against monopoly

power. So neoliberalism balances the Hayekian suspicion of the figure of the planner, which is really a suspicion of a homogenous utopian vision, with a utopian impulse. It has, in some sense, absorbed the oppositional logics of the critical utopia that holds 'open the act of negating the present' (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* 26). The neoliberal world of *MaddAddam* is one in which the utopian vision of the free market actually operates by holding open the negation of the present it produces. This foreclosure of possibility through a sense that possibilities remain open but only as individual economic choices is what ultimately leads Crake to manufacture the apocalypse. He sees uneven development, in social, spatial, economic, and political terms, as a natural fact. The problem lies within human nature itself, driven by greed and base desires people do not act on possibilities to make a better or more equitable world. The *MaddAddam* trilogy suggests that we risk Crake's worldview if we fail to see the problem as structural, a result of neoliberalism as an order of normative reason hollowing out the political and social spheres by way of the economic. Atwood's novels, then, can be seen as socio-spatial critical dystopias that emphasise the need for 'a space for a new form of political opposition, one fundamentally based in difference and multiplicity but now in a fully democratic alliance politics that can talk back in a larger though diverse collective voice' (Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* 190).

Debrah Raschke argues that the diegetic, survivalist ending of Atwood's *Maddaddam* trilogy is a fairy tale. The ending's feel-good hopefulness is designed to feel hollow, to gesture to our own complicity 'in a too cozy survival narrative that is, in fact, driving us closer to apocalypse' (36). She aligns this complacency with a postmodernism of infinite and equally useless micronarratives that has left us completely disempowered. This is not, however, a hopeless reading and she follows Mark Bosco's assertion that Atwood 'wants her readers to envision an outcome divergent from the text… [by proposing] a possible new beginning… here, now, on the horizon' (Bosco, 171). The trilogy's true hope lies not, then, in the survivalist fairy-tale that Raschke decries but in 'shocking us into seeing our extinction' and out of complacency (Raschke 39).

This reading pivots on the trilogy's post-apocalyptic survival narrative appearing to be an impossible fantasy or, at the very least, to exist in a world that is 'not for us' (Canavan 154). Yet this is never transparent in the *Maddaddam* trilogy. The ending might feel too cosy, but the apocalypse does seem to be a necessary revelation within the context

of the novels. The fact that humanity *does* survive alongside the Crakers cannot simply be discarded. S. J. Mark Bosco's analysis of *Oryx & Crake* notes that the 'tenuous possibility of a new beginning' becomes apparent *after* the apocalypse when, at the end of the novel, Jimmy-Snowman 'is about to encounter three other human survivors' (171). Both Bosco and Raschke implicitly suggest that, in staging the fictional apocalypse, Atwood reveals a possibility that we might avoid it occurring in the real-world.[60] This is a common thread in criticism of the trilogy. Shannon Hengen moralises that we all need to be convinced to 'redeem our moral selves and repay our ethical debts' (140). Karen F. Stein warns of the 'dangers of binary thinking' as well as 'utopian thinking' and, tellingly, ends with unanswered questions: can we 'imagine other futures? […] will we listen to Atwood's warning?' (148-55). Raschke argues that we need to 'see the world differently [so that] we might treat it differently – and then, who knows, we might survive' (39). These are all variations on the same theme, inspired by Atwood's *Payback*, that individuals must be compelled to moral redemption and ethical debt repayment by thinking and seeing differently. But this individualising of responsibility has a strikingly neoliberal tinge, and ultimately a driving force for Crake. His apocalypse is an act of individual responsibility, a repayment of humanity's ethical debts writ large.

The central thesis in Raschke's article is that we will be shocked out of complacency once we are horrified to learn, in the final sections of *Maddaddam,* that the Crakers have been writing and compiling the trilogy. This is because we must then confront our own extinction and (re)read the trilogy as an 'enactment of the palindrome of its title', moving back through the narrative (Raschke 27). In so doing, she argues, we will realise that *Oryx and Crake* is narrated by the Crakers and thus, chronologically, the final book of the trilogy. This is a paranoid reading of the text that assumes a specific reader response. Postmodernism, as Raschke has it, was once subversive but is now 'co-opted and corporatized', merely a 'means to distract and beguile the public' (23). Raschke argues that the postmodern condition is 'doubly mirrored in the trilogy's pre-apocalyptic world and in the Craker creation' because both are simulations in which 'referents have no connection to an external reality' (Raschke 29).[61] She states that this principle defines

[60] Heather Hicks expands this notion in *The Post-Apocalyptic Novel,* arguing that contemporary post-apocalyptic fiction uses genre conventions to gesture to the 'fictionality of apocalypse itself—an end so much described but yet to manifest itself' (21).
[61] Addis echoes similar sentiments, though contends that *Oryx & Crake* is an attempt to ground a postmodern discourse that otherwise accepts 'immateriality and disconnection' (17). She describes a

one of Crake's rules for communicating with the Crakers: '"no name could be chosen" that had "a physical equivalent"' (Raschke 29). But the full passage suggests the opposite: 'no name could be chosen for which a physical equivalent—even stuffed, even skeletal—could not be demonstrated' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 7). Crake seeks to *link* referent with external reality for the Crakers. He envisions a post-apocalypse that is objective because he believes that human imagination is dangerous. Precisely because 'men can imagine their own deaths', he says, 'human beings hope they can stick their soul into someone else' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 139). Crake takes this to be the cause of inevitably catastrophic overpopulation. In Crake's mind, the apocalypse is a way of resolving contradictions by abolishing their possibility. He sees a *very specific* narrative of human nature as the problem. His solution is to produce a *different* narrative of nature in the Crakers and annihilate their ability to form any alternative narratives, which is discussed in detail in the final section.

The reality of resource-scarcity and overpopulation is information available only to the social elite, and otherwise suppressed by the CorpSeCorps. Crake's response to this information is absolute precisely because he understands the overpopulation problem to be absolute, 'sink or swim' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 347).[62] He seeks to produce a model future in which overpopulation is impossible. However, by attempting to annihilate the Craker imagination, and construct for them fixed relations between referents and an external reality, he is merely producing a simulation of the real. Crake seeks to make their reality coincide entirely with his simulated future. Crake, like the neoliberal economist, looks to the future through scientific modelling, but his models prove inaccurate.

Crake produces the JUVE virus precisely because of his understanding that the world is doomed. So, he dooms it himself but with an idealised model in mind, one based on a return to a pure nature defined by pure relations. Postmodern complacency is not the villain of the piece here. We do not need to be shocked into an awareness of our own extinction. The problem is actually that we bear similarities with Crake. The neoliberal condition is such that we see inequality and injustice all the time but have no recourse to

'deconstructive postmodernism that has often been allied with a sense of meaninglessness and a preoccupation with apocalyptic visions (Addis, 14).

[62] Narkunas suggests that the *MaddAddam* trilogy opposes the rendering of life as algorithmic, since it is through this logic that Crake is able to see human life as part of an equation to be solved (2).

act politically. Crake seeks an absolute, scientific fix to the problems caused by and for humanity, and the only solution for him is apocalypse. Both the pre- and post-apocalyptic worlds are some form of utopian ideal, but neither resolves structurally produced inequity. Raymond Williams argues that 'it is easy to gather a kind of energy from the rapid disintegration of an old, destructive and frustrating order' and certainly the catharsis of post-apocalyptic fiction likely lies here. But 'these negative energies can be quickly checked by a sobering second stage, in which what we want to become, rather than what we do not want to be, remains so largely an unanswered question' (Williams, *Politics of Modernism* 104-5). The "failure" of the apocalypse in *MaddAddam* to wipe out humanity, and the human traits of the Crakers, offers a revelation that there can be no break with neoliberalism without identifying the processes of its formation and naturalisation, as well as establishing a *collective* social and political sense of alternatives.

ii. Apocalypse as capitalist realism

The *MaddAddam* trilogy presents Crake's JUVE virus as his reaction to overpopulation, scarcity, greed, and a negative sense of human nature in general. Mark Fisher describes the atmosphere of capitalist realism as 'the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible to even *imagine* a coherent alternative to it' (Fisher 8). In many respects, Crake tries to end the (human) world in order to end capitalism. So is Crake an arch-capitalist realist? The pre-apocalyptic dystopia of the *Maddaddam* is defined by inequality and rabid consumerism, and crisis is simultaneously normalised and suppressed. There are constant states of emergency, and the pleeblands are rife with crime, but society does not realise or accept the *extent* of crisis. The pre-apocalyptic world was inevitably charging towards apocalypse even without Crake's intervention. Crake explains that demand for resources had 'exceeded supply for decades in marginal geopolitical areas' and would soon 'exceed supply *for everyone*'. Thus, Crake asserts that things are 'worse than anyone's saying' and that the Corps are 'afraid to release the stats because people might just give up' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 347). For the neoliberal society of the pre-apocalyptic world to persist, the "truth" needs to be suppressed in favour of another narrative. In other words, a story needs to be told and a worldview needs to be constructed.

The discrepancy between what is officially accepted, and the reality experienced by individuals, 'allows "ordinary" social reality to function' (Fisher 51). Toby, in *Year*

of the Flood, is quite straightforward about this: 'Everybody knew. Nobody admitted to knowing… *We're using up the Earth.* It's almost gone. You can't live with such fears' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 285). Thus, despite the observable unevenness and scarcity, society persists in *MaddAddam's* world because the official narrative, that things are fine, offers a collective fiction to which its citizens can defer their individual fears. For Toby, without this act of deferral, 'the waiting builds up on you like a tide. You start wanting it to be done with you' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 285). Accepting the possibility of apocalypse is dispiriting and disempowering. The trilogy's frequent use of metafictional devices, especially with regards to storytelling concretising mythologies, hints at an uneasiness with naturalised ideology. But Crake, through a sort of aggregate calculation, reduces the source of the problems to human nature. He fails to address the logics of neoliberalism, and the way they form his socio-spatial conditions of possibility, and thus he drags all of its unresolved contradictions into his new world.

The fictional apocalypse of the MaddAddam trilogy is cathartic in its confrontation with and unveiling of this collective fiction. However, this takes place expressly within the fictional space. Apocalypse and survival become spectacle. In this way, the trilogy's fictional apocalypse is in fact the *ultimate* deferral of any encounter with the collective fiction. The MaddAddam trilogy's regressive post-apocalyptic world of survivors is then not a progressive *break* with the capitalist pre-apocalypse but a return to its origins. Through the speeches given in *Year of the Flood* and the stories told in *Maddaddam*, it becomes clear that the post-apocalyptic new world is built *upon* the ruins of the old, on the same logics that lead to the apocalypse. The class struggles and inequalities that structure the pre-apocalyptic society are themselves ghostly figures throughout the *Maddaddam* trilogy, at once there and not there, and this lack of socio-spatial grounding is what leads Crake to apocalyptic action.

Jimmy-Snowman's spectral trudging through these ruins throughout *Oryx & Crake* recalls Atwood's fascination with the underworld as a setting, a theme, and a metaphor for writerly craft. The underworld emerges as a 'source of knowledge and inspiration from which the artist ideally returns with a tale' (Giannopoulou 106). For Atwood, this is the process of bringing the voices of the dead 'into the land of the living' and allowing them to 'enter time again once more—which means to enter the realm of the audience' (*Negotiating with the Dead* 178-9). Zina Giannopoulou asserts that 'the

land of the dead… normally serves as the spatial analogue of the future' and is a-temporal, inhabited by 'the disembodied dead who have left behind the structured, linear time of human life' (106). Neil Smith cautions that spatial metaphors 'work precisely by reinforcing the deadness of space and therefore denying us the spatial concepts appropriate for *analysing* the world' (*Uneven Development* 224). The spatial, in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, is always hidden in plain sight, somewhere just beyond the textual horizon. The symbolism of the land of the dead is then further loaded: the apparent stasis of the pre-apocalypse is only possible when space itself is imagined dead. The static time of neoliberalism as the "end of history" is only conceivable when the active socio-spatial processes that produce, and are produced by, that world are veiled.

The underworld spreads across the entire trilogy. It is realised most literally in the post-apocalyptic land of the dead from which all the trilogy's narrators speak. The survivors, human, Craker, and hybrid alike, have all left behind what they knew to be the structured time of human life. By the trilogy's conclusion, this seems optimistic: it becomes clear that from death there has come life, and this is an underworld of resurrection or rebirth. Yet it is more like *undeath*. As this chapter strives to evidence, the post-apocalyptic world never shakes off the shackling contradictions of the pre-apocalypse: it still pivots on the very same dualisms, the same relation with nature and the same production of space. It is then mere continuance of the *figurative* pre-apocalyptic land of the dead. The compound-elite are characterised by deadened empathy and an alienation from life itself. Despite their access to great resources, they seem estranged from their very being. Those outside the compounds, in the pleeblands, are socio-economically trapped by the system. In many instances, the compound-elite quite literally consume—through sex work or scientific experimentation—those in the pleeblands. This world of seeming socio-political stasis that is inevitably cascading towards apocalypse is truly the land of the dead in its hopelessness and violent inequality. This world bleeds into the immediate post-apocalyptic narratives of the human survivors in *Oryx & Crake* and *The Year of the Flood. Oryx & Crake* is bookended by atemporality, its first and last paragraphs focus on Snowman's broken watch showing 'a blank face… zero hour' (3, 433). The novel ends with Jimmy-Snowman thinking to himself that it is 'time to go' but taking no action (433).

The ghosts in *Oryx & Crake* are those of humanity itself: Jimmy-Snowman appears to us as the last surviving human for almost the entire duration of the novel. He is a spectral presence, pale as his nickname indicates, a 'creature of the dusk' that is almost always covered in a bedsheet, as if wearing a typical ghost costumes (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 6). Jimmy-Snowman fits the description of the ghost as 'a hybrid entity, an occupant of two worlds, caught between its past, corporeal incarnation, and its present state' (Giannopoulou 107). The eventual bridging of these two worlds in *Maddaddam*, mentioned earlier in a brief analysis of the dialectic synthesis of Jimmy-Snowman's name, is a gesture to the hybridity the trilogy envisions as necessary in the survivor-future. But throughout *Oryx & Crake,* trapped in an immediate post-apocalyptic stasis, there can be no such resolution to Jimmy-Snowman's fragmented state. His memories of the world before the apocalyptic event come to him as apparitions, and he frequently finds himself 'standing with his mouth open, trying to remember' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 5). Jimmy-Snowman's fragmented memories stage 'a past whose ghostliness anticipates a horrendous future' (Giannopoulou, 106). This anticipatory past of Jimmy-Snowman's narrative is peppered with the ghosts of the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries. This fictional world is the spatial analogue of our own, if we continue our relentless accumulation and destruction of the environment. In the *Maddaddam* trilogy, the earth itself, our earth, has become the land of the dead. Snowman's memories, though he believes he has 'nobody to hear him', are tales from the underworld to the realm of the audience (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 13). The reader's present is the time upon which this future is contingent. Snowman's narration haunts our present as a cautionary tale.

The Year of the Flood takes place synchronically to *Oryx and Crake*, beginning with what might be the very same sunrise, though this time the novel does offer up a vague timeline. This is 'Year Twenty-Five, the Year of the Flood' and, as in *Oryx & Crake*, it is where the novel begins and ends (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 3). Other years are mentioned, but only in relation to didactic speeches given by Adam One. These temporal markers are unintelligible and thus alienating for readers. God's Gardener-time only allows the reader to decipher these temporal markers teleologically in relation to the apocalypse in Year Twenty-Five. Temporal imagery starts to resurface in *The Year of the Flood*, but no unified understanding of the experience presents itself: the 'sands of time are quicksands' in which so much can sink without a trace, time is 'not a thing that passes [but] a sea on which you float' and time can get 'stretchy' (229, 391, 388). Time is

frequently apprehended through spatial metaphor, emphasising the deadness of space (and the space of death) that characterises the trilogy. Indeed, it is most often understood by appealing to an uncontrollable external nature, from quicksands to seas.

Maddaddam is the only novel in the trilogy that moves beyond 'zero hour' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 3), or 'Year Twenty-Five' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 3). There are no signs of time as an official and linear ordering principle. Toby remarks that 'history is over' and elsewhere recalls Adam One's injunction, 'don't look back' (Atwood, *Maddaddam* 45, 35). The Crakers, at the end of the novel, do not understand the phrase 'tomorrow is another day', indicating their incomprehension of linear (human) time. In *Maddaddam* time does take place, as it were, but it is not, at first glance, marked by humans or hybrids and rather by nature itself: 'the moon travels through the sky, moving towards its next phase, marking time' (Atwood, *Maddaddam* 408). Yet this image is almost identical to the 'clever projection device that simulated dawn, sunlight, evening and night' that Crake built for the Crakers in the Paradice dome, in which there 'was a fake moon that went through its phases' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 355). These intertextual links chain the post-apocalyptic world to the stasis of the pre-apocalypse. *MaddAddam* is bookended with stories being told to the Crakers. It opens with a symbol of birth, the 'Egg', and Toby telling the Crakers an origin story (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 11). It closes with a symbol of knowledge, the 'Book', and the Crakers, by then self-determining, writing and reading their own stories (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 467). *MaddAddam* is framed as a new beginning after the apocalypse. But the symbol of the moon marking time that harks back to Crake's construction in the Paradice dome explicitly links the production of nature at work in the pre- and post-apocalyptic worlds, and any optimism in *MaddAddam* gives way to an ominous sense that a similar apocalypse may well happen again.

It often seems that a 'wild' nature, albeit one comprised in no small part by genetic engineering, is in the process of overtaking (or retaking) the post-apocalyptic landscape, scouring the human meanings and cartographies. Jimmy-Snowman repeatedly declares that this world is so empty (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 13, 119). Yet his experience of the post-apocalyptic landscape is built from 'fragments of past time', which entangles the new world with the old (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 13). The spatiality of the pre-apocalyptic world is deeply marked by uneven development, as the affluent elite live in heavily

guarded Compounds that range from relative luxury to opulence. The masses, on the other hand, struggle to survive in the squalor of the pleeblands, surrounded by crime and (often bioengineered) disease. The architecture of the compounds is hyper-real. Much like the cultural fascination with base pleasures, the exclusive recycling and modification of old narrative plots, and the disappearance of books or any long form writing, the architecture of the compounds draws attention to its artificiality.

This is a society gripped by the cultural logic of neoliberalism and obsessed with re-production in all its forms, even of their own bodies and organs. The Paradice lounge consists of 'fake palm trees, canned music, real campari, real soda' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 356). Each Compound house that Snowman lives in is a reproduction: a 'Cape-Cod-style frame house', a 'large Georgian centre-plan', a 'house… in the style of the Italian renaissance' and so on (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 30, 60). The furniture is even, bluntly, called '*reproduction*' and the concept of an 'original' is quite lost on Jimmy-Snowman (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 30). The spaces of the compounds are devoid of context and out of time, inviting Raschke's reading of a chaotic yet depthless postmodern villain. The people of the compounds are content to live in these simulations, completely uninterested in the uneven development of the world that facilitates their opulence. The pre-apocalyptic world seems unsalvageable, and this is why the trilogy seems to disarm itself: it simultaneously tells us that something *needs* to be done and that nothing *can* be done. Yet *MaddAddam* suggests that this line of thinking casts us as readers into the role of Crake, and thus poses a different question. The trilogy is comprised of contradictions and defined by a simultaneously known and unknown future event, and so its apocalypse asks not what we will lose but what *is already missing*.[63]

The metafictional aspects of the Maddaddam trilogy suggest a playful self-awareness that is shored up by its typically postmodern deployment of cultural fragments high and low, and these elements facilitate a reading beyond the deterministic logics of apocalypse. The trilogy ruminates on the nature of stories, and the act of storytelling, throughout. In *Oryx & Crake*, Jimmy-Snowman pieces Oryx together 'from the slivers of her he'd gathered and hoarded so carefully' which consist of 'Crake's story about her',

[63] Evan Calder Williams' *Combined and Uneven Apocalypse* makes a similar argument from an entirely different vantage point. He argues that the post-apocalypse is a 'perspectival stance to be taken up now… the recognition that the apocalyptic event has been unfolding… behind our backs' and, thus, 'we become post-apocalyptic when we start making sense of what has [already] been revealed' (157-8).

his own story about her, and 'her own story about herself' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 132-133). Oryx is formed of stories, converging and diverging, with no apparent pure *truth* to her. Something similar is true of Zeb, though he takes a much more active role in telling his own story throughout *Maddaddam*. There is a 'battle story' in which Zeb had 'been epic', but Toby 'had her own version' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 302-3). In the God's Gardeners, the older boys have many 'heroic tales of Zeb' and look up to him because 'he has lore, and it was lore they respected', both foreshadowing his later emergence as a hero to the Crakers and underlining the similarity between Craker and human (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 131, 168). Read alongside Ren's comically postmodern horoscope stating that 'illusion and reality are dancing closely together right now, so tread carefully!', these instances a clear gesture towards a general sense of the illusion of fixed "truth" in our conception of reality (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 239).

The self-reflexively critical text can illuminate the processes through which we generate meaning, but this must go beyond a recognition of the possibility of illusion. Indeed, to play illusion against reality as an either/or is to fall into a trapping dualism that misses the co-processional interplay of reality, illusion *and* experience in the socio-spatial dialectic. The way that Jimmy-Snowman 'reads' Oryx is a testament to this. He seems aware that this Oryx is a fiction, and that 'there must once have been other versions of her: her mother's story [and] the story of the man who'd bought her' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 133). Yet he simultaneously believes that he has *pieced her together* as if she were a puzzle to be solved, a specifically spatial metaphor. He gathers these 'pieces', as if he is harvesting her, and then resolves what he understands to be Oryx from these pieces. This is the problem of dualistic, antagonistic dialectic rooted in the philosophico-epistemological notion of fetishized space, in which 'the mental realm comes to envelop the social and physical ones' (Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* 5). The Oryx that Jimmy-Snowman constructs is not entirely truth or untruth, but she is unbound from any socio-spatial process and thus fixed, to Jimmy-Snowman at least, as both object and product. After all, he does entirely produce his comprehension of her: even her own story about herself is constructed by his pushing for answers about the past to which Oryx says 'I don't care. I never think about it' and tells him 'you don't understand' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 136-8). Without even so much as acknowledging the processes at work in the mediation of meaning, he inhabits an entirely productive (and dominating) role. Thus Jimmy-Snowman's *experience* of Oryx is little more than his overbearing conception.

If there are metafictional hints to the fallibility of storytelling in *Oryx & Crake*, in which Jimmy-Snowman, answering the Crakers' questions, 'made it up as he went along' and *The Year of the Flood*, in which Adam One admits that he 'must sometimes say things that are not transparently honest… for the greater good', then in *MaddAddam* it all comes to the fore. The first words of the first chapter title are 'the story' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 11). Storytelling, as an address to the Crakers, is in this novel an act of futurity. This realisation enacts the trilogy's palindromic title and retroactively inscribes the notion of storytelling-as-futurity onto the previous novels. *MaddAddam* is also the most open about Atwood's narrative presence when Toby tells herself: 'talking pigs, communicative dead people, and the Underworld in a Styrofoam beer cooler. You're not on drugs, you're not even sick. You really have no excuse' (336). This doubles as authorial self-deprecation that pre-empts criticism too focused on the speculative aspects of the trilogy, and the believability of its parodies.

Maddaddam contains the most direct metacommentary on genre in the trilogy:

> speculations about what the world would be like after human control of it ended had been—long ago, briefly—a queasy form of popular entertainment… there was only so much of that people could stand, judging from the ratings, which spiked and then plummeted [as viewers switched to] real-time contests about hotdog swallowing… sassy-best-girlfriends comedies…Mixed Martial Arts Felony Fights… or to Nitee-Nite live-streamed suicides or HottTotts kiddy porn or Hedsoff real-time executions… all of it so much more palatable than the truth (44).

Atwood here suggests the ambiguous politics of post-apocalyptic fiction, denigrating the genre as queasy and popular, while simultaneously suggesting that it contains 'the truth.' The brief popularity of post-apocalyptic fictions give way to hotdog eating contests, live-streamed suicides and real-time executions. Yet gross overconsumption and death (not to mention death as a spectacle) are the hallmarks of the *MaddAddam* trilogy's unsalvageable world, the very things that drive Crake into his apocalyptic logic. Heather Hicks locates in post-apocalyptic fiction a cathartic pleasure in imagining our own deaths, but for her this pleasure 'is a vestige of the hope of salvation once encoded in the Christian apocalyptic tradition' (21). In the end, Hicks sees nothing left in the apocalypse but 'genre

itself', the pleasure of 'eternally repeated elements' (Hicks 21). But what if the pleasure of the idea of a survivable apocalypse comes from its deferral of the very need to hope? Atwood demonstrates anxieties about the political efficacy of post-apocalyptic fiction in suggesting its potential equivalence to 'live-streamed suicides' (44). It risks contributing to an atmosphere of capitalist realism, and the sense of hopelessness from which Crake manufactures the apocalypse. In this sense, fictional death by apocalypse renews the 'real' neoliberal death-world, our contemporary situation, with a sense of life.

The *Maddaddam* trilogy stages this tension through its use of metafiction. Each novel's paratexts are accessible to the reader in a way that they are not to the Crakers, survivors, or even God's Gardeners, for whom listening to stories is most often an act of uncritical knowledge production. *Oryx & Crake* begins with two epigraphs, a quote from *To the Lighthouse* and another from *Gulliver's Travels* that sets an expectation for the trilogy's Menippean satire. *The Year of the Flood* begins instead with a fictional epigraph from *The God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook* that presents their eco-scientific-Christian beliefs. Things are less clear than they seem, as this is not a simple inversion from "real" to "fictional" quotation. When *The Year of the Flood* was released, it came with an album containing all of the Hymns of the God's Gardeners by Orville Stoeber, thus complicating the distinction between reality and fiction. *Maddaddam* begins not with epigraphic quote but a synopsis of 'The Story So Far'. Raschke reads this as 'the hyperbolic voice of the corporate market' (37). Hyperbole indeed, this section opens in pure banality, telling the reader that 'The first two books in the MaddAddam trilogy are *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*. *MaddAddam* is the third book' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 1). It is no coincidence that this market-driven voice emerges in the novel that presents the trilogy's "happy ending" of survival and futurity.

The contents pages of each installation of the trilogy present the *contents* of the novel in ways that are uniquely instructive in terms of theme and ways of reading. *Oryx & Crake*'s contents are words devoid of context, cast out and alone on the space of the page. This prefigures Jimmy-Snowman's loneliness, as well as his concern with language and the loss of words in the novel. The fact that, with two exceptions, they are all nouns or proper nouns foregrounds his frustration with the dissolution of meaning and Crake's desire that Jimmy-Snowman relink sign and signified when teaching the Crakers. The first exception, 'Purring', refers specifically to a Craker action, and the verb use

symbolises their eventual active role in the trilogy. The second exception, 'Crake in love', represents two fundamental things that Jimmy-Snowman could or did not properly comprehend: his 'love' for Oryx and Crake's true nature (Crake's love is, ultimately, expressed as apocalypse). In a broader sense, it frames *Oryx & Crake*'s preoccupation with the linguistic debris from the pre-apocalyptic world left behind after the apocalypse. Snowman enacts a form of salvage not only of words but of his own memories and/as history, thus keeping the structures of meaning from the pre-apocalypse alive.

In *The Year of the Flood,* only Adam One's speeches are listed on the contents page (bar the opening chapter narrated by Toby which is there to align the novel's opening sunrise with *Oryx & Crake's*). All of Ren's and Toby's narration is interspersed between Adam One's doctrinal declarations, although their narratives do have brief in-text subtitles to flag their arrival. This sets up *The Year of the Flood*, especially alongside the hymn album, as an instructional religious text wherein Adam One teaches, maybe even proselytises to, the reader as well as the Gardeners. The God's Gardeners, defined by decentralisation and commitments to ecological thought and communitarianism, are binarily opposed to the corporate world depicted in *Oryx & Crake*. They present a way of comprehending the world of the *Maddaddam* trilogy that is (for the reader, at least) transparently ideological, unlike the doxa of consumption and commodification, no less ideological but far less transparent, that drives the trilogy's "masses".

The first two novels converge in *Maddaddam's* contents. Chapter titles are either stories aimed at the Crakers, which recall Adam One's speeches, or words and phrases that succinctly encapsulate narrative action aimed at the reader. The stories' titles start off unwieldy, such as 'The Story of the Egg, and of Oryx and Crake, and how they made People and Animals; and of the Chaos; and of Snowman-the-Jimmy; and of the Smelly Bone and the coming of the Two Bad Men'. But, as the novel progresses, these titles become shorter, less obviously distinguishable from the other chapter titles, until the final two stories (told, no less, by the Craker Blackbeard) are simply titled 'The Story of the Battle' and 'The Story of Toby'. The convergence between the novels, between the pre and post-apocalypse, and between Crakers and humanity, comes to a head when Blackbeard ends his final story with 'Now we will sing' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 474) because this mirrors Adam One's speeches which all end with 'let us sing' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 15). There is also divergence, as the switch from exhortation ('let us') to

declaration ('now we will') is a fulfilment of Adam One's request and therefore a move from rhetoric to action. While ostensibly a utopian note on which to end the trilogy, this convergence between Adam One's doctrinal speeches and the developing mythology of the Crakers tethers the new world to the old, affirming the potential for these stories to form into a grand narrative. There is more than a subtle suggestion that this could end up reproducing the logics that led to the apocalypse.

The *Maddaddam* trilogy anticipates a paranoid reader's attention to its paratexts, as well as subverting this reader's expectation in the thematic and narrative ruptures between each novel. Despite the trilogy's seeming dialectic convergence into unity, the opposing tendency towards divergence is just as often at work. *Oryx & Crake* presents a pre-apocalyptic society of ignorance, and in the post-apocalypse utilises the last-man-on-earth trope, maintaining its possibility even with the cliff-hanger ending that sees Snowman whisper 'to the empty air' as he sees what might be other humans (432). *The Year of the Flood* undoes all of this immediately. In the pre-apocalypse, we now see that there were pockets of resistance and an awareness of impending apocalypse. In the post-apocalypse, there are now numerous survivors. *Maddaddam*, finally, undoes the temporal stasis of the first two novels. It turns their "end" into a new beginning.

The ruptures between each instalment of the trilogy function as a formal realisation of the uneven development of *narrative space*. This mirrors the unevenness that characterises the pre-apocalyptic society, but also presents didactically for the reader by emphasising the importance of perspective, and of apprehending socio-spatial relations. Opposition to neoliberalism must be collective, and embrace 'difference and multiplicity' (Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* 190). Within and beyond the state of reality deployed by the CorpSeCorps, the narratives of neoliberal social relations are at work, ranging from the self-interested individual subject to the valuing of absurd innovation. The trilogy disarms the individualising of responsibility for and resistance to neoliberalism by way of Crake. But it also demonstrates an anxieties about didactic storytelling, and the ways it might individualise rather than collectivise. The trilogy plays this out in the tension between paranoid reader and acceptant Craker. Toby, in the trilogy's clearest statement of metafiction, explains that 'there's the story, then there's the real story, then there's the story of how the story came to be told. Then there's what you leave out of the story. Which is part of the story too' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 70).

Which is which, or how one might tell, is never clear *within* the stories that are told throughout the trilogy, by Adam One to the God's Gardeners, and by Snowman and Toby to the Crakers. These stories are told without the critical tools encouraged by metafiction, and so they are reified into worldviews. These are all instances, like the *MaddAddam* trilogy itself, of an individual telling a story to a collective. It suggests that for didactic storytelling to have genuine political value, it must be understood as co-production.

The trilogy's fictional apocalypse presents a unification of uneven narrative space, through the convergence of all narratives towards *MaddAddam's* conclusion, as an analogue for Crake's attempt to resolve the contradictions and inequities of uneven development. The trilogy gestures towards the insufficiency of Crake's act, since he imagines a model without these contradictions rather than resolving them. His apocalypse ends up a neoliberal fantasy, a spatial reorganization that manages rather than resolves the crises that result from capital accumulation. The apocalypse, hitherto conceived primarily as a temporal affair, here appears now not very much about time at all. The apocalypse, as a neoliberal fantasy, is spatial. It might be understood as the only possible realisation of the universalising tendency of capital, its 'inherent drive towards spacelessness, in other words toward and equalization of conditions' (Smith, *Uneven Development* 127). As Toby says, with a little irony, 'now that history is over, we're living in luxury, as far as goods and chattels go' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 45). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, these conditions do not stay equalised for very long, precisely because the destructive and catastrophe-inducing *human nature* that characterises the pre-apocalyptic world clings on even after mass extinction. Crake ends up producing the very human nature that he imagines as apocalyptic cause.

iii. The Production of (human) Nature

'*Beware of Man, and of his evil heart',* thus speaks Adam One in *The Year of the Flood* (224). Human nature is the core problem that Crake intends to solve in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Crake's BlyssPluss pill, and by extension the Crakers, was 'designed to take a set of givens, namely the nature of human nature, and steer these givens in a more beneficial direction' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 346). For Crake, the brain is full of 'destructive features, the features responsible for the world's current illnesses' such as racism, territoriality and sexuality (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 358). Toby echoes similar concerns about humanity, wondering what 'leaves us so vulnerable to the impulse to violence?

Why are we so addicted to the shedding of blood?' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 372). Indeed, she thinks that 'hatred and viciousness are addictive' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 20). When discussing the possibility of progeny among the survivors, which will be either Painballer ultracriminal or Craker-human hybrid, she tries to think of something soothing to say to Ren and Amanda: 'Genes aren't a total destiny? Nature versus nurture, good can come of evil? … But none of it sounds very convincing, even to her' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 265-6). This cynicism around human nature is enshrined in Adam One's narrative of the fall of man. He expresses absolute determinism, describing primates that fall from trees and then inevitably into reason and technology. This fall 'was ongoing, but its trajectory led ever downward. Sucked into the well of knowledge, you could only plummet' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 224). Once the fall begins, it cannot be stopped. Humanity's selfish drive to violence and exploitation is inevitably catastrophic. This is also the trouble with the trilogy's fictional video game Blood and Roses: 'the Blood player usually won, but winning meant you inherited a wasteland' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 91). Crake thinks that this inevitable catastrophe is the point of the game, the very fact of human nature. There is seldom a character in the *MaddAddam* trilogy that does not espouse this point of view and none that actively challenge it, even those that "oppose" the CorpSeCorps.

This view of human nature has deep roots. Thomas Hobbes saw in human nature a profound selfishness, its sole drive a 'perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power that ceaseth only in Death' (*Leviathan*, 161). The basic self-interestedness of the individual bleeds into liberal thought by way of Locke and Montesquieu, and the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill. Indeed, its simultaneous regulation and expression is, in many ways, the cornerstone of liberal democracy. The self-interested and self-determined subject is also the Social Darwinist subject. Marx notes, in a letter to Engels, that 'it is remarkable how Darwin rediscovers, among the beasts and plants, the society of England with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, 'inventions' and Malthusian 'struggle for existence'. It is Hobbes's '*bellum omnium contra omnes*' [the war of all against all]' (18 June 1862 in *Selected Correspondence*). The line of Enlightenment thought and its tendency towards universality, explored in Chapter Two, emerges here in nineteenth-century England. Marx and Engels both accuse the Social Darwinists, if not Darwin himself, of projecting the competitive and self-interested subject *onto* nature, and then extrapolating from this natural world these very

same theories of the subject, and of social relations, as natural laws. Williams saw the apotheoses of the self-interested and self-determined individual, what he calls the 'central bourgeois figure: the sovereign individual', in modernist artists and even, ironically, at 'later stages of their careers, many avant-garde artists' too (*Politics of Modernism* 55).[64] Neoliberalism produces from this the dominance of *homo oeconomicus* while presenting itself as the best and only system for this citizen-subject: individuals exert their self-interest (and self-determination) by rational engagement with the market.

In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, as in our world, it is capitalism that is 'using up the Earth' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 285). The neoliberal understanding of humanity as *homo oeconomicus* grips the trilogy's characters, especially Crake, and leads to their confusion regarding culpability. Amelia Defalco sets out the ways that the novels depict a biotechnological epistemology that instrumentalises life and thus restricts or omits 'opportunities for affective relations' (437). It is through the instrumentalisation of life that an understanding of self-interested *homo oeconomicus* takes hold. As Williams argued, utopian thought, urgently needed as it is, cannot 'begin to flow until we have faced, at the necessary depth, the divisions and contradictions which now inhibit them' (Williams, *Politics of Modernism* 104). The rampant inequality in *MaddAddam* suggests that power is uneven, and the decisions of a few disproportionately affect the lives of many. Crake's manufactured apocalypse mimics these power dynamics, since he exerts himself on the world. The free market "utopia" in *MaddAddam* rests on an understanding that the self-interested competitive subject is just human nature. This understanding is exactly what motivates Crake to destroy it. But this conception of human nature is produced.

Smith explains the production of nature through the tear between 'nature and society, between a first nature and a second nature' that resulted from human agency in the emergence of production for exchange, when groups of people were united 'as a

[64] Williams chiefly sees this ironic turn because, whether 'hostile or indifferent or merely vulgar, the bourgeois was the mass which the creative artist must either ignore and circumvent or, now increasingly shock, deride and attack' (Williams, *Politics of Modernism* 53). Indeed, even where there are overlaps between modernist protest against art-as-commodity and the 'Marxist critique of the reduction of labour to a traded commodity' there were also diversions, because one of the central points of the modernist complaint 'against this treatment of art was that creative art was more than simple labour' (Williams, *Politics of Modernism* 54). Thus 'in many respects a main element of modernism was that it was an authentic avant-garde… of the successful and evolving bourgeois itself' (Williams, *Politics of Modernism* 56).

societal whole no longer through the general unity of social individuals, but through… societal instructions' (*Uneven Development* 65). Second nature, comprised not only of the material products of human labour but also the institutions and legal, economic and political rules according to which society operated, is 'produced out of first nature' (*Uneven Development* 65). The human being then becomes a social product. The bourgeois revolution, a 'product of second nature', brings with it the 'contemporary relation with nature [that] derives its specific character from the social relations of capitalism' (*Uneven Development* 69). Under capitalism, nature becomes a '*universal means of production* in the sense that it not only provides the subjects, objects, and instruments of production, but is also in its totality an appendage to the production process' (*Uneven Development* 71). Smith argues that 'social existence determines consciousness' (*Uneven Development* 77). Neoliberalism subordinates the social and political spheres to the economic, and thus produces a social existence rooted in the logic of competition. Thus human nature appears to us as *homo oeconomicus,* which has no motivations that are not economic, and so 'neoliberalism is the rationality through which capitalism finally swallows humanity' (Brown 44). This rationality pervades the world of *MaddAddam*, but its authenticity is called into question by the trilogy's metafictional features.

It becomes clear that the trilogy's pre-apocalyptic world not only pivots on a specific production of nature but requires the consistent reproduction of an attendant human nature. Soja argues that 'the production of capitalist spatiality is no once-and-for-all event. The spatial matrix must constantly be reinforced and, when necessary, restructured' and the same thing is true for the socio-spatial production of human nature (Soja*, Postmodern Geographies* 129). An overt expression of this comes through Jimmy-Snowman's expertise in self-help, the subject of his university dissertation. Interviewing for a job writing ad-copy, he is told by the interviewers that people want perfection in themselves, but 'need the steps to it to be pointed out' simply, with encouragement and positivity (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 288). His job not only entails convincing people to buy things, but also to exploit a 'natural' yearning for perfection, encouraging them to modify their own bodies. Similar rhetoric appears from time-to-time in the narrative via Jimmy-Snowman's memories. For instance, he recalls 'a motivational lecturer from RejoovTV' who explains that '*a great man must rise to meet the challenges in his life… having to face a crisis causes you to grow as a person*' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 279).

This rhetoric uses language that has become tangled in the economic to produce a sense of *crisis* and subsequent *growth* as positive human experiences, which maps right back onto neoliberalism itself, thus not only naturalising but venerating economic crises as precursors to growth. Often in the trilogy, following Crake's logic, human nature is scientifically provable. Zeb, excusing his break up with a partner because she smelled like 'stale cooking oil', explains that 'this is a primate thing, it's basic, they've done the tests. Ask any of the MaddAddamite biogeeks here' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 204). Zeb appeals to science but defers his own knowledge, and so he relies on an idea of science as "truth."

By far the most expansive expression of the production of nature in the trilogy comes about through the three fictional religions, which each express a different relation between nature and the human. They are all, however, predicated on the same conception of *human nature*. Each novel in the trilogy presents the reader with one of these distinct religions. In *Oryx & Crake*, we see the beginnings of a post-apocalyptic Craker religion. *Year of the Flood* details the pre-apocalyptic beliefs and practices of the peripheral God's Gardeners. Finally, *MaddAddam* presents a mainstream pre-apocalyptic religion: The Church of PetrOleum**.** Following the palindromic reading encouraged by the trilogy's title, the Craker religion appears as a synthesis of God's Gardener doctrine and PetrOleum rhetoric, as well as pre- and post-apocalyptic conceptions of the world. The Church of PetrOleum is led by Adam and Zeb's father, the Rev. As Zeb has it, 'golden-tongued whip-'em-up preaching' was the way to go to 'coin the megabucks' in the pre-apocalypse (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 136). The Rev cannibalises Christian scripture, inventing absurd readings in which Matthew 16:18, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church', becomes a prophecy of the 'Age of Oil' since Peter is the Latin word for rock (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 137-8). The entire religion is built on refiguring pollution as a blessing, and as such 'a lot of top Corps guys would turn up' as guest speakers (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 138). PetrOleum produces ecological crisis *as* nature, and by extension exonerates humanity's domination and exploitation of the world. Fumes and toxins become blessings from the Almighty, emphasising a perverse unity between humans (as agents of pollution) and nature. In the PetrOleum view, humans are at one with nature because they destroy and exploit it. It presents a purely imaginative way of avoiding the contradictions of the present, escaping to a mental space entirely delinked from the physical and social consequences. In this way it overcomes, ideologically at

least, Smith's argument that 'capitalism has unified nature for the future but cannot do it for the present' (*Uneven Development*, 82). PetrOleum fallaciously resolves contradictions and problems by reimagining them as a positive sign of God's will. This theology forwards the notion of selfish, destructive and greedy human nature, but as itself divine.

The God's Gardeners strive for unity with nature and, rather than offering it up like PetrOleum does, they undermine any sense of human superiority or even equivalence to nature. In fact, humans are the outsiders, separated from a nature that otherwise appears as a perfect, closed system. In the hymn, 'We Praise the Tiny Perfect Moles', for instance, the ant, worm, nematode and carrion beetle 'make the plants to thrive' and 'tidy up our spaces' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 194). Without them, 'the Earth would be a desert' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 194). For the Gardeners, 'God [acts] through Nature' and 'nature never does betray us' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 149, 203). It is only humans that betray nature. This betrayal largely takes the form of acting in the manner encouraged by the Church of PetrOleum. But the God's Gardeners also vilify the pursuit of knowledge itself, because they believe that, via selfish and greedy human nature, it leads inevitably to catastrophe. With that said, they do not eschew knowledge as such. Their goal is the reconciliation of 'the findings of Science with their sacramental view of Life' and, for Adam One, the only way to do this is by exploiting the fact that humanity has 'evolved to believe in Gods' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 287). Adam One explains that there is a penalty to the way people live without God, 'but people are less likely to credit that. If there's a penalty, they want a penalizer. They dislike senseless catastrophe' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 288). So, Adam One exploits belief in a bid for the future of the species, where his father did the same for profit. The Gardeners see in non-human creatures an 'inborn knowledge' of divinity and a certainty of futurity, 'they *know* the dawn will come' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 279). Humans, on the other hand, must 'labour to believe, as the other creatures do not' because 'Human reason is a pin dancing on the head of an angel, so small is it in comparison to the Divine vastness' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 279). Both God's Gardener and Church of PetrOleum theology pivots on the same conception of human nature, and of a simultaneous unity *with* nature and cleavage between nature and society. Where the Church of PetrOleum attempts to vindicate this human nature, the God's Gardeners see it as something to be overcome. PetrOleum is obsessed with the present at the expense of the future, while the God's

Gardeners are preparing for the future after apocalypse. The Gardeners blame a fear of inevitable apocalypse, alongside a lack of faith in the future, for the malevolent actions of those like PetrOleum, since 'if annihilation awaits us, why bother to strive for the Good?' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 279). The God's Gardeners are ultimately suggesting the replacement of one collective fiction, neoliberalism, with another, their doctrine. Yet their conception of an (unchecked) human nature is the same as that of PetrOleum and neoliberalism. Arguing that a selfish and greedy human nature is something to be *overcome* reinforces its existence *as* human nature as such.

Adam One utilises many of the same rhetorical strategies as The Rev. They both creatively interpret scripture, ask and answer rhetorical questions about God's intentionality, and informally address their audience as *my friends*. Their manners are almost identical, compare Adam One's preaching, 'Think of the antibiotic properties of maggots… and of the honey that our bees make… For every ill, God has provided a remedy in His great Medicine Cabinet of Nature!' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 193), with The Rev's, 'What more proof do we need of the holiness of our very own oil, put in the earth by God for the special use of the faithful to multiply His works?' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 138). Adam One is mimicking his father's exploitative style with progressive aims. But this stylistic similarity serves as a reminder that they are both *producing* the same sense of human nature. It parallels with Jimmy-Snowman's pre-apocalyptic job writing self-help inspired ad-copy that points out the steps to self-perfection in a simple and encouraging way (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 288). All three iterations of this process coalesce in the formation of Craker religion. The rhetorical lineage between God's Gardener thought and Craker religion is evident in the similarity between Craker storytelling and Adam One's speeches discussed in section two. Jimmy-Snowman catalyses the formation of the Craker religion as he leads them out of the Paradice compound in the wake of Crake's JUVE virus. The Crakers have 'many questions' and there is 'much explaining to do', but he simply 'made it up as he went along… A lifetime of deviousness came to his aid' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 412). Including, unavoidably, his deviousness as an advertising copywriter. It becomes standard practice among the survivors in *MaddAddam* to 'just tell [the Crakers] it's a Crake thing' to placate their relentless curiosity. In the formation of Craker religion from the ghostly remnants of the past, Jimmy-Snowman's storytelling, God's Gardener doctrine, and Church of PetrOleum rhetoric, there is an ominous sense that the hopeful

future that concludes the MaddAddam trilogy will eventually fall victim to the same problematic human nature that, in Crake's mind, necessitated the apocalypse. But this is not because *homo oeconomicus* is a natural fact. Rather, because the Craker religion is a mosaic of pre-apocalyptic belief, knowledge, and rhetoric that all orbit the neoliberal production of nature, it is ultimately liable to *produce* the same narrow conception of human nature.

The Crakers, after all, are the same species as humans. The litmus test for this is, as a MaddAddamite puts it, 'if they can cross-breed with us, then case made. Same species' and the trilogy ends with successful cross-breeding (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 253). Throughout the trilogy, much of the hope for the Crakers, especially their non-violent natures, rest on the idea that 'they just aren't capable, not being human and such' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 253). Beyond the realisation that they are of the same species, the trilogy is littered with omens of their ability to learn from, and mirror, the humans. Blackbeard, the Craker that takes over *MaddAddam*'s narration, strokes Toby's rifle, 'it's something a normal human child might do' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 114). He follows her, 'her little shadow, he's absorbing everything' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 131). The Crakers 'cross-examine like lawyers' in a bid to construct a cogent worldview (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 131) At some point, Jimmy-Snowman is inconsistent in his storytelling: 'this is going to be hard to explain. He's made a narrative mistake. He has the sensation that he's lost his balance at the top of a flight of stairs' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 421). The symbolism here, that he might *fall* down the stairs, should not be taken lightly. These inconsistencies, empty spaces that stir Craker curiosity, prefigure a potential *fall* for Jimmy-Snowman and the Crakers that mirrors the technologically deterministic fall of man described by Adam One. The Crakers begin to demonstrate a veneration of heroic individuals, becoming obsessed, through Toby's stories, with Zeb who is like 'their rock star' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 130). Jimmy-Snowman witnesses one 'getting to be a bit of a leader' and sees them forming their own rituals, remarking that 'whatever it is, they've never done anything like this before' (Atwood, *Oryx &* Crake 184, 418). These would have all been red flags for Crake, who instructed Jimmy-Snowman to 'watch out for art', symbolic thinking, and signs of leadership. Crake intended that 'they would have no need to invent any harmful symbolisms, such as kingdoms, icons, gods, or money', but their capacity to do so very quickly comes to fruition (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 359). Toby plays out Crake's fears in her terrible realisation of what teaching the Crakers to read and

write may have done: 'what comes next? Rules, dogmas, laws? The Testament of Crake? How soon before there are ancient texts that they feel they have to obey but have forgotten how to interpret? Have I ruined them?' (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 250). She fears she has ruined the Crakers because, informed by the neoliberal pre-apocalypse, she imagines that rules and laws can only ever have negative effects.

The trilogy hints variously at the ways this sense of *homo oeconomicus* is produced in and by the unevenly developed spaces of neoliberalism. Walls, explicitly produced by the Compounds, play a pivotal role in the trilogy, functionally separating the rich Compounds from the poor Pleeblands. They also serve to define the *civilised* and structured Compounds against the naturally barbaric and porous Pleeblands. Walls discipline social being, Jimmy-Snowman 'had grown up in walled spaces, and then he had become one' (Atwood, *Oryx & Crake* 216). The pleeblands, only porous through the lens of compound ideology, are no less constraining for Toby and Ren who end up forced to work undesirable jobs. Even the God's Gardeners reproduce this logic, hiding their gardens and Ararats behind walls of various sorts. In the wake of the apocalypse, Adam One requests that festivals are held, of necessity, 'in the inner Gardens of our Minds' (Atwood, *Year of the Flood* 413). In this way, the Gardeners, just like Jimmy, become walled spaces. Walls come to represent detachment, which is the raw material from which a self-interested human nature is produced. Detachment is distinctly spatial and, as Ed Soja argues, part of the 'original existential capacity to separate the individuated Human Being from the whole of Nature… by creating a gap, a distance, a space' (Soja, *Postmodern Geography* 132). Yet detachment is only one 'dimension of consciousness, the basis only for a minimal definition of being. To be human is not only to create distances, but to attempt to cross them' and in this way, 'subjectivity and objectivity reconnect in a dialectical tension that gives place to being' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 133). The neoliberal world in *MaddAddam* disciplines a social being that is expressly one of detachment. Here, the production of spatiality appears as 'an illusive ideational subjectivity substituted for an equally illusive sensory objectivism. Spatiality is reduced to a mental construct alone, a way of thinking' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 125). Thus, no matter how much the trilogy's religions preach individuality and seek unity with nature, they produce a nature that remains *expressly* detached. Crake explains to Jimmy-Snowman that he believes 'Nature is to zoos as God is to churches' and that walls are there 'not to keep us out, but to keep [Nature and God] in' (Atwood, *Oryx &*

Crake 242). His bid, with the Crakers, was therefore to erect indestructible and invisible walls, producing an ultimate detachment in which destructive human nature simply could not take place. This is an extreme iteration of Adam One's attempt to condition the God's Gardeners into suppressing their human nature. Both Crake and Adam One believe in the annihilation of possibility, because all possibilities lead to death and destruction. Neither succeed, since the God's Gardeners, on many occasions, transgress the teachings of Adam One, and the Crakers manifest all the imaginative and productive capacities that Crake tried to stamp out. Crake's and Adam One's attempts to avoid what they perceive to be an inevitable path to destruction produces the precise (human) nature that they are attempting to circumvent.

The final image of Atwood's *Payback* lectures is similar to the moment in *Oryx & Crake* when Jimmy-Snowman sees the horizon with fresh eyes, realising its rapturous qualities. She retells the story of Scrooge, who, in her version, has been visited by the spirits of Earth Day past, present, and future. The spirit of Earth Day future has given him a lesson in technological determinism very similar to the God's Gardeners description of the fall of man, in which mankind 'made a Faustian bargain as soon as he invented his first technologies' (Atwood, *Payback* 201). Suitably terrified by the inevitable catastrophe, and striving to change humanity's course, Scrooge wakes up and looks out of his window. The world is very beautiful, but where 'it used to look solid, it now appears fragile, like a reflection on water' (Atwood, *Payback* 203). He suddenly realises that he owns nothing, not even his own body. Everything he has is borrowed, and he decides that he is not at all rich. How, he wonders in *Payback*'s final sentence, can he begin to repay his debts to nature. The implicit hope that the Scrooges of the real world might wake up, literally and figuratively, is an extraordinarily risky gamble. The *MaddAddam* trilogy presents anxieties about this kind of individual resistance and response to inevitable catastrophe in the context of neoliberalism. At its most extreme, individual response appears itself catastrophic as with Crake's apocalypse. But an individualising conception of human nature is shown to hold back attempts to oppose neoliberal contexts and the CorpSeCorps as much as it defines and justifies the inequity of neoliberalism itself. Resistance to neoliberalism, *MaddAddam* suggests, must be collective and active, but it must also be attentive to the ways that neoliberalism exploits critical utopian logic in its negation of the present.

CHAPTER FOUR

It all comes together in Tucson, Arizona

I believe your nation might wish to see us, not as a relic from the past, but as a way of life, a system of values by which you may survive in the future. This we are willing to share.

Philip Blake, 'Statement to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry'

Didn't they know where Karl Marx got his notions of egalitarian communism from? 'From here,' La Escapía had said, 'Marx stole his ideas from us, the Native Americans.'

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead*

In Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* we are introduced to a Cuban communist named Bartolomeo. At times, he assists Indigenous peoples engaged in the struggle to take back their ancestral lands. But this is never without an agenda, and never free of a condescending attitude that he is enlightening what he calls 'primitive bugaboos' (Silko, *Almanac* 515). He is, eventually, executed for crimes against the revolution, 'specifically for crimes against Native American history; the crimes were the denial and attempted annihilation of tribal histories' (Silko, *Almanac* 515). This historical erasure is deeply colonial, and Bartolomeo not its sole originator: 'this was a trial of all Europeans. More than five hundred years of white men in Indian jurisdiction were on trial with Bartolomeo' (Silko, *Almanac* 526). The novel is clear in its indictment of Bartolomeo's politics. Though he is ostensibly a communist, his ideology is deeply colonial and therefore bound up in the very logics of inequity and inequality that Marx critiques at the heart of capitalism. This episode foregrounds one of *Almanac*'s central concerns: a dual critique of capitalism and colonialism, and never one without the other. This chapter argues that *Almanac* depicts the deep links between 500 years of colonialism and the evolution of capitalism in a distinctly spatial context. The novel explicitly takes aim at the neoliberal policies of the Reagan regime, showing them to be restructurings of colonial exploitations

and dispossessions that have plagued the world system for five centuries. *Almanac* denaturalises the "globalising" of the world, the colonisation of the Americas, and the evolution of capitalism by presenting these entwined histories as the result of vicious greed bound up in a very specific conception of space as something to be *conquered* and *filled*. It was only on these foundations that neoliberalism could shift space into the realm of the purely economic. Silko seeks to hold the past to account in the spaces of *Almanac*'s present. But the novel does not simply portray capitalist-imperialism's unassailable assent to hegemony. More than anything else, *Almanac* is a story (and a history) of resistance and revolution. This chapter argues that the novel brings Marx into conversation with Indigenous knowledge, and in so doing asserts the significance of spatiality that Marxism has too often ignored. Silko's novel, informed by 500 years of Indigenous anticolonialism, prefigures many of the social, political, and theoretical problems of neoliberal globalisation that have come to pass. In a gesture echoing this chapter's epigraphs regarding the fundamental prefigurative importance of Indigenous anticolonialism to any sustainable critique of neoliberalism and capitalist modernity more generally, this final chapter studies, chronologically, the earliest novel in the thesis.

The chapter's first section sets out points of conjuncture between the Indigenous philosophies of space and time that Vine Deloria Jr. puts forth in *God is Red* (1973) and Lefebvre's theses in *The Production of Space*. Synthesising these in a socio-spatial analysis of the 'five-hundred year map' that bookends *Almanac,* the section argues for the fundamental importance of Indigenous anticolonialism to any genuine critique of capitalism. The chapter's second section explores the importance of storytelling in *Almanac*, and argues that the novel emphasises the materiality of stories and thus encourages socio-spatial reading. The importance of the socio-spatial dialectic to Marxist geocriticism is underlined here, as the novel reconciles its relationship with Marx by depicting him as a storyteller. The chapter's final section analyses the way that *Almanac* depicts neoliberal spatiality, with a particular focus on uneven development in and around Tucson. It argues that the novel's neoliberal characters reproduce many aspects of this spatiality in their social interactions, in the forms of detachment and abstraction, and that this influences the spaces they produce, inhabit, and prize. While the novel presents a neoliberalism that is viciously spatial, it takes care to emphasise that these spaces are never wholly colonised. *Almanac's* entire narrative is centered on Tucson, which is shown to be an uncontrollable space, no matter how much colonists or neoliberals might

try. Rather, it is a city comprised of a co-productive array of people, spaces, and stories; a city of innumerable interstices. Tucson, Arizona comes to represent the active, unfixed nature of space and the possibilities for resistance and revolution therein. This is where it all comes together.

The chapter title pays homage to the penultimate chapter of Soja's *Postmodern Geographies*, a book that has greatly informed this thesis. For Soja, it all came together in Los Angeles, which was for him the epitome of postmodern space, a '*mesocosm*, an ordered world in which the micro and the macro… the concrete and the abstract, can be seen simultaneously' (*Postmodern Geographies* 191). The real-and-imagined Tucson of Silko's *Almanac* is a mesocosm for a geocritique of neoliberalism. Not only is it where the vast majority of *Almanac'*s narratives coalesce, and where many of its characters converge, but it is depicted as an unevenly developed space where colonialism and neoliberalism intersect in a bid for spatial domination. Tucson, however, remains porous, uncontainable, and uncontrollable. As this thesis has consistently argued, the capitalist conception of space, as fixed and undialectical, is shown to be the system's weak point.

The novel's form is often described in spatial terms. Carlton Smith argues that *Almanac* 'possess a *labyrinthine* structure, one that defies conventional analysis' and contends that the book is 'nearly impossible to summarize' (48). For Smith, Silko's novel is a 'counter-narrative [that] is free to ignore such conventions as linear development of plot, clarity of thesis, and narrative unity' (48). While *Almanac*'s plot is certainly non-linear and difficult to summarise, its thesis is crystal clear: the economic logic at the heart of neoliberalism produces a profoundly unjust and violent world system, and this capitalist system has its origins in the imperialist European colonization of the New World. *Almanac* also has a high degree of narrative unity. While it is comprised of many narratives that at first appear divergent, over the course of reading they converge with one another and on Tucson. One of the striking affective traits of this novel is that it always seems as if *everything is related*, as characters tend to turn up in the novel in patterns, while certain words and phrases echo across narratives belonging to characters that never encounter one another. These are interstitial narratives, overlapping and intersecting, and this is why the novel demands socio-spatial reading. *Almanac* traces the lives and stories of an enormous ensemble cast of over 60 characters that all live around and move through Tucson (with a few across the border in South America). We see how

colonialism affected and continues to affect all of these characters, and we are even presented with insights into the minds of those wealthy elite beneficiaries of both colonial injustice and neoliberalism. This latter group all exhibit a perverse moral detachment from the world around them, lavishing manipulation and violence so long as it furthers their interests. Rebecca Tillett argues that *Almanac* exposes 'what results when our "scientific detachment" includes a detachment—imaginative, philosophical, spiritual, physical—from the Earth itself' (2). The final section of this chapter locates this moral and scientific detachment within the spatiality of neoliberalism itself, which is deeply intertwined with ongoing colonialism.

The novel's central plot is straightforward, even if the narratives that comprise it are numerous. It begins with a prophecy that foretells 'the disappearance of all things European' (Silko, *Almanac* map legend). Throughout the novel, we see the beginnings of this prophecy's fulfilment in many different ways across many different communities. In every single narrative strand in *Almanac*, whether foregrounded or subtextual, there is a growing sense of injustice, and thus a rising tide of revolution across the Americas which the novel hints will spread globally:

> change was on the horizon all over the world. The dispossessed people of the earth would rise up and take back lands that had been their birthright, and these lands would never again be held as private property, but as lands belonging to the people forever to protect (Silko, *Almanac* 532).

We are never shown any centralised planning to the various revolutionary activities that take place throughout the novel. Rather, the novel presents a kind of revolutionary affect. Characters that stand up to inequality and inequity, though they may never meet, are unified by their frustration with oppression: 'all that mattered was these people burned with the blue flame of bitterness and outrage' (Silko, *Almanac* 690). Some of these revolutionaries are Marxists, or at least sympathetic to Marx's analysis of capitalism. After all, as Silko herself says, 'capitalism is absolutely irredeemable' (qtd. in Tillett 27). But many of the novel's Indigenous characters are sceptical of if not outright antagonistic towards Marxism, seeing it as an offshoot of European colonial ideology.

Generally, the relationship between Marxist and Indigenous decolonial movements has been fraught with fundamental disagreements.[65] The two most prominent Indigenous critiques of Marxism emphasise its Eurocentrism and its continued reliance on the processes of industrialisation. For Russel Means, these problems are interrelated, since 'Marxism is just the latest continuation' of the 'European tradition' (Means 28). He argues that 'revolutionary Marxism, like industrial society in other forms, seeks to 'rationalize' all people in relation to industry—maximum industry, maximum production' (Means 26). It is true that Marx (and Engels) saw unparalleled scientific advancements taking place through the accelerated productive processes of capitalism, but the attendant brutality of a system that rationalised humans as human capital was always unacceptable for them and in no way justifiable. As far as Means is concerned, with his eyes on the Soviet Union, Marxism is 'committed to even further perpetuation and perfection of the very industrial process which is destroying us all' (Means 26). These are legitimate concerns about anti-capitalist struggles rooted in a narrow sense of the Marxist tradition. Revolutionary work cannot afford to be mired by Americentrism or Eurocentrism, and, to be truly counter-neoliberal, must genuinely seek to protect people and the environment. These concerns should not be ignored or dismissed, but they should also not lead to a premature and absolute rejection of the Marxist tradition. Wendy Brown suggests, for instance, that Foucault's rejection of Marx holds him back from grasping 'the intricate dynamics between the political rationality and the economic constraints' that underline 'the depth of neoliberalism's power in making this world and unfreedom with it' (76). It is in this spirit that Glen Coulthard argues that conversations between Indigenous studies and Marxist political economy 'have the potential to shed much insight into the cycles of colonial domination and resistance that characterize the relationship between white settler states and Indigenous people' (8). Thus this chapter focuses on Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* as a point of convergence between Indigenous anticolonialism and Marxist anticapitalism.

In a wonderful reading of *Capital*, Coulthard sets out the links between the totalizing power of capital and that of colonialism in the very foundations of Marxist thought. He explains that 'formative acts of violent dispossession [conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder] set the stage for the emergence of capitalist accumulation

[65] The collection of essays *Marxism and Native Americans* is instructive of this relationship, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the Marxist responses are lacking.

and the reproduction of capitalist relations of production' (Coulthard, 7). He also directly links neoliberal and colonial strategizing. The common criticism of neoliberalism is that its crises demand further neoliberalisation, as with the dotcom crash and the global financial crisis, and Coulthard argues that 'the adverse effects of colonisation demand more colonial intervention' (100). This is, however, no wholesale redemption of Marxism for Indigenous studies, and Coulthard criticises *Capital'*s portrayal of the capitalist mode of production as historically and globally inevitable, as well as necessary for the eventual progressive development of socialism.[66] *Capital* tends to portray dispossession as the vanguard of capitalism and not an ongoing process. In *Capital* dispossession merely sets the stage for proletarianisation and the establishment of the capital relation. But capitalism's attempts to enclose and control space have required, and continue to require in the neoliberal context, acts of dispossession.

To reorient Marx's theoretical frame in conversation with the critical thought and practices of Indigenous peoples, and to address the residual eurocentrism in *Capital*, Coulthard advocates a shift from thinking about the *capital* relation to the *colonial* relation. He focuses his analysis on 'the subject position of the colonized vis-á-vis the effects of *colonial dispossession'* (Coulthard 11). This is an invaluable strategy for Marxism generally, and Marxist geocriticism specifically, since capitalism rests upon the inequitable logics of colonialism not only at the moment of its instantiation but at every moment of its existence. This conceptual shift necessitates an analytical shift from the *temporal* to the *spatial*. The late Lakota philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. distinguishes between anti-colonial struggles, 'registered in the spatial dimension—*as dispossession*,' from classic Marxist accounts of the working class, where 'oppression is measured as exploitation, as the theft of *time*' (Deloria Jr. qtd. in Coulthard 62). Yet spatial dispossession, particularly in the form of uneven development, lies at the heart of neoliberalism. Even in terms of the wage relation, it is better not only to think in terms of the theft of *time* but also the theft of the body itself. As this chapter will show in its final section, *Almanac of the Dead* depicts contemporary articulations of colonial

[66] Coulthard offers the caveat that after 1871 Marx reformulated his theory to move away from an antiquated developmental understanding of the assimilation of noncapitalist societies. He highlights the 1872-1875 revisions to *Capital* that strip the primitive accumulation chapter of suggestions of unilinearism, and Marx's 1877 letter to Russian radical N. K. Mikailovsky in which he asserts that this chapter's 'sole aim is to trace the path by which the capitalist economic order in *western Europe* emerged out of the womb of the feudal economic order.'

dispossession that facilitate the production of neoliberal space. These are necessarily unevenly developed spaces into which neoliberalism inscribes its necessarily uneven social relations. The Indigenous perspective is of fundamental importance because Indigenous anticolonialism has, over 500 years of occupation, been deeply concerned with spatial struggles in a way that Marxism, or any Western anticapitalism, has not.

Lefebvre wrote *The Production of Space* to assert the fundamental importance of space and by extension dispossession to the development and survival of capitalism. He was driven by the lack of attention paid to the spatial not only in Marxism but Western philosophy and critical theory generally. Though he is not in direct conversation with the critical thought and practice of Indigenous peoples, his work in some sense seeks to rescue Marxism from the very criticisms that Means and Deloria Jr. put forward, of its ardent temporality and reliance on industrial processes. For Lefebvre, these two problematics are directly linked, and their solution lies in a philosophy of space as relative; a social product that is alive with social relations. This is why he suggests a shift from the capitalist mode of production of *things in space* to the mode of production of *space itself*. It might seem that neoliberalism, in producing space as an economic category, has made this transition to the production of space, but this is not so. Neoliberalism relies on a conception of space as a receptacle or container for products and monetary value to present it this way. Lefebvre argues that only in this 'conflict-laden transition' will it be 'possible to preserve the Marxist thesis of the fundamental role of the forces of production while at the same time liberating this thesis from the ideology of productivity and the dogma of (quantitative) growth' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 410). Situating relative space at the centre of the productive process preserves the language and tools of Marxist critique but excises them of their residual Eurocentrism and historical determinism. This also entails a 'shift from domination to appropriation, and the primacy of use over exchange' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 410). That is to say, a shift away from detachment and abstraction, and towards living with and within space rather than occupying it. There are clear similarities between Lefebvre's assertion of the importance of the spatial and the 'importance of land to Indigenous modes of being, thought, and ethics' (Coulthard 60). Thus these conceptual shifts from the mode of production of *things in space* to a revolutionary mode of production of space itself must take place in conversation with Indigenous anti-colonial struggles.

This is not to say that Lefebvre, or Soja, Harvey, Massey and so on, have all the answers, ready-made, to Indigenous peoples' anti-colonial struggles and criticisms of Marx. Rather, it affirms Coulthard's argument that anti-colonial and Marxist struggles have much to offer one another. Thus one of this chapter's central claims is that Marxist geocriticism, though ostensibly a relatively new field of study, already owes much to the ontologies of Indigenous modes of life. As Makere Stewart-Harawira argues in *The New Imperial Order* (2005), neoliberal globalisation, as a 'new and dangerous form of imperialism,' provides the impetus for advocating a new ontology of world order 'informed by indigenous world views and understandings of Being' (Stewart-Harawira 27). Challenges to the neoliberal world order must be challenges to its ontology if they are to 'go beyond resisting empire' (Stewart-Harawira 3). This is especially important since the ontology of neoliberal power 'is riven with a fundamental ambiguity (or even aporia), whereby it hovers between the measurable and the immeasureable, the empirical and the transcendent' (Davies 35). A sustainable, collective critique of neoliberalism that refuses the instrumentalisation of human life and affirms the possibility of a thriving post-capitalist world must have a socio-spatial mode of production at its core.

i. Marxism, time and space

In *God is Red* (1972), the Lakota philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. argues that the divisions between conservatism and liberalism, both in the sense of political philosophies and cultural attitudes, are not fundamental disagreements because they both 'find in the idea of history a thesis by which they can validate their ideas' (61). He is deeply critical of the linearity and individualism that runs through Western European ideology which he ties to the 'Christian contention that the experiences of humankind could be recorded in a linear fashion, and when this was done, the whole purpose of the creation event became clear… revealing the nature of the end of the world' (Deloria Jr., *God is Red* 102). Time takes form as destiny in the Western European, or in other words colonial, imagination. History then records the path towards this destiny in a teleological manner; the eventual end will make sense of and justify this path. Deloria Jr.'s critique extends to Marxism, and bears some similarity to Walter Benjamin's critique of historical materialism as quasi-theology in *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940). Both, ultimately, are critiquing a dissociative analysis of a linear history that does not see the production of history bound up in ongoing socio-spatial processes. This section begins by sketching out

points of conjuncture between the Indigenous philosophies of space and time that Vine Deloria Jr. sets out in *God is Red* and the theses of Lefebvre's *Production of Space*. It argues that a philosophy of (social) space as a (social) product is fundamental in tackling capitalist-imperialism because of the continuities between colonial and capitalist conceptions of space and time that enable and persist into its restructuring as neoliberalism. Moreover, this shift in analytic focus to the socio-spatial dialectic, and to historico-geographic materialism, avoids typically Marxist problems of detached teleology without abandoning its hopes for a better, more equitable future.

The straightforward relationship between time, history, and destiny that Deloria Jr. explains as the core of Western European ideology is somewhat troubled by the onset of neoliberalism. Laura Shackelford argues that:

> Global capitalism replaces the modern world system's temporal perspective, which projected a single, progressive temporal continuum on the spaces of the world, with a spatial perspective that privileges space and the instantaneous connections between things at one moment within a single plane of accumulation (8)

But neoliberalism does not *replace* the world's temporal perspective so much as purport to *fulfil* history itself. Certainly, neoliberalism privileges the abstract (global) space of networks and flows, but it ostensibly does so as a *result* of a single, progressive history. *Almanac* engages alternative and erased histories as a way of disrupting the naturalization of neoliberal socio-spatial relations. In doing so, the novel turns away from the official history of Western European colonialism. In conversation with Marx, *Almanac* emphasises the importance of the past *within* the present, and underscores 'the erasures necessary to produce the United States' (Shackelford 21). Shackelford explains that global capitalism relies, like the modern world system, 'on an opposition between time and space even if it privileges the latter… term in this dualism' (22). Neoliberalism exerts itself spatially, but remains reliant upon the very same temporal logics that Deloria Jr. critiques.

Shackelford gets at the interrelation between space and time under neoliberalism:

> The abstraction of space from time has functioned to secure the geopolitical distinctions of the modern world system, to mask the ongoing production of this geopolitical system in and over time. The view of space as stasis, as 'fixed and unproblematic in its identity,' which Doreen Massey thoroughly critiques in her groundbreaking work, *Space, Place, and Gender*, enabled the modern world system to project its own temporal distinctions, with Europe as the point of arrival or present, on the world and, subsequently, to disavow the productive work this mapping entailed (18).

This spatio-temporal erasure of the productive work of mapping is a deeply colonial enterprise that facilitates the denial of Indigenous histories. Silko is expressly concerned with the tendency not only to draw borderlines in space but also 'in terms of time' to sever past from present and future (*Conversations* 170). The development of capitalism was reliant upon the continual spatial expansion enabled by colonial violence which presented the future as something to be *arrived at* in a very literal sense. In other words, equilibrium would be realised, or at least possible, when the final frontier would be conquered. In the throes of neoliberalism, however, the contradictions at the heart of this deferral have become readily apparent. With almost no physical space available to colonise, neoliberalism instead embraces its inequities in the constant uneven (re)development of spaces as loci of competitive processes. The unsustainable nature of this process is a joke to the elite in *Almanac*, a group of whom drunkenly laugh 'about banks and foreign debt soon being eclipsed by the accumulated interest and late penalties' (Silko, *Almanac* 332). They readily see the irrationality of neoliberalism, the system that enriches them by projecting its own *rationality*.

Deloria Jr. argues that the differences between Indigenous American and Western European migrant ideologies are fundamental and thus 'of great philosophical importance' because of their differing conceptions of the spatial:

> American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind. Immigrants review the movement of their ancestors across the continent as a

> steady progression of basically good events and experiences, thereby placing history—time—in the best possible light' (*God is Red 61*).

Where Indigenous peoples of the Americas are concerned with the philosophy of space, Western European peoples are concerned with the philosophy of time. Colonials have 'never learned to consider the nature of the world discerned from a spatial point of view' and they place themselves squarely at the centre of the history (*God is Red* 62). It is worth noting that Deloria Jr.'s description of the Indigenous conception of land, or space, as a field of 'relationships of things to each other' bears remarkable similarity to Lefebvre's articulation of space as social and relative (*Power and Place* 23).

Deloria Jr. argues that 'Age of Exploration, the Age of Imperialism, and the recent crusade against Communism all involve the affirmation that time is peculiarly related to the destiny of the people of Western Europe' (*God is Red* 62). Essentially, for Deloria Jr. all colonial and capitalist exertions upon space, including twentieth and twenty-first century American global imperialism, are bound up in with the notion of historical destiny. Space is made subordinate, and *made* is the key word. The imperial powers *produced* the space of the USA and Canada with the strictly temporal notion of the "new world" not only through bloodshed and cartography but the arts and literature too. Michel de Certeau called this 'writing that conquers. It will use the New World as if it were a blank, 'savage' page on which Western desire will be written. It will transform the space of the other into a field of expansion for a system of production' (*The Writing of History*, xxv-xxvi). This symbolic genocide of Indigenous populations preceded, and thus legitimised, the ongoing physical genocide. This necessitated a hollowing out of space, which is bluntly rendered in nineteenth-century landscape paintings that show bounteous frontiers entirely devoid of people. The spaces of the new world are here frozen in time, awaiting colonisation, as the landscapes are fixed and unproblematic. Space was mere object and container for both time and capital.

Almanac of the Dead poses an ontological challenge to the conceptions of space and time that underwrite neoliberalism. As Rebecca Tillet notes, in the novel 'we see writ large the European Enlightenment's propensity for separation and categorization, a propensity that demands we accept the need for 'scientific' detachment' (Tillet 2). Time and again *Almanac* shows the insufficiency of Enlightenment detachment to grasp things:

'Europeans suffered a sort of blindness to the world. To them, a 'rock' was just a 'rock' wherever they found it, despite obvious differences in shape, density, color, or the position of the rock relative to all things around it' (Silko, *Almanac* 224). This blunt interpretation of the world is a symptom of the capitalist production of space as Lefebvre has it, which functions in pure object form as 'a set of things/signs and their formal relationships: glass and stone, concrete and steel, angles and curves' and so on (*Production of Space* 49). Space is represented merely as a set of *things in space,* rather than an ongoing process of production. Things simply exist, and space simply contains them. In this formula, all things can be known, analysed, understood, and most importantly controlled.

In *Almanac,* the European colonists see uncontrolled spaces, those not yet fixed into the objective realm, as unknowable masses of land. The hills and canyons all 'looked the same to them' (Silko, *Almanac* 224-5). Yet the very status of the hills and canyons as unknown, and thus sites of possibility rather than sites under control, serves to frighten the colonists. The Yaquis and Apaches take advantage of the white armies' 'inability to perceive unique details in the landscape' by leading them through rocky terrain pocked by arroyos since 'the longer the soldiers rode up and down the steep terrain, the more exhausted and afraid they became' (Silko, *Almanac* 225). For the colonists and their capitalist-imperialist worldview, the unnamed and unmapped space is inconceivable and frightening. Thus the colonial project incessantly names and maps everything in a bid to tame it. As Derek Gregory explains, the production of colonised spaces through mapping and naming, or in other words 'spatial writing', forced spaces 'within the compass of a European rationality that made it familiar to its colonizers and alien to its inhabitants' and effaced 'the possibility of an aboriginal spatiality' at least as far as the colonizers were concerned (Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* 172-3). It is better to think of this as spatial *re*writing. It functions essentially to annihilate space, rendering it dead or static to enable capitalist-imperialism's attempts to dominate and regulate social and spatial life. This propensity for separation and detachment is *dangerous*; it lies at the heart of capitalist-imperialist violence against humans and the land itself. In *Almanac*, however, it is also shown to cause a fundamental lack of knowledge: 'once whites had a name for a thing, they seemed unable to recognize the thing itself' (224). This is what Soja calls the illusion of opacity at work, the distortion of spatiality through 'short-sighted interpretations of spatiality which focus on immediate surface appearances' (*Postmodern*

Geographies 122). Neoliberalism does its best to suppress the non-economic dimensions of space, and of life in general, but can only do so where its own ontological underpinnings remain unchallenged. Therefore any fundamental challenge to neoliberalism must be concerned with a philosophy of space.

Almanac is bookended by a 'five hundred year map' that depicts the Mexico-American border (which Silko has described as 'America's Iron Curtain' in an essay of the same name). It includes locations referenced in the story, from the Laguna Pueblo Reservation to Tucson, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and San Diego among other cities as well as the islands of Haiti and Cuba. There are no longitudes or latitudes on the map. Most significantly, the map uses dotted lines to show the movements of characters in the novel, who are named in groups alongside each line. These dotted lines take up the majority of the visual space. There are four short paragraphs in the place of a map legend, two of which deal in prophecy, one stating that the 'decipherment of ancient tribal texts of the Americas the Almanac of the Dead foretells the future of all the Americas' and the other explaining the prophecy that 'foretold the arrival of Europeans' (Silko, *Almanac* map legend). A third paragraph is a testament to Indigenous defiance against all odds, 'Sixty million Native Americans died between 1500 and 1600… The Indian Wars have never ended in the Americas' (Silko, *Almanac* map legend). The echoes of Toni Morrison's dedication in *Beloved* here foreshadow the importance of African and American Indigenous solidarity to the novel. The final paragraph is a description of Tucson, Arizona as a town of 'speculators, confidence men, embezzlers, lawyers, judges, police and other criminals, as well as addicts and pushers, since the 1880s and the Apache Wars' (Silko, *Almanac* map legend). These four text boxes contain the four pillars of *Almanac's* narrative: vicious colonialism, Indigenous resistance, a prophecy of decolonisation, and the porous uncontrollable space of Tucson.

Much has been made of this map in scholarly literature, though it is most extensively dealt with by Ann Brigham**.** She surveys a range of scholars that argue, in various different ways, that *Almanac* rejects Euro-American ideology. Brigham asks 'if the map is representative of Euro-American ideology, why does Silko use it to introduce and situate the novel?' (304). She argues that 'the map's spatiotemporal dimension articulates an understanding of landscape as peopled' or, in other words, she understands this to be a socio-spatial map rather than an attempt to define and contain space. This is

a map of *process*. Though a number of critics identify the importance of human movement to the five hundred year map, none note that all of the human movement is *towards Tucson*. This is a map of convergence, and so it is also a map of the socio-spatial relations that have shaped Tucson. The city of Tucson itself emerges as one of the central characters in *Almanac*.

The map functions as prophecy in the sense that all of the characters in the novel do variously end up in Tucson. But it also performs a map's typical role and acts as a guide for its reader, since it allows them to keep track of the novel's ensemble cast. The characters are visibly grouped by their relationships with each other, emphasising the social nature of the spatial. The space of this map is relative in every sense. This is a map of what neoliberalism refuses to see. Space is shown to be the system's weakness here, despite its vicious attempts to dominate the spatial. When the map is deployed as a means of domination, precisely because it needs to objectify everything, it produces a form of blindness to social space itself. Thus the five-hundred year map in *Almanac* is an interstitial map, a rendering of the (social) spaces operating between, within, and outside of the neoliberal sense of space as economic. In this map all spaces are interstitial, characters and places are shown to intervene with one another. In a broader sense, Silko's map is a socio-spatial intervention with the concept of the imperial map itself. This too is prophetic of the socio-spatial intervention to which the novel builds: revolution against capitalist-imperialism.

Rebecca Tillett argues that 'what we see depicted on *Almanac's* five-hundred-year map are the traces, the spaces, the inscriptions of a lengthy ideological and physical war that has been waged against Indigenous peoples in the Americas' (179). The map depicts a space that is the culmination of five-hundred years of colonial occupation. Almost all of the *places* on it are colonial impositions, from the Laguna Pueblo Reservation to Tucson. This also explains the prominence of Mexico's borderline on the map, here drawn as a perfectly straight line, which symbolises the neoliberal re-inscription of nationalism into space. Silko has described 'those who would make the boundary lines and try to separate them' as 'the manipulators' (*Conversations* 170) and argued for the patriotism of Indians who believe freedom of travel is an 'inalienable right' ('America's Iron Curtain' 412). This antagonism towards the imperative to draw boundary-lines is the driving force of *Almanac*, and it is not limited to spatial boundaries

but temporal ones too. As Coulthard explains, contemporary colonialism enacts a symbolic violence by drawing a line between *past* and *present* since it uses this logic to disperse colonial abuses into the past. These abuses then take on a temporal character as a legacy that can be overcome on an individual or collective level, and foreclose any overcoming of the 'abusive colonial structure itself' (Coulthard 109). Those that 'refuse to forgive' are then 'typically cast as being saddled by the damaging residue of this legacy, of which anger and resentment are frequently highlighted' (Coulthard 109). *Almanac*'s politics of resentment are given form that cannot be reduced to 'damaging psychological residue' by the bookending of the novel with this five-hundred year map that explicitly situates colonialism and neoliberalism as systems of ongoing abuse.

Silko's map is a call to arms and a means of fighting back against the spatial and temporal boundary-drawing that underlines ongoing violence against Indigenous peoples, physical and symbolic. This map would not be considered geographically accurate, positioning Tucson as close as it does to Haiti and Cuba. Yet it is not an inaccurate representation of space in a sense that does away with a fascination for measurement, because of the socio-spatial flows between and within these places to the novel's narrative. The map simply does not correspond to proportional norms. This raises other questions, however, about cartography and, by extension, the notion of economic scientism that neoliberalism leverages to justify its own existence. This straight line may not truly equate with the 'real' shape of the US-Mexico border, yet neither does the commonly used Mercator map, which warps the US-Mexico border because it reduces the size of regions close to the equator (which tend to be poorer). The borderline functions as a sanctioned interstice, the utmost expression of an imperialist desire to dominate spaces and yet also a begrudging and quiet acceptance that space may indeed be porous. In recognising this space as an interstice, neoliberalism strives to seal it. Thus this space *between* the United States and Mexico must be subject to absolute control, and to absolute closure outside of official border-crossings. Silko, in a chillingly prescient 1994 interview, explained that 'jingoism and hysteria about immigrants and immigrations' would contribute to a hardening of this border as an attempt to 'seal off Mexico from the United States' and 'create a hysteria here so that it will justify U.S. troops opening fire and shooting and killing' (*Conversations* 143). The dotted lines on *Almanac's* map that symbolise movement show that the border fails to wholly dominate the socio-spatial. The dotted line that marks the path of the Twin Brothers, who walk north with hundreds of

thousands of people in fulfilment of prophecy, is the only one that ends at the border. This is because the novel ends with the brothers walking north, their fate unknown. Thus the borderline becomes a place of ideological collision but, as a representative interstice, also a locus of possibility.

The people and socio-spatial relations inscribed in the five-hundred year map only span the duration of the novel. In other words, they only take place in the novel's present moment. One of the extracts from the fictional almanac states that 'Sacred time is always in the Present' (Silko, *Almanac* 136). The present is important because it is a moment of process, containing the coalescence of the past and the seeds of the future. The temporal is not sharply disconnected in *Almanac*. As La Escapia explains, 'the old-time people had believed… they must reckon with the past because within it lay this present moment and also the future moment' (Silko, *Almanac* 311). All times are connected and, by way of the five-hundred-year map, they are connected through space. On the map there are two characters that exist outside of the novel's present: Geronimo and John Dillinger. Yet rather than disprove the suggestion that this is a map of the present, they underline exactly how space-time is connected and connective in *Almanac of the Dead*. They are both intimately linked with Tucson, but more importantly these two characters only enter the narrative through storytelling.

Stories are frequently spatial in *Almanac.* They are often linked to a particular place, as the novel is to Tucson. The act of storytelling is, too, a spatial act in a rather literal sense. Silko, in an interview, explains her realization that 'landscape could not be separated from narration and storytelling' (*Conversations* 137). Brigham argues that 'as a thing and social process, landscape resembles language, which is solidly material and ever changing, and it is the relation between the two that *Almanac* amplifies' (Brigham 305). Probing the mutually productive relationship between language, or narrative, and space is one of the aims of socio-spatial reading.

Accepting that 'many geographers [have] cautioned against the transformation of space into metaphor,' Brigham contends that we might 'rethink the so-called metaphorical conception of space as one of narrative' (325). She wants to emphasise the way that narratives 'are always complicit in the production of space and spatiality' (325). This is an important aspect of geocriticism, but we must take care in the ways we

conceptualise the relationship between language, narrative and space, since they are not coterminous. Lefebvre argued that 'social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space. Their underpinning is spatial' (*Production of Space* 404 404). This is the key: language and narrative, themselves concrete abstractions, have spatial underpinnings. They exist in and through space, and are produced by and productive of social space. This is the spatial ontology of *Almanac*, too, as it ties its numerous stories and acts of storytelling to certain spaces without reducing them to these spaces, or reducing the spaces to these stories. Stories and narratives in *Almanac* are interstitial, they intervene in space and communicate across time.

ii. The space of a story in the story of a space

Annette Van Dyke explains that 'storytelling is central to [*Almanac*]—story in the form of the almanac and in the form of prophecy—but also in the form of each character's personal story' (36). Moreover, storytelling is deployed in *Almanac* as a formal device. The novel is comprised of an enormous amount third-person focalised perspectives that coalesce into the wider story. Sometimes things in a certain story fragment are not clear until one has read further into *Almanac*. This encourages a distinctly spatial reading, with the plot arcing back and forward through the linear progression of the novel. The novel presents itself, as well as its stories and the fictional almanac of prophecy, as a trialectic process. Stories interact with teller and listener (or writer and reader) and are never precisely finished: they are always open to further transformation, whether through retelling or addendum. The reader is invited to participate in the text in much the same way that old Yoeme 'scribbled arguments in margins' of the ancient almanac (Silko, *Almanac* 570). But they are not permitted complete productive control over its meaning, because the novel holds to itself as prophecy that 'all things weak, all things European' will disappear from the Americas (Silko, *Almanac* 503). The form that this revolutionary change will take, however, is entirely bound up in stories; the way they are told, and the way they are heard. *Almanac* is the story of a space, of Tucson, but it is also a space of the stories belonging to all of its characters, to the land, and to the histories that colonialism tried to erase. This section will argue that *Almanac* depicts storytelling as a socio-spatial process that is a communal, collective and connective act. Then, by depicting Marx as a storyteller in this sense, the novel reconciles its relationship with him while hinting at spectres of the socio-spatial in the very *form* of *Capital*, in which Marx

collects the narratives of factory workers, and thus its importance to Marxist thought all along.

The stories in *Almanac* 'form complex webs of associations between past, present, and future' (Roemer qtd. in Van Dyke 39). This recalls Chapter Two's discussion of history in *Mason & Dixon* as a 'great disorderly Tangle of Lines, long and short, weak and strong, vanishing into the Mnemonick Deep, with only their Destination in common' (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 349). History and memory (the 'Mnemonick Deep') are linked here, emphasising the imperfect nature of history as such. This conception of history as a process stands in stark opposition to the empirical desire to produce a 'perfect memory of the past' that remains a preoccupation in science studies in the twenty-first century (Bowker 4). Both *Almanac* and *Mason & Dixon* show history, or perhaps more accurately *the past*, to be a continual process entwined with the present and future, characterised by traces and marks rather than a single great line. History is in this sense relative, and entangled within socio-spatial processes.

Van Dyke suggests that these 'webs of association' are *complex* and this is true insofar as the novel, in much the same way as it conceives history, consists of many different and connected parts. But *Almanac* juxtaposes this with the straightforwardness of its central plot and political message. It narrates the violence and injustice of capitalist-imperialist domination, stokes the fires of Indigenous revolution to take back native lands, and prophesises the eventual disappearance of all things European from the Americas. *Almanac's* complexity comes in its challenge to the oversimplified and dehistoricised narrative, or story, of colonialism. Yet in conceiving space and time differently, what the novel actually offers is a sense of clarity. The present moment of inequality and inequity, in which colonists in the Americas continue to occupy stolen Indigenous land, is not the inevitable result of immutable human nature or economic processes beyond human comprehension. Rather, this unevenness is actively produced, and along with it a history that gives it credence as the only possibility. Lefebvre writes of 'the modern world's brutal liquidation of history and of the past' (*Production of Space* 122). Western European history is a history formed of erasures. *Almanac* uses storytelling, understood as an ongoing process, to once again solidify the past *within* the present. The novel's stories spin these webs of associations to forge connections across time and space that, in form as well as content, stand against the boundary-drawing,

divisive logics and dehistoricised narratives of capitalist-imperialism. The cosmology put forward in *Almanac* enacts, and was already enacting, what Soja called the 'triple dialectic of space, time, and social being; a transformative re-theorization of the relations between history, geography, and modernity' (*Postmodern Geographies* 12). For Soja, this is a necessary response to the postmodern politics of Reagan and Thatcher. For Silko, it is an ontology that predates and directly challenges the five-hundred years of colonial occupation which, at the time of her writing *Almanac*, had come to inform neoliberalism. No surprise, then, that Lecha keeps her 'notebooks and fragments of the old [almanac] manuscript' in a wooden ammunition box (Silko, *Almanac* 245). Stories are a method of survival. Stories are a weapon.

In *Almanac,* old Yoeme believes that 'power resides in certain stories; this power ensures the story to be retold, and with each retelling a slight but permanent shift' takes place (Silko, *Almanac* 581). She adds to the almanac her own miraculous escape story from the Alamos jail, and the 'story of her deliverance changed forever the odds against all captives; each time a revolutionist escaped death in one century, two revolutionists escaped certain death in the following' (Silko, *Almanac* 581). Stories have an accreting power intimately tied up with their capacity to connect people. In the novel this power is material, actively changing events and altering spaces. Lefebvre understands that things can 'not be created independently of each other in space... without taking into account their interrelationships and their relationship to the whole' (*Production of Space* 124). He credits the Bauhaus with this development of a 'new conception, a global concept, of space' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 124). But, as Deloria Jr. explains, Indigenous peoples already had a holistic philosophy of space and interrelationships. This is encapsulated by the stories in *Almanac*, though their holistic relationships go further than Lefebvre would be suggesting. The story of Yoeme's escape, for example, would help revolutionists escape certain death 'even if they had never heard such an escape story' because 'where such miraculously escape stories are greatly prized and rapidly circulated, miraculous escapes from death gradually increase' (Silko, *Almanac* 581). Narratives in *Almanac* have spatial underpinnings, in this case the Alamos jail, and are socio-spatially productive in a much broader sense; here Yoeme's story produces the possibility of survival.

Stories are elsewhere in the novel necessary to resist oppressive forces. Roy is a homeless Vietnam veteran who, alongside Clinton, begins the formation of *Almanac's* Army of the Homeless that, by the end of the novel, rises up against the U.S. government by occupying vacant dwellings and government land. He muses that 'In America a man needed some kind of story to explain himself, to explain why he was here and how he had got here' (Silko, *Almanac* 397). This is quite a different perspective on story, or history, to the United States itself, which either feels no need to explain its colonial occupation or treats it as distant past. For Roy, stories become a way to connect with other homeless radicals, veteran or not, since 'what difference did it make years later whether a man had actually served in Vietnam… or only repeated stories he'd heard from older guys who had been in combat?' (Silko, *Almanac* 397). Such stories, of U.S. brutality, oppression, and injustice, are 'the only good thing they would realize from [the Vietnam] war' (Silko, *Almanac* 397). As Roy sees it, these stories are to be leveraged against the story that the United States spins about itself, as a land of freedom, democracy and opportunity. Roy witnesses the inequity produced by uneven development in America in the form of 'women and children hungry, and sleeping on the streets… [and] police beating homeless old men' (Silko, *Almanac* 393). For Roy, then, stories become a process of connection not only between people, but between socio-spatial reality and the hypocrisy of American nationalism and neoliberal rationality.

What matters in *Almanac* is not only what stories are prized and circulated, but how these stories are told. Descriptions of Indigenous storytelling in the novel are always spatialised, and also function as metafictional descriptions of the novel's structure. For example, 'Calabazas calls it 'Indian Style' when he talks and talks before he turns at the last moment, to the point' but 'there were certain messages in the route Calabazas took when he talked' (Silko, *Almanac* 215). This suggests that storytelling, rather than offering up a fixed and immutable story, provides a route through the space of a story. Thus the story is a socio-spatial process between tellers and listeners, who then have the potential to retell it. In this, Calabazas is influenced by his Yaqui elders like old Mahawala, who tells stories that 'did not run in a line for the horizon but circled and spiralled like the red-tailed hawk' (Silko, *Almanac* 224). These stories are also inherently communal, 'old Mahawala started out, and then the others, one by one, had contributed some detail or opinion or alternative version' (Silko, *Almanac* 224).

The anti-linear form is constitutive of *Almanac* itself. Caren Irr argues that the novel's spatial conception of time is relativistic (240). This lends itself to Yvonne Reineke's description of the novel as one of pattern and repetition, which she explains through an analysis of a section that depicts the journey of the ancient almanac manuscript, in which portions are lost. This section, she suggests, encapsulates 'the themes of space, time, decoding, and writing' and 'functions as an analogue for the larger narrative' (Reineke 73). The almanac manuscript is 'characterized as a living text' since it 'sustains—and ultimately saves—the children [that carry it] from starvation' because it is made from horse stomach membranes (Reineke 76). The almanac is also alive in the sense that it is never 'complete', it is open to further transformation, whether through old Yoeme's scribbles, Lecha's notetaking, or Zeta's transcription. It is also open to interpretation, and its narratives are frequently said to operate 'like codes' (Silko, *Almanac* 569). Yet the almanac delimits this interpretation to a degree, since it is a prophetic text that foretold 'the appearance of Cortés to the day'[67] and foretells the eventual disappearance of all things European from the Americas (Silko, *Almanac* 570). The importance of the interrelationship between space, time, and social being in *Almanac's* storytelling is crucial in differentiating the fictional almanac's prophecy from the Western European sense of History-as-destiny. The almanac's prophecy is not strictly teleological. It will not simply make sense of the past that led to it, nor is it conceived as an *end* as such, but rather it allows for an alternative future. Where the Western European notion of History tends to subjugate space and justify the disconnection of people from the land and each other, the almanac's prophecy offers a material hope for the future as a continual process that lies in unity between people. This is encapsulated in Yoeme's and others' belief that the almanac had a power within it 'that would bring all the tribal people of the Americas together to retake the land' (Silko, *Almanac* 570). The various acts of decoding and transcribing that characters perform on the fictional almanac become symbolic of the activity of *Almanac of the Dead*'s readers since the novel's anti-linearity encourages, if not demands, socio-spatial reading.

Almanac of the Dead is divided into six parts, and these parts are subdivided into a number of books, and these are further subdivided into subtitled stories in which the

[67] The Aztecs prophesised the return of Quetzalcoatl for the year of his name, CE AGATL. In that year, 1519, Cortés came and 'was welcomed as Quetzalcoatl to the court of Moctezuma in Tenochtitlán' before betraying the emperor's hospitality and sieging the Aztec capital (Waters 251).

narrative takes place. The novel's structure carries a great deal of symbolic weight. First, it establishes the connection between the novel *Almanac* and the fictional almanac, since they are both comprised of fragments. Indeed, even the lost pages of the fictional almanac bear a direct relation to the novel itself, since Silko lost part of the manuscript in Gettysburg. 'It was so precious,' she explains. 'And somehow I managed to lose it' (*Conversations* 170). The final book is titled 'Prophecy', and it is here that the majority of characters converge on Tucson while the revolutionary Twins travel towards the US-Mexico border. The book ends on a point of narrative coalescence, having eschewed linearity to get there. The story, however, does not end, and remains poised on the eve of revolution. At this point, the story is passed onto its readers and into the world, where real and imagined spaces coalesce.

The prophetic nature of *Almanac* runs deeper than this, taking form in the novel's very structure. The title of the novel's fifth part, 'The Fifth World,' alludes to the context of a set of Indigenous creation stories belonging to tribes, such as the Navajo and Hopi, historically located in what is now referred to as the Southwestern United States, as well as belonging to some Mesoamerican cultures. Across the majority of stories, four cycles of creation and destruction preceded the Fifth World, which is the final world in which we currently live. The Hopi story of creation, as recorded in *The Book of the Hopi* whose spokesmen 'are some thirty elders of the Hopi Indian tribe in northern Arizona', is slightly different (Waters ix). For the Hopi, we currently live in the Fourth World known as 'Túwaqachi, World Complete,' which is 'not at all beautiful and easy like the previous ones' (Waters 21). Sotúknang explains to the people as they emerge into the Fourth World that it offers 'everything for you to choose from,' and these choices will determine whether or not this world 'must in time be destroyed too' (Waters 21). In their commentary, Frank Waters and White Bear describe the Fourth World, the present world, as both the lowest point of humanity's descent and the mid-point of humanity's journey. The Fourth World contains 'the full expression of [humanity's] ruthless materialism and imperialistic will; and [humanity itself] reflects the overriding gross appetites of the flesh' (Waters 26). This bears a resemblance to the period that *Almanac* identifies as its present epoch, the 'Reign of Death-Eye Dog' during which 'human beings, especially the alien invaders, would become obsessed with hungers and impulses commonly seen in wild dogs' (Silko, *Almanac* 251). This parallel gestures towards *Almanac of the Dead* as itself a mythic text that deals in cycles of creation and destruction. The fact that even 'The Fifth

World' is not the final section of *Almanac* suggests the possibility of change, of a new world characterised not by ruthlessness and disconnection but by unity, between people and with the land.

The title of the novel's sixth and final part, 'One World, Many Tribes,' would seem to emphasise such a reading of possibilities and connections. This section title suggests an ontology rooted in a philosophy of space. The singularity of the 'One World' emphasises its primacy and irreplaceability, but also offers a holistic sense of the interrelationship of all things with, and through, the world. It is in relation to the world that the 'Many Tribes' are unified, though not homogenized. Part six is immediately preceded by the story of Zeta murdering the arms-dealer Greenlee as he is in the middle of telling a racist joke, which foreshadows the thematic shift to action in the novel's closing section. Zeta muses that 'the time had arrived more quickly than any of the people had ever dreamed, and yet, all the forces had begun to converge' (Silko, *Almanac* 702). In the novel's final part, just like the forces Zeta mentions, many of *Almanac*'s characters converge on the 'International Holistic Healers Convention' in Tucson (Silko, *Almanac* 709).

From this International Holistic Healers Convention, 'One World, Many Tribes' depicts the rapid onset of a range of revolutionary activity across America, from the eco-warriors that suicide bomb Glen Canyon Dam (Silko, *Almanac* 727) to the 'militant Sioux Indian lawyer-poet' who abandoned law school in favour of poetry because 'the deck was stacked, the dice were loaded, in the white man's law' (Silko, *Almanac* 714). This final part of *Almanac* is, by far, the section most outwardly antagonistic to neoliberalism, with many characters stating variations of 'we are at war' (Silko, *Almanac* 715).[68] The point being that this new world would need to be fought for and although 'violence begat violence… if the destroyers were not stopped, the human race was finished' (Silko, *Almanac* 739). The revolutionary, anti-imperialist politics of *Almanac* are on full display at its end, yet, as the Barefoot Hopi, a very patient and optimistic revolutionary, states, 'This is nothing! This is only the beginning!' (Silko, *Almanac* 734). This serves as a reminder that *Almanac of the Dead,* like the fictional almanac, is a living text engaged

[68] For example: 'this was war' (728), 'this is war' (728), 'Ferro had declared war on the Tucson police' (736) and 'great struggles were about to sweep all through the Americas as far north as Alaska and Canada' (739).

with its readers in a socio-spatial process that is always open to further transformation. The future lies outside of the novel, in the world, though not precisely *beyond* the novel, as its stories are a part of the world.

The story of *Almanac* is a method of survival precisely because it is a weapon to be taken up against neoliberalism. It goes 'beyond resisting empire' (Stewart-Harawira 3) by offering up not only spaces of hope but space *as* hope. The Americas were once free of colonial oppression, and, as the almanac prophesises, will be again. The socio-spatial possibilities of the past, present, and future, are woven together in *Almanac* through storytelling, and 'the power of the stories belonged to the spirits of the dead' (Silko, *Almanac* 521). In *Almanac*, and for Silko, spirit-beings and ancestor spirits are intimately connected with places, and stories are a way of connecting with these spirits as well as articulating their messages. While writing *Almanac*, Silko explains, she was 'forced to listen… I was visited by so many ancestors… it was very hard. It changed me as a human being' (*Conversations* 139). In this sense the storyteller, or author, is a part of the process of the story, rather than its owner. For Silko, the spirits are all around us, a part of social space. The power of stories belongs to them, and 'when we tell the stories of those past folks telling stories, they are actually here again in the room' (Silko, *Almanac* 139). Stories not only allow the past into the present but connect them as a singular process. History is alive with the spirits of the dead. In *Almanac*, the great weakness of the white man in America is that he 'didn't seem to understand he had no future here because he had no past, no spirits of ancestors here' (Silko, *Almanac* 313). This turns the colonial imperative to produce history through erasure on its head in suggesting that this attempt to dominate the past inevitably contains within it the seeds of future failure.

It is at the conjuncture of prophecy, storytelling, and the spiritual that *Almanac* reconciles its relationship with Marx. Silko describes *Almanac* as her 'tribute to Marx' (*Conversations* 31). The novel's prophetic sense of revolution and the coming of a new world alongside its six-part structure bear at least formal similarity to Marx's similarly six-part theory of history. This convergence is a formal expression of Coulthard's suggestion that Marxism and indigenous anti-colonialism might engage one another. Like Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks*, though, *Almanac* does not present Marxism uncritically. In the novel, Marxism has 'a bleak future on American shores' due to 'the

immense crimes of [Marx's] followers, Stalin and Mao. To the indigenous people of the Americas, no crime was worse than to allow some human beings to starve while others ate' (Silko, *Almanac* 316). It is in this sense that Silko describes the novel as 'post-Marxist' (*Conversations* 19). Nonetheless, Marx himself comes across as a sympathetic figure in *Almanac*, appearing frequently in the stories focalised through Angelita La Escapía. Angelita is a Mayan woman at the forefront of the novel's revolutionary activity, and functions as an interstitial character in the sense that she connects various factions in the novel, like the Cuban Marxists, with the Indigenous struggle for their ancestral lands. At the International Holistic Healers Convention in Tucson, she acts as an emissary for the twin brothers and provides an update on their spiritual quest north to the US-Mexico border. But she is also shown to make preparations, in the form of 'army surplus Stinger missiles', should things turn violent (Silko *Almanac* 739). For La Escapía, Marx is an anti-colonial thinker because he 'had never forgotten the indigenous people of the Americas, or of Africa' (Silko, *Almanac* 315) and had 'caught the capitalists of the British empire with bloody hands' (*Almanac* 312). She does, however, differentiate between 'Marx *the man'* and Marxism, or the 'so-called disciples of Marx [who] had often disgraced his name' (Silko, *Almanac* 519). This differentiation is the novel's reconciliation of Marx with Indigenous anti-colonial struggles, and it is predicated on the link between storytelling and the spiritual.

La Escapía sees Marx, above all else, as a 'storyteller who worked feverishly to gather together a magical assembly of stories to cure the suffering and evils of the world by the retelling of the stories' (Silko, *Almanac* 316). Her first encounter with Marxism is soured by the Cuban Marxists' misreading of Marx in lectures aimed at 'trying to educate' Indigenous peoples. She 'had expected to hate everything the Cubans taught' (Silko, *Almanac* 311). Eventually, however, the Cubans read directly from *Das Kapital* and La Escapía 'felt it. A flash! A sudden boom. This old white-man philosopher had something to say about the greed and the cruelty' (Silko, *Almanac* 311). The direct reading of Marx conjures Marx himself, free of Cuban misinterpretation, into the narrative. La Escapía differentiates Marx from the white men who for hundreds of years 'had been telling the people of the Americas to forget the past' and, instead, 'Marx came along and he was telling people to remember' (Silko, *Almanac* 311). She parallels Marx's understanding of history with the 'old-time people [who] had believed the same thing: they must reckon with the past because within it lay the seeds of the present and the future' (Silko, *Almanac*

311). This is what marks Marxism's break with Western philosophic tradition: Marxism is the only genuine (Western) philosophy of the future, and of hope, because it recognises 'the future in the past' (Bloch 9). For La Escapía, Marx recognises the future in the past *through storytelling*.

Marx 'had gathered official government reports of the suffering of English factory workers the way a tribal shaman might have... [and] in the repetition of the workers' stories lay great power… no factory inspector's 'official report' could whitewash the tears, blood, and sweat that glistened from the simple words of the narrative' (Silko, *Almanac* 520). La Escapía's description gives spatial form to the factory workers' stories not only because these stories are 'gathered', but because of the physicality of their narratives, the 'tears, blood, and sweat' that cannot be separated from the words. La Escapía is enacting a socio-spatial reading of *Capital.* In some sense, she suggests that Marx himself did the same with official government reports, especially given her subsequent assertion that 'Marx had understood stories are alive with the energy words generate' (Silko, *Almanac* 520). In La Escapía's reading, Marxist histories are *spatialised* and in this way stand against the 'official report' of History that Deloria Jr. describes as 'a steady progression of basically good events and experiences [depicted] in the best possible light' (*God is Red* 61). History does not simply *take place* in isolation but is a process within the 'triple dialectic of space, time, and social being' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 12). Histories are explicitly stories in *Almanac*, and thus linked to the novel's presentation of storytelling as a process at once spatial and spiritual. La Escapía's Marx understood that 'stories or histories are sacred… within 'history' reside relentless forces, powerful spirits, vengeful, relentlessly seeking justice' (Silko, *Almanac* 316). Much postmodernist criticism has revealed history as a narrative, or a set of narratives, but the crucial point here is that histories are socio-spatial: produced and productive but reducible to neither.

In *Almanac,* histories are intimately tied up with the spirits of the dead. The 'root of all trouble for Europeans' was that they 'did not listen to the souls of their dead' (Silko, *Almanac* 604). The temporality of capitalist-imperialism requires that the *past* be disconnected from the *present.* The dead must remain dead, cast off and silenced, and thus 'in the Americas the white man never referred to the past but only to the future' (Silko, *Almanac* 313). Otherwise capitalist-imperialism could not construct history as 'a

steady progression of basically good events' (Deloria Jr., *God is Red* 61). This history is necessarily incomplete, or selective, in order to present a singular path to the present that ostensibly, but only ostensibly, continues into the future. La Escapía's Marx, on the other hand, understood that 'the most complete history was the most powerful force' (Silko, *Almanac* 316). This is a socio-spatial history, one attentive to the souls and stories of the dead, that recognises 'the past could never be pinned down. Each person remembered a moment differently' (Silko *Almanac* 395). But in *Almanac* it is actively suppressed: 'the powers who controlled the United States didn't want the people to know their history. If people knew their history, they would realise they must rise up' (Silko, *Almanac* 431). In one of many moments where the margins between *Almanac* and the world are blurred, this suppression is not confined to fiction. In 2012, the Tucson Unified School District banned the textbook *Rethinking Columbus* which offered alternative narratives of the European conquest of the Americas in a bid to demythologise the voyages of Christopher Columbus, and even contained an essay by Silko.

Marx and Engels emerge in *Almanac* as exceptions, as Europeans that stand against European brutality. They are squarely enemies of colonialism, and Christian missionaries recite 'the names of Marx and Engels, right after the names of Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub' (Silko, *Almanac* 317). While Marx and Engels are reconciled with Indigenous ways of being, *Almanac* is always careful to establish that Indigenous knowledge predates Marx, and he simply 'understood what tribal people had always known' (Silko, *Almanac* 520). That is, Marx understood the importance of connection, understood that 'no individual survived without others', and is thus devoted 'to the workers' stories' (Silko, *Almanac* 520). Stories forge connections across space and time, they allow people to live on 'in the imaginations and hearts of their descendants' (Silko, *Almanac* 520). Storytelling as a connective socio-spatial process stands against the disconnecting logics of neoliberalism, and the history of dispossession and erasure that facilitated it. This stands in direct opposition to the behaviour of the neoliberal characters in *Almanac,* none of whom ever tell stories beyond their own self-interested focalised narration to the reader. These characters are defined by social and spatial detachment, and their greedy whims are shown to wrack Tucson with uneven development and structural violence.

iii. Uneven development and the indomitable Tucson

All of the characters in *Almanac* are defined by, and in relation to, the spaces they mould and inhabit. There is a distinct spatial difference between the villains of the piece, the wealthy and powerful, and those who oppose them. Though there is a great deal of moral greyness around many characters' actions in *Almanac*, the novel rarely lets up on its insistence that there is a nefarious and malevolent oppressive class comprised of specific self-interested individuals. There are clear enemies here, and they consistently act against the interests of *the people* as collective. As Roy and Clinton agree, 'battle lines will be drawn according to color: green, the color of money, the only color that had ever mattered' (Silko, *Almanac,* 406). In a similar tenor, an 'eco-warrior' at the International Holistic Healers Convention says that 'This was war. The new enemies… [were] the richest people on earth' (Silko, *Almanac* 728). This section will focus on *Almanac's* presentation of the production of uneven development as a result of deliberate and malicious actions by its neoliberal characters' attempts to dominate space. They are shown to not only benefit from inequality but revel in it. The section goes on to argue that social and spatial production are deeply entwined and that, therefore, the neoliberal characters are defined by detachment and abstraction produce, inhabit and prize spaces that exhibit the same traits. This comes to the fore in an analysis of the planned city for the hyper-rich, Venice, Arizona. The section, and chapter, concludes, however, that no matter how much wealthy and powerful characters, corporations and governments exert themselves spatially, Tucson specifically and Arizona more generally remains always outside of total control. It is a symbolic space of resistance and hope.

The novel's antagonists, all exceptionally wealthy beneficiaries of the neoliberal system, consistently produce and inhabit spaces that are predicated on disconnection and exclusion. Essentially, all of the "bad" characters in *Almanac* are unified by their desire to dominate spaces, and their perpetuation of uneven development. The kinds of spaces they produce are dually linked to neoliberal excess and histories of imperialism. For instance, when La Escapía walks around Mexico City, which has been spatially dominated by the ultra-rich, she is 'in a daze at what she was seeing—at the immensity of wealth behind the towers of steel and concrete and glass, built on this empire for European princes' (*Almanac*, 312). Skyscrapers here are not only symbolic containers of wealth, but borders between that wealth and the people. The characters that oppose

inequity and inequality are unified not only by their desire for communal spaces but also unity *with* spaces and the natural world. Even the Indigenous revolution to take back the ancestral lands, led by the Twins marching north to the US-Mexico border, is defined by inclusion: 'All were welcome. It was only necessary to walk with the people and let go of all the greed and the selfishness in one's heart' (Silko, *Almanac* 710).

Almanac's most consistent political subject is the return of land to Indigenous peoples and it drives, directly and indirectly, all of the radical action in the novel. It unifies the vast majority of the Indigenous characters, and is 'the only 'truth' tribes could agree upon' (Silko, *Almanac* 310). It is the subject of the almanac's prophecy, and the desire of a variety of spirit beings, that no matter what, 'tribal people would retake ancestral land all over the world. This was what earth's spirits wanted: her Indigenous children who loved her and did not harm her' (Silko, *Almanac* 712). This is the book's central issue because the dispossession of land is the foundational act of colonial countries, and it sets the stage for a capitalist-imperialist spatiality. The Western philosophic tradition treats space as the 'domain of the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile – a world of passivity and measurement rather than action and meaning' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 37). In this context, the assertion that Europeans 'did not listen to the souls of their dead' takes on further meaning (Silko, *Almanac* 604). The trouble with European historicising is that it is not a *spatialised* history, and it misunderstands space, the 'domain of the dead' (Soja, 37), as *passive*. This deadened view of space actively erodes the destruction of Indigenous social space that came with colonialism. Thus the Indigenous land claim carries all of this with it. As Coulthard explains, land claims are intricately interconnected with a 'distinct *mode of life*; a life on/with the land that stressed individual autonomy, collective responsibility, nonhierarchical authority, communal land tenure, and mutual aid' (65). He argues that Indigenous struggles, and thus critiques of capitalism, were historically 'deeply *informed* by the land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations' but that formal land-claims processes, and their language of private property, have reoriented this to a 'struggle that is now increasingly *for* land, understood now as material resource to be exploited in the capital accumulation process' (78). This is why the land claim is so central to *Almanac*'s politics, because it also entails the return (or the retaking) of Indigenous modes of life.

In contrast to this mode of life, *Almanac's* antagonists engage in the deadening of space and nature for short-term gains. Architecture is throughout the novel shown to be a tool of the elite and, thus, oppressive and alienating. After all, as Stephen Klein writes, 'most often [architecture] is the product of the dominant culture and, as such, assists that culture in maintaining its hegemony. Designers, architects and planners often reinforce the existing order by shaping spaces and objects that support its interest of money and power by creating its symbols' (Klein qtd. in Dutton & Mann 18). This is why Lefebvre recommends treating architectures as 'archi-textures' by viewing 'each monument or building… in its surroundings and context, in the populated area and associated networks in which it is set down, as part of a particular production of space' (*Production of Space* 118). In this way, the architecture in *Almanac* always appears as both a tool and symptom of neoliberalism. All of the spaces depicted in *Almanac* that capitalism has produced, even down to family homes, are defined by detachment from the world and from other people.

Clinton and Roy travel northwest from Tucson and scope out often-unoccupied houses that they will later occupy with the army of the homeless. These homes are all 'scattered on the tops of foothills and ridges, isolated from the desert as well as from one another' (Silko, *Almanac* 400-1). These houses are built on elevated surfaces, symbolising power and wealth, though this carries another symbolism with it, that this power is somehow precarious, always at the edge of a precipice. More importantly, these houses absolutely alienate socio-spatial relations. They form a border between the natural world, here the desert, and their interiors. Not only that, but as these are (at the very least) second homes for the wealthy, most of the time they are not even used for the purpose they were built for. The isolation of the houses *from one another* alludes to the hyper-individualism of neoliberalism, which is a trait that all of the powerful and wealthy characters in *Almanac* exhibit.

The only architect that the novel gives space to is Alegría, who is consistently shown to be selfish, 'she lives for herself. She knows this but can not stop. There is no other use for her' (Silko, *Almanac* 320). It is in this sense that she can be read as (although not reduced to) a metaphor for architecture. Her architectural drawings are precise and delicate, but they contain 'no human figures' (Silko, *Almanac* 320). Instead, she draws animals, because human figures 'spoil everything' (Silko, *Almanac* 320). Her architecture

is one without people, and her classmates ask her 'whom are these buildings for? What meaning do they have for any of us?' (Silko, *Almanac* 320). To these criticisms, she says 'when you take power, you will want big buildings too' (Silko, *Almanac* 320). Alegría can see no purpose to architecture beyond the display of power. Her drawings transpose almost perfectly into the mansion she works on for one of the novel's wealthy characters, Menardo. At university, she draws 'a monkey [that] played in the orchids of the hanging garden, and she drew a scarlet macaw on a perch' (Silko, *Almanac* 320). Slightly earlier in the book, a description of Menardo's mansion included 'gardeners assistants [that] hang like monkeys from ladders, tending orchids' (Silko, *Almanac* 310). Those under Menardo's employ are reduced, seemingly by the architecture itself, to monkeys.

Lefebvre argues that 'architecture produces living bodies' and its animating principle is that it 'reproduces itself within those who *use* the space… within their lived experience' (*Production of Space* 137). Menardo's mansion, itself a product of gross inequality, reproduces those inequalities in those who use it. The dehumanising of the assistants is a demarcation of privilege, separating them from Menardo and Alegría. In *Almanac*, there is a clear link between the way characters are shown to conceptualise space and the way they interact with other people. Silko has said that the characters in *Almanac* are 'so intense or extreme as to be almost mythical' (*Conversations* 169). The characters in the novel function symbolically for the tension between the neoliberal production of space and a fundamentally oppositional philosophy of relative space. That is to say, the characters' social relations mirror their spatiality. The rich and powerful are consistently shown to lack empathy and objectify other people. They disconnect themselves from others in a bid to dominate them.

The most reprehensible and, not coincidentally, by far the most privileged characters in the book are Beaufrey and Serlo. They are descended from European aristocracy. They self-describe as '*sangre pura*; blue blood' (Silko, *Almanac* 542). In the novel, they act as a reminder of the link between aristocratic wealth, imperialism, and capitalism. Though they resent that the United States has 'vulgarized wealth by allowing the lowest levels of humanity to worm their way into political power', they both agree that 'lineage was all that mattered. Those of highest lineage had never lost their great wealth' (Silko, *Almanac* 541). Beaufrey muses that there is 'nothing in the world that money could not buy' and often wields his power specifically to purchase things that are

not for sale because the words '*unavailable* and *forbidden* did not apply to aristocrats' since laws in the 'United States traced their origins to the 'courts' of feudal lords who… passed judgement on the serfs' (Silko, *Almanac* 534-5). Law, alongside wealth, is here depicted as a tool of the elite; the very structure of society is built arounds the needs and wants of an empowered few. Serlo is particularly troubled by the thought of losing his power and worries about 'the days of chaos about to arrive' due to the population growth of 'swarms of brown and yellow human larvae called natives' (Silko, *Almanac* 545). To this end, he belongs to a 'secret multinational organisation with a 'secret agenda' for the entire world' (Silko, *Almanac* 545). This group is engaged in eugenics research (Silko, *Almanac* 541) and creates HIV to target 'the poor, the non-white… The filthy would die. The clean would live' (Silko, *Almanac* 548). Serlo believes that *sangre pura* is an 'endangered species [that] fought for survival with no holds barred' (Silko, *Almanac* 548). His worldview depends on structural inequality because it requires absolute stratification between the masses and those of *sangre pura*.

Serlo disengages himself from those that are not *sangre pura* and is 'not curious about the fate of insignificant beings' (Silko, *Almanac* 550). He despises the very notion of connection, which he depicts as feminine: 'the nature of the female was to engulf what was outside her body, to never let the umbilical cord be severed; gradually the mother became a vampire' (Silko, *Almanac* 542). Serlo's detachment is directly linked to his patriarchal misogyny, and he is defined by an absolute disconnection from others**.** Beaufrey exhibits the same detachment, treating his interactions with others as a game (Silko, *Almanac* 539). He finds enjoyment in permitting his young lover David to misunderstand his 'importance in the world' (Silko, *Almanac* 537). In the course of this game, Beaufrey abducts David's child and has its organs harvested, a fact which he successfully hides from David for the novel's duration (Silko, *Almanac* 563). He is shown to be absolutely without empathy when, while consoling David over the loss of his child, he realises 'he must not giggle again because David's baby had been stolen only hours earlier' (Silko, *Almanac* 540)**.** He revels in his power over others, nothing 'got Beaufrey hotter than pumping away at an unsuspecting asshole such as David; ignorant of everything' (Silko, *Almanac* 561). Yet 'Beaufrey always had sex in silk pajamas… [he] did not allow himself to be seen *or* embraced *or* touched. He ignored his partners' (Silko, *Almanac* 552). He requires not only moral distance but physical borders between himself and those he considers his inferiors. In his social interactions, Beaufrey channels the same

lack of sentimentality and mercy that he admires in the free market. Indeed, for Beaufrey, 'others did not fully exist—they were only ideas that flitted across his consciousness then disappeared' (Silko, *Almanac* 533). To Beaufrey, the possibility of connection with other humans, emotional or otherwise, is impossible since they exist to him only as *his* ideas. This fundamental disconnection from others is necessary to Beaufrey's attempts to dominate them.

Beaufrey and Serlo own a luxury *finca* (ranch) to which they can retreat in the result of social, political, or economic, unrest. Its 'underground vaults and storage units' contain various currencies, giant tanks of water and wine, as well as 'immense stores of dehydrated foods' (Silko, *Almanac* 542). Thanks to Serlo, the *finca* is also equipped with an 'Alternative Earth unit' that 'contained the plants, animals, and water necessary to continue independently' (Silko, *Almanac* 542). Serlo hopes that, eventually, these Alternative Earth modules will be launched into orbit so that 'the select few could continue as they always had, gliding in luxury an ease across polished decks of steel and glass islands where they looked down on earth as they had once gazed down at Rome or Mexico City from luxury penthouses, still sipping cocktails' (Silko, *Almanac* 542). Here Serlo seeks to reproduce the inequalities that afford him luxury by literally and figuratively *conquering space*. Just as Beaufrey and Serlo's social relations are defined by disconnection, so are the spaces they produce and inhabit. These characters are *Almanac*'s reminder that neoliberalism is necessarily without empathy and relies on socio-spatial disconnection, whether it takes the form of colonial dispossession or stratification through race, gender, class, sexuality, and so on. The novel traces a link between the socio-spatial practices of five hundred years of colonialism and those of contemporary neoliberalism..

Shackelford points out that the novel is 'frequently (mis)read as a reactionary assertion of an ethnonationalist, place-bound, identitarian politics unaware of the workings of global capital' (4). Such readings of *Almanac* fundamentally ignore its foregrounding of the deep links between neoliberalism and imperialism. They thus entirely misapprehend *Almanac's* focus on the Indigenous land claim as, somehow, a direct correlate of the violent nationalism stoked by neoliberalism that Derksen referred to as spatialisation by fear (*After Euphoria* 177). This decontextualised and dehistoricised view of the novel is tied up in neoliberal ideology, perceiving land as mere material

resource to be exploited and not as deeply interrelated with a distinct mode of life. The misreading is also, as Shackelford argues, 'a byproduct of strict adherence to the theoretical opposition between the space of modern political forms and global capitalism's networking logics' (4). This is, in other words, adherence to globalisation's self-conception whereby the global space, imagined as a dynamic network, supersedes and even subjugates local, regional, and national spaces. Thus there is a perceived tension between modern political forms (the nation-state) and global capitalism. Yet, as Shackelford forcefully argues by turning Manuel Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996) on its head, there are actually strong continuities between the social spaces of abstract global space and local, regional, and national space. By focusing on the interrelation and interdependence of these spaces, Shackelford considers the possibility that the *discontinuities* in their spatial logics are not a moments of tension at all, but rather 'integral to the functioning of global capitalist networks' (9). In material terms, for example, global capital not only benefits but relies on the delimiting of labour force movement by spatial boundaries ranging from borders to the availability of accommodation. This is one of the ways that neoliberalism embraces its processes of uneven development.

In *Almanac*, Serlo and Beaufrey embody these complex spatial interdependencies of global capitalism. By way of their wealth and social status, they operate dynamically within the networked space of globalisation, yet they are entirely reliant on nation-states. Beaufrey relies on the nation-state because they produce the simulations of democracy that he believes keeps people in line, and Serlo because his shadowy multinational corporation operates through governments. Moreover, their luxury *finca,* replete with its immense stores of food, commodities, and hard currency, operates entirely outside of abstract global space. Shackelford sees the spatial interdependencies of neoliberalism at work in the novel's El Grupo Gun Club, which consists of state actors (including politicians, judges, and police chiefs), criminals, and capitalists that operate across the US-Mexico border. This public-private corruption 'flags the inextricability of national political interests and economic interests' and suggests that while 'global capitalist flows may striate the geopolitical space of the nation-state', they actually consolidate the

privilege of these individuals (Shackelford 17).[69] The ostensible connections forged by globalisation ultimately scale up inequalities rather than lead to the flat world promised by Thomas Friedman. In a rather blunt parody of global connectivity, Max Blue, the novel's premiere assassin-for-hire to wealthy individuals, corporations, and governments alike, muses that:

> this was the modern age. [He] could take care of everything by phone. By private couriers. As the dust cleared, the smoke blew over, and the corpse got stiff, thousands of miles away Max Blue would be teeing off in the distance at the arid, blue mountain commenting to a congressmen or federal judge that the mountains were as blue as lapis lazuli (Silko *Almanac* 372).

Max is here the ultimate emblem of globalised corruption, as he plays golf calmly with government officials and admires the landscape, assassinations he has orchestrated take place around the globe. The novel depicts Max as a symbol of the U.S. itself. He is described as having 'made a deal' with death (Silko, *Almanac* 442) and death is linked directly to the Americas where it 'roamed freely night and day' (Silko, *Almanac* 423). The presentable face of a corrupt system, here Max Blue is akin to the way the U.S. self-presents while engaging in global imperialism. Given that *Almanac's* characters are 'almost mythical' (*Conversations* 169), the sociopathic behaviour of characters like Serlo and Beaufrey, as well as members of the El Grupo Gun Club, represent the socio-spatial disconnections fundamental to the abstract global economic space of neoliberalism.

Serlo asserts that 'the only useful function for common rabble' is organ donation (Silko, *Almanac* 560). As is almost always the case in *Almanac*, there is a character trying to corner that market. Trigg harvests blood and organs, which he refers to as *bioproducts*, from the poor. He specifically seeks to exploit areas of high unemployment for a ready supply of donors. He also takes pleasure in abducting the homeless, who he imagines as subhuman, and bleeding them dry because 'nobody ever notices they are gone' (Silko, *Almanac* 444). Taking the neoliberal logics of competition and individualisation to their extremes, he blames his homeless victims 'for being easy prey' and even thinks of his murder as generosity, doubting that 'any of them could hope for a better death. They were

[69] This is the result of contemporary neoliberalism that, as the chapter demonstrated, draws from the Ordoliberal and Chicago School in its paradoxical conception of the free market as somehow transcendent but at the same time requiring state intervention to properly function.

human debris' (Silko, *Almanac* 444). At the beginning of this chapter, the wage relation was explained as temporal exploitation through its literal theft of time, but I also argued that we might think of it in spatial terms as the theft of the body itself. Trigg's brutalisation of poor, unemployed, disadvantaged and homeless bodies is a prime, if hyperbolic, example of this spatial exploitation at work in the neoliberal context. Tillett argues that Trigg is a literal vampire capitalist whose actions represent the kinds of punishments meted out by capitalism 'to keep the poor firmly in their place' (37). She links this extra-textually to the Reagan administration's attitude towards the poor 'whose very poverty marks their insubordination within the capitalist system' (Tillett 37). Trigg, who notably 'was convinced he was a genius' (Silko, *Almanac* 381), embodies a neoliberal approach to the poor and disadvantaged by shifting the responsibility entirely to his victims while simultaneously dehumanising them, thus morally distancing himself and reaffirming his own arrogance.[70] This is precisely the same social relation *of disconnection* that Serlo and Beaufrey, as well as the novel's other elites, exhibit. This neoliberal social relation of dehumanisation and distance does not simply flash into existence in the mental realm but is intricately tied up with the uneven development and production of capitalist space that Trigg's vicious trade in living bodies relies upon.

Trigg, depraved neoliberal innovator-entrepreneur that he is, is reliant on producing and exploiting uneven spaces. He favours Tucson because he can take advantage of underdevelopment and unemployment to access more human bodies as raw material. He is also pleased that 'Tucson employees were ignorant of the value of blood and other "bioproducts"' (Silko, *Almanac* 389). Trigg's trade in bioproducts is, however, only the opening gambit of a longer game. His blood-plasma donor centres destroyed neighbourhoods and drove property prices down, at which point 'Trigg came and cleaned up, buying most property at forty cents on the dollar' (Silko, *Almanac* 379). Trigg dreams of entirely redesigning Tucson into the global 'health and beauty capital' and luring rich visitors with grand resort hotels and a luxury hospital for cosmetic surgery and organ transplants (Silko, *Almanac* 663). He essentially wants to carve Tucson up so that a ready supply of the structurally poor can be leveraged as resources to service the transnational elite. He wants to build into the space of Tucson the very moral distance he exhibits

[70] The same logic stands true for his use of words like 'bioproducts' to describe his trade in blood and organs (Silko, *Almanac* 444). This, as Tillett points out, is the use of dissociative language 'to enable moral disengagement' (37).

toward the poor. Yet as Leah Blue points out, Trigg is thinking too small. She cannot imagine that millionaire transplant surgeons 'will tolerate living in Tucson' (Silko, *Almanac* 664). Here, like any good neoliberal, she sees her own competitive advantage. Trigg's uneven development of Tucson will leave it ugly, serving to make the adjacent city she plans to build, with its 'white marble palazzos and canals of cobalt blue water', even more irresistible (Silko, *Almanac* 664).

The production of neoliberal space in *Almanac* is best captured in its depiction of this 'city for the twenty-first century', Venice, Arizona (Silko, *Almanac,* 375). Leah wants to build this city in the desert around Tucson, which will siphon an enormous amount of water from the surrounding area, crippling numerous communities for the benefit of an elite few. The novel's subsection titled 'Venice, Arizona' occurs almost exactly in the centre of the book (on pages 374-378 of 763) and it centres many of the book's major themes. Venice is the most overt attempt by *Almanac'*s rich to dominate both people and space through the oppressive power of architecture as well as the colonial logics that underpin uneven development. Leah plans the city without a care for its socio-spatial effects. Leah herself sees the space as literally dying: 'It was too late for the desert around Tucson anyway. Look at it. Pollution was already killing foothill paloverde trees all across the valley' (Silko, *Almanac* 375). The city is conceived in abstract exclusively for a wealthy class of transnational elites from elsewhere, and it is imagined through purely economic means. Venice's array of fountains and canals, for example, are the result of market research that 'repeatedly found new arrivals in the desert were reassured by the splash of water' (Silko, *Almanac* 375) and surveys that show 'both residential and commercial buyers responded most strongly to property with flowing water' (SIlko, *Almanac* 658). The city is relentlessly planned, with an attention to authenticity verging on the hyperreal, as Leah refuses to use synthetic marble (Silko, *Almanac* 375) and imagines 'brilliant white walls of palazzos and villas bordered with lawns that ran into fairways and greens' (Silko,*Almanac* 658).

Venice not only *produces* unevenness in its exceptional elite-only nature, but is reliant upon uneven development and its collateral across multiple spatial scales:

> [Leah's] dream city had been calculated with Arizona's financial collapse and Mexico's civil war in mind. Venice, Arizona would rise out of the dull desert

> gravel, its blazing purity of white marble set between canals the color of lapis, and lakes of turquoise (Silko, *Almanac* 662).

Leah conceives Venice on predictable economic instability and international war as the ebb-and-flow of the neoliberal world system works to further enrich the rich. Venice is in this regard a profound socio-spatial restructuring that would 'meet the urgent demands of capitalism in crisis – to open up new opportunities for super-profits, to find new ways to maintain social control' (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* 34). There is an air of sanctity in the way that Leah thinks of Venice rising from the dull desert, gesturing to the narcissistic self-image of the elite. But this language perhaps has more in common with marketing spiel in high-end real estate, as the artificial city enlivens the deadened natural world. Just like the New York apartment building, 200 Eleventh Avenue, mentioned in the introduction to this thesis that 'energizes the neighbourhood' (Selldorf), Leah Blue's Venice energizes the desert. These are, however, narratives that these projects spin about themselves. Where 200 Eleventh Avenue produces unevenness through the spatialisation of financial equality, Venice quite literally bleeds the area around it dry. It not only relies on the grotesque unevenness of Trigg's Tucson, but on the destruction of surrounding communities through water siphoning. Leah has to do some legal wrangling to obtain deep-well drilling permits, but this is no problem for somebody with her financial power and connections. It is here in the novel that the deep spatial links between neoliberalism and colonialism are most obvious or, in other words, where we explicitly see the *colonial* production of economic space.

To get her deep-well drilling permits, Leah has to use her husband's connection to Judge Arne through the El Grupo Gun Club. She wants Arne to dismiss an 'obscure water-rights suit brought by some Nevada Indians against a subdivider in Bullhead City' (Silko, *Almanac* 376) because it will force the State of Arizona to grant her the permits, but leave no paper-trail between the unrelated case and her applications. Arne is confident that he can influence the water case 'at every level, all the way up to the Supreme Court' and explains that 'Indians could file lawsuits until hell and their reservation froze over' but he would never issue any restraining orders against Leah's deep wells (Silko, *Almanac* 376). Notably, Arne explains that he believes in 'states' rights, absolutely' (Silko, *Almanac* 376). Tillett explains that Arne's emphasis on states' rights is a direct reference to the neoliberal politics of the Reagan administration, which veiled an

empowerment of the wealthy few and the minimising of federal safeguards and oversights in the rhetoric of regional and local freedoms (Tillett, 52). Moreover, in the case of *water rights* in particular, 'Indian Affairs officials, as well as Justice Department attorneys, often attempted to protect Indigenous water rights—it was states, settler water users, and their congressional advocates who tried to oppose them' (Griffith 28). Indigenous peoples have been forced to legally fight for their water rights, and this is a difficult task thanks to the ambiguities in *Winters v. United States*, a landmark case which appeared to be a victory for Indigenous peoples. However, while federal courts tend to 'uphold reserved water rights stemming from *Winters*', Congress and state legislatures 'ignore or circumvent the law' (Griffith 30). This means that 'Indigenous peoples are often unable to convert their water rights into actual use of water' (Griffith 30). Leah, by way of Arne, leverages this tendency to get her deep-well drilling permits, despite the destruction it will wreak. She uses a distinctively *colonial* legal apparatus to produce the capitalist space of Venice, Arizona which will unevenly develop the surrounding area.

The legal system is here shown to be in service of economic gain. It is power at a distance that, at Leah's behest, disconnects people from a basic human right to water. Moreover, the case that Arne intervenes in is disconnected from Leah's project itself. In this way, the law as a tool is the structural form of the moral distancing that all of the elite in *Almanac* exhibit. The oppressive nature of the legal system is disguised by its purported justice-bearing neutrality. The neoliberal legal system functions alongside what Taiaiake Alfred calls postmodern imperial conditions, where 'oppression has become increasingly invisible', no longer taking form as military occupation or blatant land thefts but through a 'fluid confluence of politics, economics, psychology and culture' (qtd. in Coulthard 47). The U.S. legal system has always played an important role in legitimising the colonial production of capitalist space. *Winters* is a prime example, as it attempts 'to dictate what Indigenous peoples' relationship is to water through legal narrative' (Griffith 32). It uses legal narrative to dictate cultural, political, psychological, economic and even social relations. In much the same way, numerous cases regarding land claims, as well as frequent U.S. breaches of treaties, attempt to dictate Indigenous peoples' relation to *space.* This is why the poem read by the 'militant Sioux Indian lawyer-poet' Weasel Tail in *Almanac's* final section contains a list of legal cases, including the Marshall Trilogy which shaped the power between states and the federal government and formed the bedrock of federal Indian law, alongside the repeated

declaration that it is actually the U.S. that is unlawful and unjust (Silko, *Almanac* 715). The key point is that neoliberal spatiality must constantly, and forcibly, be renewed.

Venice, Arizona is a rearticulation of colonial powers to shape a distinctly neoliberal space. This is the 'bourgeoisification' of nature, of the desert, where a space is 'reclaimed for residential purposes by the elite' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 57). The city is to be defined by disconnection in every way. A disconnection with the natural world, a disconnection of the Venice elite from the Tucson "masses" and a disconnection of water, of life, from the surrounding area. It is a product of, and productive of, the moral distancing exhibited by Beaufrey, Serlo, and the members of the El Grupo Gun Club. It is an absolute statement of power and socio-economic difference, and an inscription of this difference into space itself. Lefebvre argues that historians have described early colonial Spanish-American towns as artificial products, but forgotten that these products are also instruments of production. They were 'a superstructure foreign to the original space [which] serves as a political means of introducing a social and economic structure' (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 151). The colonial spatial product that is simultaneously an instrument of (social) production is precisely how Venice, Arizona functions in *Almanac*. It reintroduces, renews, and amplifies a social and economic structure of inequality and unevenness. Its hyperreal artificiality is the result of market research into human desires, or more precisely the desires of the wealthy elite. It is a city that has been calculated in every sense. The use of marble fountains and facades function in much the same way that Lefebvre argues 'Greek columns on the façade of a stock exchange or bank' do; it signifies capitalism's inability to 'produce a space other than capitalist space and its efforts to conceal that production as such' (*Production of Space* 160). A pure instance of conceived space, or what Lefebvre calls the space of architects and town planners, Venice ultimately remains mere conception, an idealised mental projection. At the novel's end, Leah has her legal go-ahead and work is about to begin on the city. Though Leah has planned this city with civil unrest in mind, it is worth remembering that the novel closes on the precipice of revolution. Venice, Arizona might serve as a last bastion of the elite and their reliance on extreme inequality but it also serves as a stark reminder of the contradictions of capital that emerge in space. Yet these contradictions, for all their spatial fixes, are not sustainable. Weasel Tail asks in his poem, 'You think colonialism lasts forever?' (Silko, *Almanac* 714). It will destroy itself, and if we do not produce an alternative politics, it will take us all with it.

The city of Tucson contrasts deeply with the absolutely conceived, over-calculated city of Venice, Arizona. Tucson is shown again and again to be porous, an ongoing socio-spatial dynamic that is made up of innumerable interstitial spaces, just as the novel's five-hundred year map depicts it. Tucson is a colonial city, but never wholly colonised. It has been ravaged by uneven development, full of 'empty storefronts and empty houses' (Silko, *Almanac* 661). It is a 'city of thieves' and brutality in which 'money talk[s] louder than bullets. In Tucson a man might dare you to shoot him; but no man in Tucson ever refused a hundred-dollar bill' (Silko, *Almanac* 386, 434). Petty crime is rife, but the real criminals are the social elite that collude with the state to run drugs and arms across the border: 'Tucson had always depended on some sort of war to keep cash flowing' (Silko, *Almanac* 598). The city's proximity to the border leads to rumours of shady U.S. military recruiters around the country seeking good soldiers to relocate to Tucson, where they are creating a '"bastion of strength" to run the length of the U.S. southern border', a fictional detail that reads as dark realism in the wake of Trump's border discourse (Silko, *Almanac* 398). Yet there are also rumours that Tucson 'had communist priests and terrorist nuns and even the Methodist churches in Tucson were communist' (SIlko, *Almanac* 398). The point is that Tucson is not a fixed space, and always somehow escapes control: 'white men had never been able to control Tucson or the Mexican border' (Silko, *Almanac* 357). The imaginary borderline, which only existed 'in the white man's mind' (Silko, *Almanac* 592), fails to contain the city's socio-spatiality: 'Tucson was too close to Mexico. Tucson *was* Mexico, only no one in the United States realised it yet' (Silko, *Almanac* 759). Tucson is where *Almanac* all comes together; where its narratives and characters converge. The city comes to symbolise the contestability of space itself. This convergence emphasises that anticolonial struggles and class struggles must, as Soja argues, 'encompass and focus upon the vulnerable point: the production of space' (*Postmodern Geographies* 92). This is the revolutionary fervour of Silko's tribute to Marx: a stark reminder of the complex interrelationship between colonialism and neoliberalism, and the attendant necessity of a politics of space.

All of the revolutionary actions in the novel are deeply spatial. From the suicide bombing of the Glen Canyon Dam (Silko, *Almanac* 727) to the homeless army's occupation of vacant homes to the Korean-American hacker Awa Gee compromising 'air traffic control systems [and] interstate power-transmission lines' (Silko, *Almanac* 683). For Awa Gee, it 'had become increasingly clear that the people were up against the giants.

But the giants had been ruthless for too long; the giants had become deluded about their power’ (Silko, *Almanac* 683). The economic sense of space that neoliberalism projects is still materially rooted. This is why the struggle for space is paramount to avoiding the catastrophic consequences of reckless and rampant accumulation. Silko’s *Almanac* gets more prescient by the day, as a Tucson border patrol agent is acquitted of shooting a Mexican teenager (Jacobs) and the US fires tear gas at children across the borderline (Vazquez). *Almanac* and its seemingly prophetic depiction of neoliberal violence and excess makes clear that any struggle against neoliberalism must necessarily be a spatial struggle, in theoretical and practical terms. This must not only take form as a struggle *for* space, but fundamentally for the means of production of space and its equitable distribution.

CONCLUSION

'Yet we're not Slaves, after all': Socio-Spatial Hopes

Book learning: Has it been historically undervalued? We want your opinion!
- Jeff Derksen, *The Vestiges*

An interstice is an intervening space, usually a small one. It is also a gap, or break, in something generally continuous. This thesis has argued that neoliberalism is a governing rationality that seeks to order and understand the world as a market through economic scientism. Neoliberalism's uneven development of spaces, as well as social relations, are entangled with its valorising of competition. Interstitial literatures register uneven development in their form and content but, through their self-reflexivity, offer ways of perceiving the production of space as an ongoing social process. Thus uneven development appears not as the *product* of a competitive economic process, but a specific articulation of neoliberalism's attempt to subjugate social and political possibilities through the constant management of space.

The ascent of neoliberalism as a governing rationality that employs economic scientism begins with a Hayekian and Ordoliberal faith in the market's price mechanism as a kind of universal law that is beyond human understanding. Because, in this view, the price mechanism could take into account the innumerable inputs and shifting processes of any given economic situation in a way no human ever could, its competitive logic would always produce the best results. For Hayek, the impersonal nature of market mechanisms meant it would never be contaminated by the figure of the "planner" which, he argued, prefigured not only fascism but socialism and, in general, any progressive idealism that sought a more equitable world on non-economic grounds. These systems constrained individual freedom, and Hayek saw in economics a way to embrace it. To his mind, 'it may sound noble to say: damn economics, let us build up a decent world. But is in fact merely irresponsible' (Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* 215). To damn economics would be to damn everything, since his insistence that 'our only chance of building a decent world is that we can continue to improve the general level of wealth' implicitly offers economics as a socio-political leveller (Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* 215). All of the texts under study in this thesis call for *collective* action in response to neoliberalism, eschewing

its individualising gaze. In *Almanac of the Dead* this takes the form of prophecy that the 'dispossessed people of the earth rise up' (532). These texts also see in the Hayekian sense of individual freedom through wealth no potential for an equitable world. Spahr's and Derksen's poems, and the socio-spatial reading practice they encourage, suggest that "freedom" is always contingent.

Chicago School economists took up the logic that drove the Hayekian and Ordoliberal faith in the "unconscious" price mechanism and warped it by positioning competition not as a trait of the market but as a trait of the individual. This shift meant that economics, presented as a rational and exact science, could now be used to explain everything. It could also be used to justify anything, thanks to the sense that truly competitive processes would always produce best-case results in aggregate. The Hayekian idea of the market as something *beyond human* that can regulate human activity allows it to become absolute and totalising. This is what happens in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, which takes the dangers of individual response and resistance to neoliberalism to the extreme in its depiction of Crake. An atmosphere of capitalist realism leads him to conclude that apocalypse is the only good option. He is driven, by neoliberalism, to become the destructive "planner" that Hayek sought to avoid.

Neoliberalism as an order of normative reason, in an expression of this Chicagoan emphasis on individual competition, now seeks to make the entire world market-like and explain it through economic analysis. Economists and experts on competition ascend to positions of authority where, through economic modelling and narrative respectively, they are able to show what is and is not competitive, what is and what is not a genuine free market interaction, even if it contradicts our immediate experience. We are governed by an economic scientism that would likely have chilled the early Hayek who warned against descents into fascism.[71] 'Individual freedom,' he argued 'cannot be reconciled

[71] It is hard to say for sure that Hayek would deplore neoliberalism as it is now. *The Constitution of Liberty* makes a lot of accommodations for power wielded via economic means. As long as the exercise of power is not coercive, it is acceptable. But he outright refuses the possibility that actions can be indirectly coercive, or consequentially coercive. He suggests that 'there is no evil in the power wielded by the director of a great enterprise in which men willingly united of their own will' (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* 202). But he also argues that 'if the threat of starvation to me and perhaps to my family impels me to accept a distasteful job at a very low wage, even if I am "at the mercy" of the only man willing to employ me, I am not coerced by him or anyone else' (Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* 204). In this formulation, the only real difference between the "planned" society, for which he has such vitriol, and a society driven by economics, is that an individual has a "choice," even if it is between doing something distasteful at the mercy of somebody else or death-by-starvation.

with the supremacy of one single purpose to which the whole of society must be entirely and permanently subordinated' (Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* 211). The neoliberal logic of competition as an ordering principle in all spheres of life gives us exactly that.

Neoliberalism presents as rational by appealing to a sense that everything can and should be measured, rooted in the Enlightenment, then offers economics as the yardstick. *Mason & Dixon* prefigures the connection between the development of rational thinking and the development of the world market in its heterotopic Age of Reason. But it depicts a world that cannot always be measured, warning against absolute faith in the rational, while also showing the ways that acts of measurement are ideologically inflicted, through the consequences 'loos'd like Vermin' by the Mason-Dixon Line (Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* 710). Which leads us to the fact that the very mechanism from which neoliberalism draws its authority, the logic of the market, is itself immeasurable, beyond human understanding, and thus not rationally explicable. This contradiction between the measurable and immeasurable, the rational and irrational, as Davies argues, defines the ontology of neoliberal power (35). Neoliberalism hovers in these interstices, unstable, even while it presents itself as a totalising system.

The space that neoliberalism produces is then also riven with this aporia. I have argued that, following Neil Smith and Ed Soja, the uneven development of space is not just a consequence of capitalist development but fundamental to the reproduction of its social relations. This intensifies and shifts under neoliberalism, which seeks not to expand the reach of the market but to conquer all spheres of life with economic logic. Capitalist space hitherto strove to conceal the maximisation of profit (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 160). Neoliberalism instead reveals it. Now that everything can be understood to be economic, and the result of competitive processes, uneven development becomes a sign that things are working as intended. The hypervisibility of inequalities under neoliberalism are woven into a social fabric of competition.[72] Uneven development is the texture of life under neoliberalism; it is the way we experience the world. Within the unevenly developed socio-spatiality of neoliberalism, however, is also its fundamental aporia. This thesis has argued that interstitial literatures present themselves as socio-

[72] Almost every major city in the world juxtaposes widespread homelessness with constant and enormous commercial redevelopments. By the same token, there is scarcely a region or city that hasn't seen the gentrification of a neighbourhood, an act ostensibly of urban renewal and improvement, raise the cost of living and push out its previous inhabitants.

spatial processes, and thus become spaces in which we can work through the contradictions of neoliberalism without succumbing to its purely economic logics.

Chapter one demonstrated the social and spatial dimensions of reading (and, by extension, writing) and established the formal similarities between the production of space and the production of meaning which coalesce in a spatialised text. While emphasising reader autonomy in the form of *evaluation*, the chapter sought to eschew traditional models of reader-centred meaning production that imaginatively free the reader from all contextual binds. Thus reading is conceived as a collective practice imbricated with socio-spatial relations. Derksen's and Spahr's poems approach neoliberalism as an order of normative reason that manifests socio-spatially. For Spahr, the uneven development of social being is caught up in a contradictory relationship, one that is both connective and disconnective, between the individual and the collective, and between local and global space. For Derksen, the city represents a locus of globalising processes that is unevenly developed by the competitive market, and his poetry shows these processes not to be neutral or objective. We see in these poems the limits to neoliberalism's conception of space as economic.

Chapter two analysed Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* in a bid to trace a genealogy of neoliberal ways of thinking, particularly about space, to the Enlightenment. It suggested that neoliberalism's economic scientism is as much a betrayal of the Enlightenment as it is a product of it, gesturing to the aporia that defines neoliberal power. The chapter also argued that the drawing of the Mason-Dixon Line in the novel was an act of uneven development driven by commerce. This was not, however, an act of exposure to show neoliberalism in a deterministic light. *Mason & Dixon* enacts a kind of bait-and-switch on the paranoid reader through its images of parallax and autostereogram, which allude to the priority of process over product. I argued that the novel suggests possibilities for change, for a more equitable world, are rooted in our ethical obligations to something more than the economic.

Chapter three explored the implications of thinking of neoliberalism as an attempt to actualise a utopian ideal, and the ways in which it hijacks some critical utopian logics. The pre-apocalyptic world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy is dominated by an intensified Chicago School neoliberalism that seems all-encompassing, and drives Crake to

manufacture the apocalypse. The chapter argued that the metafictional aspects of Atwood's novels displays anxieties about the political efficacy of post-apocalyptic fiction, foregrounds concerns about Crake's individualism, and, through the uneven development of narrative space, encourages socio-spatial reading. In undertaking this reading, attentive to process over product, the chapter suggested that the overwhelming capitalist realist atmosphere of the trilogy's pre-apocalyptic world results from neoliberalism's production of human nature as *homo oeconomicus*. Crake is driven to apocalyptic action because his scientific worldview of arithmetic rationality cannot account for, renew, or repurpose the social and political dimensions of life. Thus, the chapter's analysis concludes, there is a sense of urgency in refusing neoliberalism's economic worldview and remaking spaces for social and political life.

The final chapter, where it All Comes Together, analysed the most aggressively counter-neoliberal novel in the thesis. Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, with its hyperbolic, mythicised neoliberal villains and ardently revolutionary tone, is cathartic. Its constant exposure of neoliberal and imperial violence, which might seem to function in the paranoid mode, ultimately give way to a reparative experience. By holding tightly to the idea of prophecy, *Almanac* suggests at every moment that things might yet be better, and change might yet come. It is not, however, an endorsement of waiting things out. My socio-spatial analysis of the novel suggested that Indigenous resistance to imperialism, which is intimately linked with the development of capitalism, has *always* been a politics of space. Thus it can help to inform attempts to resist neoliberalism, since space is its weak-point. *Almanac of the Dead* offers a number of violent spatial responses to the neoliberal moment, most notably revolutionary acts of terrorism. But they all coalesce in, and hope for, a collective and inclusive space that goes beyond the economic, and this takes shape in the march of the twins. The violent responses in the novel might seem extreme but perhaps, if we allow neoliberal irrationality to keep on going, they might soon feel inevitable.

The truest limitation of this thesis is the number of texts that it analyses. While my intention is not to establish a new genre, there remains always strength in numbers. Nevertheless, I hope this limitation might also be generative, with the space afforded to expansive socio-spatial analysis of a few texts serving to open up further avenues of research. The texts under study all produce and inhabit spaces, but they do so to bare their

own processes of production. They never abscond, nor allow the reader to, to pure mental or imagined space. Thus they are never extra-ideological, refusing neoliberalism's flourish in presenting as common-sense.

In *Utopia in the Age of Globalization* (2013) Tally argues that since 'the shifting spaces of late capitalism are not readily represented', we should opt instead to produce a 'utopian map of the world system' (95). This will take the form of reading literature to achieve an 'educated imagination' and thus 'a life beyond the mind-numbing and banal consumerism affirmed on almost all sides today' (Tally, *Utopia* 97). He suggests, and I agree, that 'socialism is an essentially political process within our present' (Tally, *Utopia* 101). We must be careful, however, to root this educated imagination in space, and enact its spatial implications. After all, if only our imaginations transcend the banal consumerism of everyday life under neoliberalism, our bodies remain within it. Spatial resistance to neoliberalism has, thus far, largely taken form in protests, occupations, and vandalism. If our educated imagination is going to be any use, it has to inform, transform, and orient these eruptions of spatial resistance.

Neoliberalism presents itself as a rational system, but it has irrational results. Its inequities are not the inevitable result of a transcendent ordering principle. This is not revelatory. We know this already but, as Brown argues, lack a mode of political expression as neoliberalism interpellates us into *homo oeconomicus* (44). Resistance to neoliberalism cannot simply take the form of pointing to inequalities, economic or otherwise, because this reinforces its logic of competition. Rather we must take on neoliberalism's inability to account for itself. This erupts spatially through uneven development, which almost always has to be propped up by economic modelling of its future potential or explanations from competitiveness experts. Narratives of space like this explain away the irrationality of neoliberalism. So we need other narratives of space, and different ways of thinking spatially, to show not only that neoliberalism is inconsistent *with its own metrics* but also, and fundamentally, to produce spatially rooted social and political alternatives that are divorced from economic logic.

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