Writing the Lines of Connection: Unveiling the Strange Language of Urbanization

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Abstract

Across urban studies there is an increasing preoccupation with the forms of articulation that link a multiplicity of cities across a region often known as the ‘Global South’. How do cities such as Jakarta, São Paolo, Dakar, Lagos, Mumbai, Hanoi, Beirut, Dubai, Karachi, for example, take note of each other and engage in various transactions with each other in ways that are only weakly mediated by the currently predominant notions of urbanism? What might be the lines of connection and how do different cities recognize and experience the textures of their different histories and characters? Six urbanists are assembled here to write in conversation with each other as a way to embody possible collaborative lines of inquiring about these issues.

Introduction to the project

AbdouMaliq Simone and Julie-Anne Boudreau

Writings on the urban question and what we know of relationships between cities and transurban economies suggest that there exist latitudes and corridors of articulation that link a multiplicity of cities across regions often known as the ‘South’ and the ‘North’, and link them in a wide assortment of configurations. Is it possible that Jakarta, São Paolo, Dakar, Lagos, Mumbai, Hanoi, Beirut, Dubai, Karachi (the list could go on) take note of each other, and are engaged in various transactions with each other, in ways that are only weakly mediated by the currently predominant notions of urbanism? What might be the lines of connection? How does an analysis go ‘from there to there’ and fold these different cities into each other, yet take cognizance of, and experience, the textures of their different histories and characters? How can one write about these lines? How, to
paraphrase Fulvia Carnevale, can a strange language be found in the predominant language of urbanization?

We can also look at this question in a slightly different way. Cities throughout the world have highly variegated histories. They are constituted and composed at the intersection of diverse influences and conditions. While this is equally the case for cities of the Global South, their trajectories of urbanization are marked by the colonial difference. Spaces, resources and bodies were rendered available to the instantiation of an externally configured modernity and enrolled into the circuits of accumulation where a net loss of things in their flows northwards necessitated irregular and always insufficient compensation. Colonialism engineered various instabilities. For example, labor was frequently displaced and urban residence always temporary. Cities were domains of a particular kind of emplacement, one where distinctions between citizen and subject could be marked, where the mobility of ‘native’ ideas, bodies, and economies could be controlled and where the signs of modernity could be inscribed.

Yet what did those that were emplaced endure? Despite the frequent assumption on the part of the colonizer that the spaces of colonization were empty, up for grabs, undeveloped or radically antagonistic, arrivals from beyond were always shaped by what had transpired in these places before, dependent upon the tracings of past efforts by others. As articulations among cities everywhere become more extensive, and as cities in the South are more intensely incorporated into global circuits of accumulation and exchange, arrivals become more numerous; more people from the outside come to operate in these cities in various capacities. But what has the experience of emplacement been for those for whom the colonial difference represented constraint on their mobility? For them, as for the nomad of Deleuze and Guattari, points and places are relays, always already left behind on arrival, always referring to movements yet to come. Staying in place entails ‘riding out the earth’s movements while staying on the spot’ (see Boucher, below). While the geomorphic reference may be meant literally in terms of the very physical transformations of the earth’s template and climate, cities do also bear the sediments of all the ways in which the bodies of inhabitants have been open(ed) to each other.

Certainly, cities are dense areas of ingestion, gesture, elimination, coupling and coagulation, and the incompleteness of these different degrees of intensities are incalculable. Yet, as both Gayatri Spivak and Nigel Clark have indicated, the work of these residents (and their work as a gift) makes the basis for a different future, a world that is held more in common, since the more numerous arrivals would be unable to operate without it. In the contemporary rendering of urban development dynamics, the work done by those who are emplaced is largely peripheral, off the map. Yet these histories of trial and error, of residents facing squarely the often tumultuous oscillations of physical, social and political disjunctions that are not smoothed over by premium infrastructures or overarching discourses, potentially compel the tools of city-making to go beyond themselves and confront the kinds of fears and enchantments they have long denied. The question then becomes: what kind of writing might engage this work, be responsible to it, address the ‘call’ of this responsibility in a way that is open to what it might offer, rather than being an effort to definitively represent it?

This issue of the Debates and Developments section results from a writing experiment with six authors who each submitted short papers (unaware of what the others would write). We took the liberty of making these papers talk to one other, giving life to the words in ways that may have been unexpected for their authors. The idea was to highlight articulations between emplaced yet always mobile voices; voices that speak of specific cities and people, while participating in a transurban language of urbanization.

Juxtaposing ideas, critical analyses and experiences revealed how voices always speak to each other. We are not simply following parallel narrations, but discovering unintended conversations. One can pull various strings from these conversations. Each in their own...
way, the authors reflect on temporalities: sediments of the past, anticipations of the future, times of the dream, times of the plan, times of the epic, times of the everyday... They also speak of mobilities — migration, immigration, resisting colonial emplacement, yearning for a home — and of the crushing weight of state domination, efforts to regularize, normalize, settle down, erase the past and entrench spatial hierarchies.

This project was in some ways an epistemological reflection on urban knowledge production. Each author brings forward the urgency of writing differently about the city. A first step, Kipfer suggests, is to compare in order to highlight how colonization co-produces the ‘North’ and the ‘South’. Units of analysis, in other words, are co-produced. The ‘colonial’ is always present in the ‘metropolis’ and vice versa. This interconnectedness, however, can hardly be imagined as a ‘smooth space’ of flows. Writing on cities requires digging beyond the varnish and constructing ‘dialogues and confrontations’, urges Pieterse who turns to art as a privileged form of writing that has the potential to shuffle away the sediments of racism. Art becomes a social act because it shocks and generates affective responses in everyday interactions, beyond the epic scale of transformation. Just as art is an urban reality, dreams can also be sites of resistance, Boucher argues. Even if not empirically visible, dreaming reveals the interconnectedness of space and time.

This conversation reveals how the strange language of urbanization is legible only if power relations are understood spatially and temporally. There are spaces of the city that we rarely analyse: the space of anticipation and the *tjukurrpa* (the space of dreamtime). Rao shows how the perception of a crisis (itself generated by over-regulation) precipitated planning experiments in the landscape of Mumbai. These experiments, in turn, opened a space of anticipation characteristic of speculative activity. The impact of speculation (on a rapidly changing built environment), she explains, is often a representation of the future as unrealizable and anticipatory. This ‘future precipitated into the present’ has a strange effect on everyday life in the constantly changing and contrasting built environment of Mumbai. Cavalcanti adds that processes of colonization and domination do not simply emplace people, but are built on projections of the future. In the *favelas* of Rio, she shows, the fact that the government has lifted the threat of removal has opened the land to real-estate market activities. A shack can now be improved and the resulting house has potential economic and symbolic value. Investment in infrastructure (‘the politics of concrete’), on the other hand, is possible because the slum, now conceived as permanent, acts as a territorialized space of threat (‘the politics of cocaine’). The drug trade makes the space legible and legitimate for state intervention. Indeed, anticipation of future problems enables authorities and NGOs to craft risk-based policies.

If the space of anticipation reveals power dynamics, the *tjukurrpa* (the space of dreamtime) opens potential sites of resistance. For Aboriginals of Western Australia, dreaming has its own space and time, spaces that are not controlled by colonizers and that enable Aboriginals to travel. Dreaming can be considered part of social reality and life experience. It is intensely affective and thus has much potential for resistance. As Pieterse argues, we need to tackle the ‘effable domain of the ordinary’, and stop thinking solely in terms of ‘epic scales of transformation’. And as Smith relates, this strange language of urbanization is a language of interconnectedness, embodied in the experience of immigration (her mother’s ultimate ‘act of love’), of the ‘temporary stance’ of multiculturalism, and of the ambiguous yearning for home, whether home is about ‘possessing Africa’ or ‘grabbing Toronto’. Smith’s story is as much about the epic as it is about the ordinary...
Departures and arrivals: Cities of connections

SMITH

‘I am going to Nairrrobbii...’

My little niece said with a thick Kenyan accent and great conviction while boarding at Toronto Pearson Airport. For the last two years, from when she was only sixteen months old, my little niece has resided in Kenya, where my sister relocated her family.

‘You are going to Nairrrobbii...’

I mocked her. She would smile, piercing me with her contentment. I would have been okay, if the waiting time to board had not been so long. I felt melancholic and irritated. I could not bear to hear her leave for Nairobi. The city I knew is now the city of this little girl. I was her age when I used to wander its outskirts.

And there it was, after 16 years, I felt it again. The last few years have been the most successful. I have begun to deny my nostalgia for Africa, for Nairobi, and surrender to an immigrant life. And yet, in a flash of a little girl’s silliness, I felt she had Nairobi, a piece of my Africa. I had Toronto, a piece of an immigrant life — one that I have not wanted.

The next few hours with her were bittersweet. She asked me to take her to see the airplane — the one that would take her to Nairobi. I remember when my father would buy me airplanes and the kids in the neighbourhood fancied them. Yet despite my love for airplanes and travel, I had no desire to leave Africa. It was home.

And here I was, playing with my little niece who was pleased to be returning home. But what did she know about home, I asked myself. It was the bane of my existence — my desire to return to Africa was always evident, yet never fulfilled. I would have loved to say I found a shelter from Africa’s problems, a true resting place and a new home away from my turbulent childhood. But I have been tormented with conflict and pain remembering home...

Africa, how discomforting your existence
You have killed your children,
Slaughtered your future
Your vastness, futile,
Your hope, idiotic...

BOUCHER

In the modern Western World, mobility plays a predominant role. Occidental common knowledge and academics, because they share the same ontological position, define mobility as the movement of physical bodies. I question this presumption by trying to find other ways of being in the world that allow for different movement. Nomadic societies of hunters and gatherers and of oral tradition seem to share a conception of the world, the environment, its components and human beings that makes it possible to ride out the earth’s movements while staying physically on the spot. This ontology makes the dream a means of travel, but also a destination given that in these nomadic cultures the dream is also a time-space where movement, among other things, takes place. This ontology was and is confronted with Occidental principles through colonialism. As I suggest, in today’s world, the dream could be used as a means and a world of colonial resistance.

I draw my arguments from the empirical research of anthropologists. My main inspiration is the work of Sylvie Poirier with the Aboriginal population of Western Australia. However, the reader must bear in mind that it is impossible to generalize the Aboriginal conceptions of dreams, dreaming activities, perception of world and nature. I aim to offer, here, a working track by linking concepts that haven’t been put forward in these studies but that are indeed present: travel and dreams.
Colonization and the state: over-regulating the city and practices of emplacement

PIETERSE

It is thirteen years ago that I went to cast my first democratic vote as a South African citizen, unshackled from the burden of race and baptized in the equalizing pool of citizenship. On that overcast and wind-swept day, 27 April 1994, I grasped imperceptibly that another struggle, another series of confrontations had to follow, because everything in my city and country — concrete and abstract — was oblivious to the nutrients that citizenship required for its growth. Amidst the glow of having crossed an impossible threshold of pain, there was no energy to contemplate the hard work that was still to follow to understand and possibly excise the layers of dehumanization that was sedimented in the wake of colonialism and apartheid. In particular, the fundamentally iniquitous effects of engrained racism on citizenship was poorly understood and almost ignored; not because it was not seen as corrosive but, with the formal demise of apartheid, no one quite had the words or wherewithal to address it. As a nation we were so exhausted by what we had just been through, the promise of reconciliation and racial transcendence embedded in the dream of becoming a ‘rainbow nation’ was a much easier prospect to embrace.

Thirteen years later, the consequences of our untreated wound — sedimented racism — remains a throbbing ache in the psyche of our searching democracy. On the one hand we seem incapable of talking about anything else but race, and yet on the other we seem to be making no headway in addressing the stubborn persistence of race-based inequality and misunderstanding.

KIPFER

In an insightful recent contribution, Radhika Mongia (2007) underscores that colonization was a constitutive force in modern state formation. She argues that to grasp the modern state properly as a duality of ‘inequality’ and ‘equivalence’, one must take into account the way in which national state authority was forged unevenly, in a web of relations between imperial centre and colonial periphery and among a range of colonized territories. Key in this regard is the regulation of transnational migration flows, which helped define the external boundaries of territorial states by cementing the uneven relationship between them. She demonstrates that the regulation of Indian migration to Canada (which changed from facilitating indentured labour in the nineteenth century to a general restriction in the early twentieth) must be understood in part as a result of an emerging international migration regime, which, within the British Empire, differentiated between white settler states and non-European parts of the Empire such as India (where new restrictions on emigration were created to prop up Canada’s emerging immigration controls). Creating a racialized external limit to Canadian citizenship by controlling migration (and, eventually, issuing passports) thus rested on an emerging inter-state system characterized by equivalence (of the nation-state form) and inequality (of the colonial and neocolonial relations among them).

Mongia’s argument makes a vital contribution to the methodological challenge of comparative research on the legacy of colonization. Understanding the formative role of colonization in producing the components of the modern world order — the nation-state, in this case — is impossible if one considers nation-states as pre-given, separate entities which can be compared to other such presupposed entities. Instead, she proposes a methodological perspective of ‘co-production’, which emphasizes that the units of comparison are contingently ‘co-produced’ through the very inter- and transnational relationships and processes that differentiate them from other units of analysis. With these remarks, Mongia extends Philipp McMichael’s plea for methods of ‘incorporated comparison’ (1990), which he formulated as a double intervention against modernization.
theory (and its tendency to treat national cases as autonomously developing, reified entities) and world-system theory (which treated the comparative specificities of national cases as functions of an encompassing world system but shed little light on how national and world-systemic units of analysis are themselves historically contingent and co-dependent). In an argument that dovetails with ‘relational approaches’ to comparative research (Burawoy, 2001; Hart, 2006), Mongia suggests that the relationship between units of comparative analysis (nation-states) and the wider relations that envelop them (colonization, in this case) is a historically contingent form of co-determination.

These insights are eminently useful for comparative research on the colonial aspects of urbanization. Such research does further complicate the comparative method, of course. For the study of urbanization is an eminently multi-scalar affair. As we know from Henri Lefebvre, the urban can be understood as a medium level of analysis which can be studied at multiple (local-regional, national and world-wide) scales (Kipfer, forthcoming). In the language of (largely a-spatial) comparative sociology, urbanization takes us thus both below and beyond the national unit of analysis. This has been made clear by a burgeoning literature on (post-)colonial urbanization, architecture and planning.\(^1\) The colonial aspects of modern urban history and their legacy have been studied in two major ways: at the scale of urban regions (imperial and colonial cities) and at the scale of inter- and transnational processes and strategies (such as the networks of planners, administrators, and cultural producers involved in city building in both imperial centre and colonial periphery). While still of strategic importance, the ‘national’ unit of urban analysis is itself doubly determined: not only in relationship to world-wide urban networks but also through subnational urbanization processes. This clearly demonstrates the inadequacies of approaches which restrict their international focus on urbanism to professional networks and processes of policy diffusion between predominantly Euro-American nation-states, whose institutional integrity as units of comparison is treated as self-evident (see, for example, Sutcliffe, 1981; Ward, 2002).

RAO

I look at speculation through the lens of contemporary Mumbai, a place that has recently attracted much attention from social scientists and journalists, as well as from the World Bank, as a site ripe for massive urban reform. These accounts typically position Mumbai as a city in crisis, an extension of what we might call the ‘Lagos effect’. But what perhaps distinguishes Mumbai from a place like Lagos or from a Latin American megalopolis like São Paulo is its apparent orderliness, its over-regulation and its controlled and carefully orchestrated performances of corruption that keep its everyday life going.\(^2\) Indeed, part of the crisis of Mumbai is precisely the result of this over-regulation. In particular, Mumbai’s crisis has two major dimensions — along the axis of space and the built environment and along the axis of conviviality.

The crisis of the built environment, its dilapidation, unsustainable densities and the degraded conditions under which a majority of the city’s population lives is broadly the subject of this contribution. According to a World Bank report — produced in-house as an initial step toward creating a ‘business plan’ for making Mumbai a more effective and functional city — this crisis can be attributed, in large part to over-regulation. The report speaks about the prevalence of a ‘real-estate raj’ and suggests that the reform of land use

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1 For recent geographical debates, see, for example, the debates on comparative urbanism and post-colonial geography in special issues of Urban Geography (2004) and the Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography (2003).

2 Of course, over-regulation and corruption are two sides of a single coin since regulation multiplies sites for ‘innovation’ or points from which regulation might be escaped and profit made from arbitrage (see Pemmaraju, 2001). See also Suketu Mehta’s (2004) Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found for a rich account of these processes.
regulations controlling the ownership and development of property could be seen as ‘the spatial equivalent of the liberalization and opening up of the Indian economy’.

The regulatory context

The Bombay Rent Act
- Passed in 1947, enacted in 1948
- Fixed all rents at 1940 levels
- Subsumed under the Maharashtra Rent Control Act in 1997
- Under the Maharashtra Rent Control Act, in effect since 2000, rent may be increased by 5% in the first year and 4% every following year

The Urban Land Ceiling Regulation Act (ULCRA)\(^3\)
- Imposes a ceiling on vacant urban land
- Is intended to prevent the concentration of urban land in the hands of the wealthy, to prevent land speculation and to bring about equitable urban land distribution
- Has made it difficult for the private sector to transfer and assemble land
- Has contributed, according to Alain Bertaud, to ‘practically freezing legal development of land by the private sector unless in cases where exemptions were obtained.’

FSI\(^4\) Restrictions
- The imposition of a uniform, very low FSI (Floor Space Index or buildable area on any given plot) restricting FSI to 1.33 for 90% of the municipal area.
- Has restricted Mumbai’s FSI to one-fifth to one-tenth of the level of other large cities causing severe shortages in built space.

Mumbai’s sheer size in terms of population and economic activity accounts for the Bank’s claim that urban reform in Mumbai could have such large-scale implications for the country’s economy. Further, the report shows via a thorough forensic analysis, the connection between these laws and the extremely degraded conditions under which a majority of the city’s population lives. Stringent building height restrictions or restrictions on the buildable area on any given plot (FSI or FAR, Floor Area Ratio) have been laid down in an effort to control densities and demographic growth. Mumbai’s topography, the limited supply of land on the island, lack of transport connections to the mainland and these restrictions on buildable area together constrain the availability of land for development and thereby make Mumbai’s real estate among the most expensive in the world.

Furthermore, this limitation on the availability of land for even the existing population, let alone migrants, has led to Mumbai becoming one of the densest cities in the world where the amount of space consumed by each person is amongst the lowest in the world. As the population continued to grow against the backdrop of a changing urban

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\(^3\) In November 2007, the ULCRA for Mumbai was repealed by the Maharashtra government after a long period of deliberation and after most states had repealed this legislation. Although some interesting trends are emerging, it is too early to discuss the effects of the ULCRA repeal and I will not touch upon it further here.

\(^4\) Mehrotra defines FSI as follows: ‘FSI or Floor Space Index is the ratio of the combined gross floor area of all storeys of buildings to the total area of the plot or premise on which they are situated’. Mehrotra further adds that: ‘What this concept of FSI did, was to impose a somewhat blanket index and set of standardized building by-laws across the entire city...This imposition of abstract mechanisms such as FSI [in the 1964 Development Plan] was a clean break from the earlier approach, where rules that governed urban form were formulated area-wise and were based on perceived needs. This approach was, however, relevant only when the city grew incrementally’ (Mehrotra, 1997: 267, emphasis added — I will return to this point further on).
economy, the built fabric degraded dramatically, with the explosive growth of slums, which cater not only to the poor but also to the middle-classes who have little or no housing stock to turn to either for rent or for purchase.

CAVALCANTI

In the past decade or so, scholars of urban poverty have developed new categories to think through the new structural determinants for the production of urban poverty on an unprecedented scale. Hence we read of the proliferation of ‘surplus humanity’ (Davis, 2006) or the ‘useless of the world’ (Castel, 2003) whose relentless building of ‘shadow cities’ (Newirth, 2005) encroaches upon and transforms urbanity as we know it. In such generalizing narratives, the slum figures as a ‘shorthand for the severely dysfunctional landscapes of Southern cities’, and resurrects an old confusion and stereotype between the features of poor quality housing and the characteristics of those who live in them, as Vyjayanthi Rao (2006a: 228) and Alan Gilbert (2007) have respectively noted in recent issues of this journal.

Old stereotype is right. From the standpoint of Latin America, the linkages between rapid urbanization, the sprawl of shanties and the stereotypes associated with them is an old social, economic and political issue that has long concerned social analysts.5 From development to dependency theories (that already linked the sprawl of shanties to a global capitalist system), and the latter’s concern with the marginal masses (with the controversy over the adequacy of the Marxian concept of the industrial army of labor in describing it) that cleared the path for the deconstruction of the so-called myth of marginality, Rio de Janeiro’s favelas6 have figured not just as an object of study and field site, but almost as an idiom for thinking through development, urbanization, inequality and social change.

Along with the slum as an urgent empirical problematic, many of the analytical concepts developed in this earlier context — marginality, the center/periphery opposition, the amplification of the informal sector — have returned to macro-social analyses in recent years, albeit thoroughly rescaled and reshaped to fit the new capitalist conjuncture and the spatialities proper to economic and cultural globalization. They come back embedded in a strikingly different temporal framework, however. Whereas in the old marginality debate it was the weight of the (colonial) past that guided the scholarly gaze and produced the present predicament, the current focus on slums proliferation takes the shape of future projections.

Contemporary theories foreground flows of people and things, the new landscapes thus produced and the environmental effects of these dis(em)placements: its lexicon gravitates toward questions related to movements in space — migration, sprawl — while its conceptual framework presupposes a future precipitated into the present; hence its foregrounding of all sorts of risks, hazards and the unsustainability of present and future cities. That is, what was formerly constructed as an atavistic residue — the slum — is now recast as a global convergence point, as a dystopic avant-garde.

KIPFER

Let me concentrate on one aspect of (neo-)colonial urbanization: the state. Despite its centrality in any analysis of spatial ‘partitioning’ (Marcuse and Von Kempen, 2002), the state has been present but under-theorized in urban research on (post-)colonial

5 For a debate on the shifting categories through which poverty in Latin America has been conceived by scholars see volume 39.1 of Latin American Research Review (2004).

6 Rio’s favelas tend to function as a paradigmatic example because of their spatial proximity to middle-class neighborhoods, engendering a landscape of sharp social contrasts where poverty is extremely visible.
urbanism. My brief comments are informed above all by Henri Lefebvre’s understanding of state and city/urbanization and Frantz Fanon’s view of space, race and (de-)colonization. Laid out most elaborately in the four volumes of De l’État, Lefebvre treats the modern state as a contradictory condensation of powerful social relations, which, albeit hierarchical and centralized, also takes on more diffuse, everyday dimensions. He approaches the state through debates particularly relevant for comparative analysis: first, on imperialism and colonization and second, on commodity and capitalism (Lefebvre, 1976: 306–60; 1977: 87–156). The state he sees as central to both and thus takes issue with economistic arguments inherent in some dependency theories.

For Lefebvre, territorial state formation is an active and indispensable force in the generalization of commodity exchange. This generalization crucially involves various forms of primary accumulation: the restructuring of agriculture, the destruction—incorporation of pre-capitalist cities, transformations in the city—countryside relation, and colonial plunder. These forms of primary accumulation he sees not just as a historical precondition but an ongoing feature of capitalist development. Lefebvre thus extends Luxemburg’s thesis on the co-dependence of capitalism and imperialism and links it to state theory. Accordingly, the modern state embodies and helps institute a form of forced equivalence which rests on a two-fold, interdependent structural violence of commodification and primary accumulation. Patriarchal militarism — latent or overt — is part of both forms of violence.

Resisting: dreams, art, time and affect
BOUCHER

The study of dreams and their cultural systems occupies a small but not negligible part of anthropological research. A special issue dedicated to this theme in the journal *Anthropologie et Sociétés* collected various examples of dream experiences and dream activities, mainly among aboriginal peoples with an oral tradition (Poirier, 1994b). The authors in this issue describe the act of dreaming basically as the activity that takes place during sleep. It also includes daydreaming, vision, open and evasive imagination. What stands out for anthropologists are the cultural significations of dreaming. Since the Middle Ages, and more recently with Freud, dreaming in the Western world is regarded as an individualistic and asocial activity. For Aboriginals, dreaming is a personal and intimate experience, but it is also suitable for socialization; dreams are interpreted — and are manipulated — by the dreamer and by others according to specific cultural rules in a particular context. The act of communication related to the narration of dreams as well as the social uses, values and scope of their contents confirm that dreams are part of social life.

In her contribution to that special issue on dreams and dreaming, Tedlock (1994) shows the diversity and complexity of dream analysis in different aboriginal cultures throughout America. A brief analysis of the various cultural definitions of dreams draws

7 Much research on the urban legacy of colonization has been shaped either by world-system and dependency theory or by postcolonial theory understood as a rearticulation of French post-theory. Representative of the former’s influence are Timberlake (1987), Armstrong and McGee (1985), Ross and Telkamp (1985). Shaped formatively, if sometimes eclectically, by the latter are most prominently Rabinow (1990), Wright (1991), Jacobs (1996), Çelik (1997), Gregory (2004) and Kincaid (2006). Anthony King’s most exemplary work straddles both (1990; 2004). Neither theoretical complex is strong on theorizing the state, albeit for opposite reasons: the residues of structural-functionalist globalism in the first case, and the epistemological aversion to dialectical critique and macro-analysis in the protocols of Derridean deconstruction, Bhabhian hybridity and Foucauldian genealogy in the second.

8 For more detailed arguments and references, see Kipfer (2007) and Kipfer and Goonewardena (2007).
at first an analogy between dreaming and moving. The Zunis of New Mexico see dreams as journeys out of the body. The Mayas K’iche’ distinguish two kinds of dreams: the ones during which the free soul travels, the others where the flying soul receives visits from gods and ancestors. For the Achur, dreams offer the chance to wander in a level of reality where the everyday constraints on the body and language are suspended. One has to acknowledge the role of translations in this lexical analogy between dreams and travels. But I suggest that, in the ontological principles of Aboriginal peoples, it is actually possible to ride the world through dreams.

The most relevant example in this respect comes from Poirier in the same book (Poirier, 1994a). From data collected during various fieldwork sessions that took place in the 1980s in the desert of Western Australia, Poirier explains that, for the Aboriginals of this region, dreams are real experiences, integral parts of the real and of the stream of events. To get a better glimpse of how it is possible to conceive of dreams as travel, it is necessary to introduce the tjukurrpa (dreamtime) sometimes called — and better understood as — Law, as in ancestral law. The tjukurrpa is mainly a cosmological order, a vital essence that animates the universe. As a legal and moral order that permeates and gives sense to physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual experiences, the tjukurrpa rules relationships, networks of alliances, exchanges and territorial belonging. As such, the tjukurrpa is immanent, contained in the nature of everything that ‘is’: sites in the territory, objects, animate and inanimate beings. Plants, humans, minerals are all filled with the strength and the essence of the tjukurrpa. In short, sites on the territory and tjukurrpa beings are not part of nature, neither are they part of the supernatural. They are and they belong to the social order (Poirier, 1994a: 107–8).

PIETERSE

Even a fleeting glance across the South African media suggests we have no difficulty in talking about race and racism. For example, race issues are always simmering below the heated discourses about why the South African national rugby and cricket teams are winning or losing; race, as encoded in university affirmative action policies, has been at the centre of recent debates about academic freedom and achievement; race, set in its African context and held up against a unipolar world of ‘double-standards’ is the dominant variable used to explain the South African government’s unfathomable stances on the atrocities in Zimbabwe and with regard to the lack-lustre roll-out of HIV/Aids anti-retrovirals; race in the form of black economic empowerment policies is said to explain either the ‘success’ or ‘under-achievement’ (depending on one’s perspective) of the South African economy, which has been inching above 5% GDP growth for the last few years; race, enfolded with impoverished living conditions, is deemed to be the primary driver of persistent and growing inequality in a society with unemployment rates hovering close to the 40% mark. Indeed, the long-term structural shift of the South African economy onto a post-Fordist platform, producing a concomitant loss of too many manufacturing and agricultural jobs, makes for a brutal confluence with labour force dynamics whereby the vast majority of the population do not posses the skills or education needed to enter new job opportunities. Of course, it goes almost without saying that after centuries of exploitation of black labour/bodies, this incomprehensibly large, structurally excluded labour force, is 99% black.

Indeed, daily life and its mediated discourses all seem to circulate around the omnipotence of race-based dynamics and explanations. Yet, despite all this apparently explicit naming of race, the stories never seem to change: One is left with the numbing impression at the edge of the subconscious that all of the media narratives are simply recycled and rewritten with exactly the same story line, although, cunningly, slightly altered characters in poorly camouflaged settings are sketched, producing exasperatingly
familiar conclusions. Contemporary racial discourses are trapped on a Ferris wheel chasing the shadow of the promised rainbow-nation.

Hence, despite a seeming cacophony of discourses centred on, around and below race, we as South Africans remain ostensibly unsuccessful in constructing dialogues and confrontations that lead to understanding, shifts in being and outlook, and possibly even new points of view; the stepping stones to new identities. The reasons for this, I suspect, is tied up with the nature of our interactions and engagements, their informing ideas, which are ensnared in tired and overworked concepts and signifiers which simply generate noise and little insight or understanding. Part of the problem, I believe, is related to the absence of ‘affective resonance’ in the forms and passageways of our collective dialogue as a nation, balancing as we are on the tipping points of freedom/enslavement.

SMITH

As I search for home, I remember my first day here... in Toronto. A marring day, striving hard to take a hold of me...

‘Excuse me, please... Excuse me!’

‘God, what’s wrong with her!’ grunting under her breath, a hurrying commuter brushed me aside.

I tried to recollect myself, as I waited for my mother to get off the public telephone. She was calling my extended family, while my thoughts were caught between grey-coloured buses and passengers at the Greyhound terminal.

That was the morning of the 9th of September 1991, the year of the civil war in Somalia. I was a fresh refugee, with a useless passport, in a new city. The day was warm, rainy and indecisive. My mother wanted to move to Toronto. She said I could get a great education here and make a life for myself. My mother was in constant fear that, as women, our lives would end in marriage and children without education and self-sufficiency.

My aunt finally approached us: energetic, hurried and resolute. She informed us that they had parked for a short time and we must hurry to the car. We quickly jumped in a long grey Buick and headed west of the city. Suddenly, we were on a ramp and the highway sped us away through soaring high towers, dust and a myriad of collaborations. The city never ended. We rode, and I watched motorists consumed in their own thoughts, travelling through car fumes, traffic congestion and under giant advertising billboards stretching across the Gardiner Expressway.

‘Many tourists love the advertisements on the Gardiner’, my aunt would proudly state of Toronto’s forward-moving ideas. As my aunt continued to regale us with tales of our new home, tidbits about Toronto and other pleasantries, and with my mother contented to be reunited with her family, I felt like an uneasy guest of this city.

I was overwhelmed at the sight of our new home. A house we owned. None of the homes I lived in in Nairobi were ours. We moved over ten times, from one apartment to another, from one house to another.

‘Nasra!’ shouted my sisters, whom I had been separated from the last two years. I greeted my uncle and grandmother as well. Happy to see them, yet I felt sad. I continued to hear stories well into the night as my uncles took turns and as my sisters described the difference between Nairobi and Toronto, and my aunt and mother nodded their approval of settling in Canada.

Yet, on that day, I could not settle to a life in Toronto. I felt odd, sick and lost in a memory. Yet for my mother, this journey to Toronto was a final act of love. How could I betray her by yearning for Africa?
RAO
As the executive summary of the World Bank report on Mumbai concludes, ‘current real estate policies have created a city in which the poor can only participate in the city’s economy if they are willing to live in the words of the Indian Supreme Court “compelled by circumstances and . . . not guided by choice” . . . — That is, often encroaching on infrastructure in ramshackle shelters. It is a system that has also created a city in which the middle class can work only if they travel long distances in extremely over-crowded trains, or live in one-room chawls or even slums; as well as a city in which real estate development is widely thought of as a corrupt business and a corrosive influence’ (Buckley, 2005: iv-v). Thus, for the Bank and actors with similar ‘developmentalist’ goals including many civil society groups, the ‘solution’ to Mumbai’s crisis is to reform this system of antiquated regulations that stand in the way of attracting new businesses and new investment, specifically foreign investment. But while the rhetoric of reform is couched in terms of ‘creating a market’, especially for property and allowing demand and supply to rule, it cannot be denied that many of these same actors — industrialists and business leaders — have benefited enormously from the climate of speculation that has been created and sustained by this situation.

Several studies on Mumbai have pointed out that the key to the housing crisis is not so much a lack of space as the lack of its availability. The Bank’s study, for example, discovered that there are literally hundreds of acres of land vacant or improperly used. Much of this vacant land belongs to the State or the Central Government or to Public Sector Undertakings. Some portion also belongs to large landowners who, under the strictures of the Urban Land Ceiling Act, have been unable to ‘convert’ their assets into profitable real estate products or to even use them efficiently. Many of these properties have been locked down for decades owing to litigation over the validity of the ULCRA between owners and the government. In addition, a study undertaken by the Centre for Civil Society in Mumbai shows that an estimated three to four hundred thousand apartments lie vacant in the city while millions live on the streets or in slums. Arjun Appadurai has described this situation in terms of ‘spectrality’, which gives rise to rumour and other forms of information. In turn, these forms of information provide the conditions for the circulation of capital. Specifically, the form of capital that circulates is speculative in nature, geared toward arbitraging artificially distorted market conditions.

Thus, while reformist rhetoric might parlay the reform of laws as the panacea to Mumbai’s urban crisis, it is undeniable that these very conditions have served the enormous wealth creation of the last two decades, specifically, unregulated wealth or ‘black money’ as it is popularly known in India. Such wealth expresses itself in conspicuous consumption and specifically in ventures that are short term in their horizon of anticipation. Real estate deals are amongst the most profitable schemes for parking black money along with film financing. Both ‘industries’ were considered too risky to qualify for institutional funding. Thus, they were the perfect venue for black money. The risks involved in real estate development are enormous given the amount of bureaucracy that has to be negotiated and the danger that corrupt officials are liable to change their minds. This leads to long delays in construction projects and frequent changes of course on the part of officials as new exemptions are granted or existing ones repealed apparently at will. While this is not the place to go into a detailed explanation of the existing forms of governance in relation to land use and property markets, it should be noted that city-level decision making on these issues central to the development of the city does not exist. Decisions in these matters are taken by the politicians at the state level, which often results in decisions that seriously distort the urban fabric.

9 The recent introduction of mortgage financing and the legal recognition of the film industry as an industry has changed this scenario to some extent by allowing financial institutions to invest in these industries.
It is unclear, however, whether the enormous wealth created by these kinds of shortages — almost famine-like in their structure — can be surpassed by an ‘efficiently’ functioning city, the goal of urban reform laws. Thus, the culture of speculation has a peculiar temporality — one that is created by the distortion of future potential in relation to the built environment but also one that requires the maintenance of these distortions in order to profit. This leads to a peculiar imagination of the future, as a permanently unrealizable space of anticipation. Indeed, it is important for speculative activity to signal to the future by creating this space of anticipation because naked greed as such could lead only to conflict. Thus, the work of speculation not only takes place through the activities of builders and developers, but it also circulates through other forms of cultural activity and representational practice as well, specifically those forms and representations that lay claim to the future.

CALVACANTI

It is thus not surprising that, in the generalizing ‘slum’ imagination, Rio’s favelas are unfailingly evoked as paradigmatic for their endurance in time and interconnectedness in the city’s visual landscape and social imaginary. This is, however, an essentially de-historicizing and often descriptively deceptive move. It effaces the very historicity of the favelas and erases the crucial question of how these spaces have undergone massive material, infrastructural, social and symbolic transformations over the course of the past two or three decades.

My point is that some favelas’ endurance in time and space is not a matter of residual statistics. It is constitutive of what is properly new about current spatial configurations of poverty, inequality and segregation in Rio de Janeiro — and in other large (Southern) cities where slums, shanties and some refugee camps have gradually developed into permanent fixtures, inaugurating novel social dynamics and interactions. Prolonged instability and precariousness metamorphose into something else, producing new power relations and institutional arrangements, sometimes thriving in twisted and contradictory ways.

In the case of Rio what is even more significant is the fact that such generalizing (‘slum’-type) discourses construct the ‘favela’ as a performative social category through which contemporary structures of inequality and violent conflict in the city are perpetuated. On the ground, generalizing discourses produce a perverse dynamics of entrenching stereotypes that entail particular reality effects, such as the reinforcement of contradictory territorial structures that mediate and (re)produce both violent conflict and infrastructural upgrading in the favelas.

I want to explore some of the hermeneutic possibilities opened up by the surreptitious emergence, over the course of the past decade or two, of a peculiar term that has come to pervade the lexicon of Brazilian urban planners and administrative technocrats: the ‘consolidated favela’. Moving in this direction leads to the question of how the very constitution of this category erases the strange politics of concrete and cocaine that have made it come about.

By concrete and cocaine I mean the two vectors of social change that have radically transformed the favela landscape, its phenomenological experience, and its political (em)placement in the city since the late 1970s. I use the term ‘concrete’ to capture the social forms that have emerged out of the substitution of favela removal programs by infrastructural upgrading and urbanization projects. ‘Cocaine’ refers to the establishment of more or less organized criminal networks centered on the retail sale of cocaine within the space of the favelas. What matters here is less the overall structure or the ‘commercial’ aspects of the drug trade itself than the spatial practices through which the trade secures its own reproduction as an instance of power — which impinges upon historically constituted social representations of the favelas. Dispersed in space, fragmented and unstable within, these criminal networks share a modus operandi that hinges on spatial practices and tactics of rendering the space of the favela visible and
legible through territorial boundary-producing mechanisms enforced through violence or the threat of violence. These boundaries are internally produced — through the armed surveillance and law of silence imposed by the trade itself — but constantly reinforced by violent police incursions.

The main theoretical hypothesis developed here is that these seemingly contradictory social and spatial dynamics have, in fact, become mutually constitutive, and that this intersection produces a paradoxical situation that traps favela residents in a double bind: the conditions for their political visibility and leverage rest on their constitution as a threat to the city; and yet it is this very perception that has brought them unprecedented political recognition and material improvements.

KIPFER

Extending *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre’s *De l’Etat* yields a sense of the state as a central (albeit tension-fraught) force in the production of abstract — homogenous, fragmented and hierarchical — space. One aspect of this production of space involves the role of the state in reproducing relations of domination through hierarchical territorial relations: relations between dominant and dominated spaces. These state-led strategies of hierarchizing territorial relations, Lefebvre calls ‘colonization’. They can be analysed at multiple scales to shed light on (1) geopolitical relationships between nations and macro-regions; (2) forms of uneven development between regions within national contexts; and (3) territorial relationships within cities and urban regions (1978: 170–86). The thrust of this threefold understanding of ‘colonization’ was to bring insights from the most common analyses of colonization — those referring to geopolitics and world order (1) — to bear on inter- and intra-regional analysis (2 and 3).

Under the intellectual pressure of anti-colonial theory and politics in the 1960s and 1970s, Lefebvre’s approach posits a direct comparability of spatial organization in the colonies proper with the territorial organization of ‘colonies’ internal to the metropolitan heartland itself. With reference to ‘colonization’ within urban regions, Lefebvre stresses that strategies of city building such as Haussmannization in the nineteenth century and modernism in the twentieth span the divide between imperial centre and colonial territory. They can be studied to compare not only Bordeaux and Lyon, but also Paris and Algiers.

Lefebvre’s notion of ‘colonization’ is suggestive but limited. Lefebvre brings together various forms of territorial ‘colonization’ without specifying the particular ways in which territorial hierarchies are produced in particular places and at particular scales. At the least, Lefebvre needs to be ‘stretched’ with Fanon’s crucial insistence that racism be understood as the ‘most visible’, ‘most everyday’ ‘modality of the systematized hierarchisation’ that is colonization (Fanon, 1975: 33; see also Ross, 1995; Hart, 2006).¹⁰ Racism as lived experience (which Fanon observed in 1950s’ Lyon and which greatly informed his (1967a) *Black Skin — White Mask*) is intimately tied up with various forms of colonial spatial organization: spatial separations in the colonial city, the relations between city and countryside in colonial territories, and unequal international relationships of world order.

This he specified in various texts produced after he joined the Algerian liberation struggle (Fanon, 1963; 1965; 1967b). Very much in keeping with his one-time teacher Aimé Césaire’s famous dictum, ‘colonisation = chosification’ (1955: 19), Fanon underlines how racialized spatial organization reifies — homogenizes and separates — the colonized. Although he does not produce a theory of the colonial state per se, Fanon sees agents of the state — the military, police, urban planning — as crucial in this peculiar form of reification. The upshot is clear, particularly for those interested in the
legacies of colonialism within former or current imperial centres: only territorial relations co-defined by racialized hierarchy (or ‘racial urbanism’ — Nightingale, 2003) can properly be called ‘colonial’.

**PIETERSE**

In my experience and reading, we as South Africans are so stuck on, and in, race-based conceptualizations of the world and ourselves because we can only think in epic scales of transformation. There is a very deep desire and belief (particularly amongst black South Africans) that if we are to excise and transcend racism we must be able to witness the slaying of the dragon with our naked eyes and live through the liberating effects of bathing in the blood of the slain beast; a precondition to empowering us to be all we have always thought we should and must be: the heroes of the world who not only defeated apartheid but also managed to slay its shadow, racial supremacy. This heroic narrative corners us into an anti-racism politics that is mainly about epic interventions — broad-based black economic empowerment, affirmative action, quotas, redistribution, land reform, etcetera — that will resolve the profound structural knots of institutionalized racism. It is only once this threshold has been crossed that we can get on with the business of figuring out how to live together, and by extension, ourselves. As the cliché intimates: first create a level playing field before you expect everyone to compete equally. I have no particular quibble with these vital domains of anti-racism struggle as set out in the heroic narrative, but want to suggest that in the absence of a more textured, more fluid, more open-ended, more dynamic, more autonomous sense of subjectivity, it will inevitably ring hollow, disconnected from the indeterminate micro-politics of becoming — the effable domain of the ordinary.

South African art holds many of the keys to help us, and maybe even the world at large, to unlock doors that can facilitate a more productive engagement between the epic and the ordinary. In order to substantiate this assertion, I want to lean heavily on the redolent theorization of affect offered by Brian Massumi:

Spinoza says that every transition is accompanied by a *feeling* of the change in capacity. The affect and the feeling of transition are not two different things. They’re two sides of the same coin, just like affecting and being affected. That’s the first sense in which affect is about intensity — every affect is a *doubling*. The experience of the experience. This gives the body’s movements a kind of depth that stays with it across all transitions — accumulating in memory, in habit, in reflex, in desire, in tendency. Emotion is the way the depth of that ongoing experience registers personally at a given moment . . . No emotional state can encompass all the depth and breadth of our experiencing of experience — all the ways our experience redoubles itself . . . Affect as a whole, then, is a *virtual co-presence* of potentials . . . There’s like a population or swarm of potential ways of affecting or being affected that follows along as we move through life. We always have a vague sense that they’re there. That vague sense of potential, we call it our ‘freedom’, and defend it fiercely. But no matter how certainly we know that the potential is there, it always seems just out of reach, or maybe around the next bend. Because it isn’t *actually* there — only virtually. But maybe if we can take little, practical, experimental, strategic measures to expand our emotional register, or limber up our thinking, we can access more of our potentials at each step, have more of it actually available. Having more potentials available intensifies our life. We’re not enslaved by our situations. Even if we *never* have our freedom, we’re always experiencing a *degree* of freedom, or ‘wriggle room’. Our degree of freedom at any one time corresponds to how much of our experiential ‘depth’ we can access towards a next step — how intensely we are living and moving (Massumi, 2000: 213–4).

**BOUCHER**

The kapukurri are dreams. During sleep, the spirit (*kurungpa*) leaves the body to live its own experiences and encounters. *Kapukurri* is the place par excellence for meetings and exchanges with the *tjukurpa* beings and the deceased ones. It is a space-time mediator.
between ancestral order and actual life. Dreams, as lived and understood by the Aboriginals, are moments and places of actions, experiences and knowledge. They are perceived as true experiences (Poirier, 1994a: 108, 116). The term kapukurri also describes the narrations of dreams. An important part of the analysis of dreams as social processes relies on the study of narration of dreams. Poirier explains why the narration of kapukurri convert dreams into real life experiences:

In cultures of oral tradition, we do not conceive fictitious narrations. All stories derived from a lived experience, whether a dream, an encounter with a tjukurrpa being, a new experience or a remarkable achievement of a late relative, are real and are part of the real (Poirier, 1994a: 110 — my translation).

Over the course of her data collection, Poirier noted five recurrent themes in the dreams of Aboriginals: the dream-shadow (easily forgotten), the dream bearer of a message, activities related to hunting and gathering, disease and travel. Four out of these five themes (not the first one) can include movement. For example, the dream of a child to be born reveals the site on the territory where the child was conceived. The child will embody the tjukurrpa related to this specific site. Through dream, a sick woman can visit a medicine-man in a distant community so he can perform a healing ritual for her. Through dreams, the spirit (kurungpa) visits sites on the territory and spends time with the tjukurrpa beings or deceased relatives affiliated with those sites. Dreams are time to dance, hunt or discuss with them. Poirier explains that: ‘By their sole presences, they all contribute to maintain and regenerate the ancestral and reproductive essence of the visited sites’ (Poirier, 1994a: 114). This shows the complexity of the place and role of the tjukurrpa in the Aboriginal cosmological order.

In Aboriginal understanding of oneiric activities, dreaming of being somewhere is as true as being there physically. These travels are added to life experiences and future actions may rely specifically on what was learned, seen, heard or felt in the course of these journeys.

PIETERSE

The unending variation and complexity of affect resides in the individual and collective emotional registers that people lug around with them and out into circulation as they make their way through the world. It is only in this fine grain of particularity that echoes with larger swells of affective registers that we can create a basis for meaningful engagement about complex histories, trajectories of pain and pleasure, and potentialities if desires and obligations are forced to find accommodation within people/citizens and their polities. Naturally, this speaks into a vast canvas of complex shades and nuances, which can be overwhelming in its intensity but also fruitfully mediated by art.

For example, let’s reflect on some of the registers of affect, feeling, meaning and potentiality that transpire from the particular pieces and their articulation in an installation curated by Pep Subírós, entitled: ‘Local racism, global apartheid: South Africa as a paradigm’. In his symmetrically crafted depiction of forced labour, Gerard Sekoto manages to capture both the exploitation associated with imposed white baasskap (overlordship) and the ability of black subjects to insinuate rhythm, song and a sense of creation into an oppressive relation. One cannot but be transfixed by the power of the social commentary infused with aesthetic recreation which hints at very complex, profoundly situated realities. A feat he pulls off with as much acuity and insight as in his studies of more intimate everyday spaces where black people could just be... lovers, gamblers, amblers; in other words protagonists of pleasure and desire. By bringing affective registers of intimacy and leisure into the frame, the crude racist stereotypes of the time that sought to discipline daily routines are simply nullified, even if only momentarily.
BOUCHER

This intertwining of dreams and real life is possible because Aboriginals have a specific way of understanding their place, as human beings, in the world. To explain this ontology, some anthropologists working among contemporary hunter-gatherer societies have developed what is called the ‘dwelling theory’ (Radice, 2000), or the ‘ontology of dwelling’ (Ingold, 1996: 121; Poirier, 2005: 10). Phenomenology provides the theoretical background for ‘dwelling theorists’, who want to put forward a relationship to the environment that doesn’t distinguish place and space, the former being the social construction of the latter (Ingold, 1996: 120; Casey, 1997: 14; Radice, 2000: 11). To go beyond that constructivist perception of the world (Milligan, 1998: 6–7; Radice, 2000: 12; Poirier, 2005: 10), this approach assumes that all beings are involved in an active relationship, practical and perceptual, with other components of the world, animate and inanimate beings.

Among others, Ingold (1996) challenges this relation between the concepts of culture (conceptual form of nature) and nature (physical substance). According to him, such a dichotomy is purely occidental and should be revisited in light of Aboriginal experiences. They do not see their environment as an external world that should be conceptually controlled and symbolically appropriated before action (Ingold, 1996: 117–21). The environment and its components (trees, animals, minerals) are not ‘passive entities upon which humans project their mental representations; rather they engage as active agents in intimate and reciprocal relations with humans’ (Poirier, 2005: 11). As such, landscapes are sentient. Poirier wrote, for example, that a site on the territory can inform humans through dreams that he feels alone or neglected (1994a: 113).

The ontology explained by the dwelling approach reveals a specific relationship to the surroundings but (because) it is inextricably linked with the livelihood of the human groups that assume those principles. It is possible to ask whether a change in the way of living directly on and from the land — such as where colonial implementation of a sedentary lifestyle has been effective — could affect the permeable and flexible boundaries between the ancestral realms and the physical world.

KIPFER

In the lineage Lefebvre–Fanon, the notion of ‘colonization’ establishes a relationship of interiority between geopolitical colony and metropolis. The ‘colonial’ is always-already-present in metropolitan urbanism, and this during and after the prevalence of formal, geopolitical colonization. More specifically, the state (itself a multi-scalar formation) is a crucial factor in organizing ‘colonial’ relations of centre and periphery. The point of comparative research is thus threefold.

First, it is to demonstrate the ways in which particular colonial experiences helped form the inter- and transnational apparatuses and knowledge forms of city-building and urban administration in colony and metropole alike. Second, comparative analysis would be oriented to demonstrating how multi-scalar state practices yield comparatively differentiated territorial outcomes, both in former colonies (Mumbai and Kingston, Dakar and Abidjan) and in former cities in imperial heartlands (London and Liverpool, Paris and Bordeaux). Third, such research is eminently interested in the capacity of anti-colonial struggles. Following Fanon and the spirit of coordinating anti-colonial efforts, such a comparative approach would foreground struggles in former colonial cities (such as slum-dweller opposition against eviction in Durban and Mumbai). With Lefebvre in mind, one can also compare the anti-colonial traces of struggles of resistance in metropolitan centres with imperial pasts (such as struggles of suburbanized people of colour against police violence and socio-spatial exclusion in Paris and Toronto).

In all three cases, one can surmise that strategies and struggles in particular urban regions and trans- and international urban networks relate to each other as forms of ‘co-production’. Of particular empirical salience and political importance in this regard
is research on the comparability of neo-Haussmannite urbanization strategies. Such strategies, one may posit, are co-produced by, on the hand, transnational alliances of ruling-class fractions and state branches specializing in city-building (Olds, 2001; Sklair, 2005), and, on the other, particular, path-dependent socio-spatial dynamics in particular urban regions.

To study this co-production, one can compare cities in the former colonial world, with particular emphasis on struggles against state-led slum clearance and spatial peripheralization in those ‘Cities of the South’ (Seabrook, 1996) which pursue strategies of rapid, transnationally incorporated growth and global-city formation (major metropoles in India, China, South Africa and Brazil, for example). In globalizing cities with primary or secondary imperial pasts (in the US, Britain, Japan, France, Holland, Germany, Canada, Switzerland etc.), a key focus of comparative analysis can centre on state-led strategies of gentrification, public housing redevelopment and socio-spatial displacement to older suburban social spaces. In both cases, a particularly important research question is to understand the degree to which neo-Haussmanite strategies rearticulate ‘older logics of imperial control and racial dominance’ (Davis, 2006: 96) when they tie physical redevelopment to racialized attempts at dispersing subaltern populations and undermining real or potential socio-spatial bases of opposition.11

RAO

What does laying claim to the future actually imply? As I suggest above, there is an intimate relationship between speculative activity and the future as a horizon of anticipation. Indeed, speculation works by gesturing toward the future in some manner. In a fascinating essay on early twentieth-century fictional representations of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Tower in New York, cultural historian Nick Yablon connects real estate speculation and representations of catastrophe in that period. Specifically, he ties the fictional representation of New York as a landscape of sublime ruins to the emergence of an understanding of the built environment as transitory and unstable. These images, he suggests, are central to understanding the ways in which the ‘New York cityspace was subjected to intensified forces of economic and spatial upheaval before and after the turn of the century’ (Yablon, 2004: 310). ‘The volatility of the built landscape in an age of speculative finance and corporate capitalism’ (ibid.: 311) was, he writes, a shared and common preoccupation amongst a wide range of publics. What his work suggests is two ideas central to the widespread circulation of speculative activity.

First, such representations, in this case in fictional narratives, work to create a sense of transitoriness in relation to the built environment. Such transitoriness and instability of the built environment, its mutability and its fungibility from the point of view of a future vision of the city is neither given nor self-evident. Second, such representations create a preoccupation with the future that might be transformed amongst a wide range of publics and thus allow speculative activity to occur more seamlessly. In other words, speculative activities depend upon a narrative of ruination and catastrophe, which creates preparedness within the public realm to accept the idea of the future not as an infinite present but as a space of progressive development. Thus, on Yablon’s reading, cultural representations, which could include both fiction and cinematic representations, created a space of anticipation for a new field to emerge. This space of anticipation is necessary for large-scale change or redevelopment to take place, but it is a space that is attached to speculative activity rather than to rational planning as such. Indeed, speculative activity emerges precisely in the gap between planning and policy and exploits that gap. It does,
however, remain tied to retaining the gap for as long as possible, before the rationality of the market takes it over and reduces the possibilities for irrational profits.

Yablon’s work is interesting precisely because it points to another space — what I refer to as a space of ‘anticipation’ — that reveals another location for speculative activity, that of the imagination. For most urban historians, speculative development is connected intimately to instruments of rational planning — such as the grid or the parcelling of plots. In the case of Mumbai, for example, the imposition of the abstract mechanism of the FSI was similarly a signal about the future of urban growth. While prior to the 1964 Development Plan urban growth occurred incrementally, the imposition of a blanket index across the city gave concrete shape to areas where speculation might occur as areas of potential growth. Thus, these instruments also became the occasion for the circulation of speculative finance capital, which found profit in the very idea, if not the reality, of a rapidly changing built environment. The imagination could thus serve as a vehicle to organize the entire cityscape into multiple sites of development, allowing speculative capital to arbitrage opportunities thus created by differentiations between sites, not just by positioning particular sites as the most profitable on account of certain policy decisions about urban form or perceived need.

Thus, investment in building and construction is the medium for speculative capital to circulate but its circulation also requires cultural preparation for viewing the urban built environment as volatile rather than stable so that the existing infrastructure and imagination of the actually existing city could be leveraged to produce something new. Going back to eighteenth-century Paris, where the earliest finance markets developed, Nina Dubin shows how artistic representations of the ‘volatility of the built landscape’ — representations, for example of the destruction of Paris by fire — created a climate for speculative capital to be invested in construction. Significantly, these investments preceded the Hausmannization of Paris, that is to say, its large-scale reconstruction through rational, modern planning. The history of speculation thus provides us with a hitherto unavailable ‘hook’, as it were, on the relationship between the future imagined by speculative anticipation and that imaged by the representations and accounts of rational planners.

CALVACANTI

Given the taken-for-grantedness with which the scholarly literature, public policies and city laws use the term ‘consolidated favela’ one would think there is an easily accessible, consensual definition somewhere. That is not the case; in fact, such a definition is hard to come about, though what it describes is easily perceivable: favelas whose housing stock is predominantly of brick and masonry (as opposed to the wood and plaster shacks of a while back) and is visibly connected to urban infrastructure and services, such as light, sewage and water. Hence, what is surprising is not its self-evidence but the mere fact that only 30 years ago such a term would have constituted a contradiction in terms (not to mention hard to objectively come about).

This in and of itself offers one of those singular (Foucauldian) motifs that opens a field of inquiry into historical discontinuities in regimes of power, structures of governance and subject-producing formations. Moving in this direction entails going beyond the term’s current usage as a (rather apt) descriptive term, and inquiring into how its very self-evidence has come about: hence the question is not: ‘what is a consolidated favela?’ (that is, indeed, largely accounted for in substantive and even statistical terms) but what were — and continue to be — the conditions of possibility of favela consolidation as a historical process? How did infrastructural upgrading become such a mainstream, consensual policy, and what are the discourses that legitimize and underwrite it? Finally, what sorts of social dynamics do these transformations entail, produce or silence?

12 See, for example, Rem Koolhaas’s (1994) Delirious New York, which connects the grid to the psychological state of the city-dweller.
As a descriptive term that captures an emerging urban phenomenon, the ‘consolidated favela’ challenges established — lay, technical, legal or working — definitions of ‘favela’. In all these spheres and for most of the twentieth century, favelas have been perceived as ‘area[s] predominantly of housing, characterized by the occupation of land by low-income populations, precarious infrastructure and public services, narrow and irregular layout of access ways, irregular shaped and sized plots and unregistered constructions, breaking with legal standards’ (Riley, 2001: 1).13

In short, the favelas have historically been characterized as spaces of extreme poverty and illegality, a definition that still holds for a considerable portion of Rio’s seven hundred (and counting . . .) favelas. But not only are there areas in the city that do not fall under the category of favela despite being illegally inhabited by the poor but, more importantly, their constitutive illegality is inscribed in a larger context of noncompliance with urbanistic legislation, wherein ‘the infractions, beyond being infractions, are the norm, and the norm . . . is constituted by infractions’ (Maricato, 1996: 23).14

A similar reasoning could be applied to poverty. The fact is that it is no longer accurate to claim that the most extreme levels of poverty or deficient urban services are found in Rio’s favelas; quantitative studies based on census and household survey data show an increasing differentiation among the urban poor, with changing consumption patterns and improved access to public services, especially health, education and sanitation, despite overall increasing economic deterioration and relative stability in the reproduction of social and economic inequality (IPEA, 2003; Perlman, 2002; Torres et al., 2006).

What is even more striking about these slippages is that they can be traced back to the 1980s — the ‘lost decade’ of successive economic crises and rampant inflation, in which poverty levels increased, and the favela population and the number of favela settlements expanded at much higher rates than the so-called ‘formal city’ (see Lago, 2000). Yet the overwhelming majority of the informants I encountered over the course of 18 months of field research in one unequivocally consolidated favela narrate the period as one of undeniable improvement in their living conditions, a stance corroborated by quantitative studies: between 1979 and 1987, roughly 25,000 children of low-income families between the ages of 0 and 6 came to have access to pre-schools; 200,000 meters of sewage networks were installed, benefiting about 280,000 people in 263 favelas; and a Community Health program was implemented in 31 favelas.

By 1990, Light — the city electricity company — had expanded its network to provide public electricity to over one hundred favelas. Garbage collection had considerably improved; countless day-care centers — partially funded by the city government and managed by favela residents — were up and running (albeit precariously) (see Peppe, 1992: 96; Burgos, 1998: 47).

Moving in space, time, and emotions

SMITH

‘Nasra, you should try to visit before I leave Nairobi’, said my sister soberly. The words pierced me.

‘Yes, we will try. I hope so’, I replied, lying.

‘Try to come after the elections.’ My sister continued to nudge my husband and me to a decision.

13 This particular definition is extracted from the 1992 City Master Plan, but could have been excerpted from any piece of legislation since the 1937 Building Code.
14 It is estimated that over 50% of real estate properties in the country’s largest metropolitan regions do not conform to current legislation regulating soil usage and occupation, and/or do not observe zoning or construction laws (Maricato, 1996: 21).
‘Well, we might come before . . .’ I let the charade go on, satisfying my jealousy over my little niece.

‘Just try to make it. It’s the best chance, before I return’, added my sister, unable to differentiate between her anticipation and disappointment at returning to Toronto.

_The road to Toronto marked the journey to a new Nairobi. A new type of Nairobi, muddled through cultural difference, opportunity and the possibility of change._ I settled oddly into that night, trying to identify between the transportation of my body and the reluctance of my soul. My feelings morphed to despair; my hands began to numb. I was caught between the city and its memories, and while my uncle was complaining about my sisters, it would seem that, since that moment, Toronto had become a place that precipitated my anxieties.

‘I really want to . . .’, was all I could muster up, as my journey of return to Africa was constantly marred by my financial and academic obligations.

Now, after living in Toronto for over 16 years, my desire for home has never left me. It is a constant wave of rage and despair that intersects with the memory of a city, of hope and of belonging. It has been a feat of great magnitude to convince myself to live in Toronto. For an immigrant, Toronto is the center for cultural survival — there is something waiting, ready to inform, warn and create a symbiotic relationship. I went into my days and nights with little choice, and when Toronto asserted itself, I was disappointed. Immigrants always say jokingly, ‘It seems that the worst of Canada is always left for the immigrants’.

I am easily irritated at the sight of cultural ‘pseudoism’ — I am sickened as Harbourfront tries to remind me of Africa . . . its attempts to explicate the global flavours of Toronto locally, or the local flavours of Toronto globally mock me. Mostly, it makes for great advertisements, government initiatives and a collective dysfunctionalism. We can gleefully attend, and take along our loved ones or new tourists, to deconstruct African instrumentalists till morning dawns! But when do the connectivities between city and Torontonians correspond? Men, women, children and fire-eating charades at the many festivals provide nexuses of intrigue and exoticism. Mix difference and deference and you have Lula Lounge. Add lost sophistication and a new breed of professional women and you have Easy on the Fifth. At any given street, pick up a copy of Now Magazine, Eye Weekly or gleefully eye the easy persuasion of entertainment advertisements. Indeed, the vicissitudes of cool have reached Toronto, while we, immigrants, are lost in our doctrine of Toronto — that we can jam our lives in and change them for the better while demanding that Toronto stay a forward-moving city?

BOUCHER

Traveling through dreams to visit deceased loved ones in the ancestors’ world could be perceived by Occidentals as an exotic means of transportation and destination. But it is more difficult, theoretically, to consider that experience to be as true as any other, to insert the feelings and activities offered by dreams into the stream of real life events. The work of Tim Cresswell, a contemporary geographer, will be useful at this point to illustrate two arguments: (1) To move in dreams is not possible according to Occidental ontological principles because it is imperceptible and (this is why) (2) mobility control as a colonial (modern) strategy did not include control of the Ancestors’ world, which gives to dreams a dimension of resistance.

In his book _On the Move; Mobility in the Modern Western World_ (2006), Cresswell understands mobility through three relational moments: an empirical observable reality, representations of mobility and a practised, experienced, embodied way of being in the world. Aboriginal movements in dreams are indeed embodied experiences. In the waking state, the spirit (kurungpa), the faculty of thought and comprehension, is located in the ear. While dreaming, it is the umbilical region (tjuni) that plays this role; the dreamer thinks, feels through the _tjuni_. Aboriginals also represent and make sense of their dreams and the _tjukurrpa_, notably through paintings. The most problematic relational moment of
mobility as described by Cresswell is the empirical observable reality, the one that calls to planners, modelers, science labs and high-powered computers. To move in the Western World means to move physically. It is then possible to capture and objectify mobility. In their way, Aboriginals can read movements that are going on to and in the *tjukurrpa* because they shape, they inscribe the landscape. Poirier explains:

The whole desert area, and far beyond, is thus crisscrossed with ancestral tracks, which not only link the underground, the heavens, and the surface of the earth, but which also bind together humans, ancestors, and named places as kin within complex and dynamic networks of relationships (Poirier, 2004: 63).

Narrations of dreams, of movements in dreams, enable Aboriginals to objectify the ancestral journeys and the land they (re)created. What happens in dream is real; as narrative event, it is suited to enrich individual and social knowledge. Nobody would doubt a person’s experiences that occurred in the *tjukurrpa* and the story derived from them, because they are reality. It is not an occidental empirically observable reality, but the reality in a world where nature and culture are one.

**PIETERSE**

Everyday sociality is used as a register by David Goldblatt to draw a veil over the underbelly of Afrikaner working-class culture, but not in the interests of caricature or shame, but rather to reflect affective in-between moments of unexpected intimacy: sleeping in full abandon, child-like affection for the ‘other’ before the ‘real man’ is forced to emerge, and the unadulterated masculine pleasure of rifle practice shoulder-to-shoulder with your *broer* (comrade).

At the same time, Goldblatt can also drain affect by refracting the clinical symmetry of official Afrikaner nationalism as embodied in the posture, pomp, landscape architecture and rituals of supremacist ideology, with chilling effect. This is indeed the power of art; to both induce and reduce affective resonance, which leaves the spectator with little room but to react, to feel, to reposition in relation to the provocation, and effectively become someone different. It is in these transitions that we are at our most susceptible to explore our own views and desires with regard to ourselves and others, and therefore, most vulnerable to meaningful engagement. This is what makes art such a powerful entry point for transformation because it catches us all off guard as we momentarily spin off our axis of certitude and dogmatism.

The affective power of art is not simply about creating passageways to our interiority; it is also about shock, excitement, fear, anguish and dread. Moving through the contemporary world with its overproduction of violence and brutality triggers a plethora of compensatory mechanisms so that we shut ourselves off from the implication of our own complicity in what we cannot even contemplate, let alone name or try and change in a sustained fashion. These compensatory instincts draw their power from the addictive consumer cultures that buoy global flows of capital and symbolic economies.

The viral nature of these consumer cultures put us all beyond inoculation, meaning, we are all inescapably implicated. Yet, our ideologies and philosophies in a ‘post-post’ era have exhausted themselves by their own contradictions, leaving us at war with ourselves and the world we bring into existence by merely breathing. At such a moment, the dazzling clarity of provocations by insurgent artists such as Lolo Veleko, Johannes Phokela, Nondipha Mntambo, Sue Williamson and Zwelethu Mthethwa are as vital as antiretrovirals to the infected. Theirs are voices of surgical provocation by honing in on the exact sites, scales, dimensions, fields, terrains and memories of injustice.
Empirically, these comments on comparative research very much dovetail with existing research on post-colonial urbanism, even if they foreground the role of the state in neocolonial urbanization. Theoretically, they are best understood as contributions to materialist and Marxist-influenced forms of post-colonial studies, however. As such, they are difficult to reconcile with approaches — technocentric or vitalist — which conceive the urbanization process one-sidedly as a deterritorialized set of flows, movements and mobilities.

As Matthew Sparke (2003) and Gillian Hart (2006) have pointed out, such ontologies of ‘smooth space’ best epitomized by Hardt and Negri (2000) come dangerously close to dominant forms of ‘neocolonial enframing’ which rest on an at least implicit distinction between a space of flow of transnational capital and a place-based ‘outside’. Current ‘neocolonial enframing’ resonates with the way in which the colonial was made invisible in late-nineteenth-century metropolitan modernity (Jameson, 2003: 700). Emphasizing the ‘colonial’ aspects of transnational urbanization today is precisely to make visible such occlusions. In fact, following Fanon and Lefebvre for purposes of comparative urban research is to analyse what Debord (1992: 166; 2004: 34) used to call the ‘technique of separation’ of capitalist urbanism which helps produce the hierarchical, and also racialized, underpinnings of the commodity form. This technique may be incomplete, contradictory and contested since it is shot through with the cross-cutting dynamics inherent in racialized class and gender relations. But it remains nonetheless constitutive of the urban experience today.

Politically, Fanon and Lefebvre stand in those Marxist and anti-colonial traditions which see that liberation (truly universal human emancipation) is mediated by a dialectic of appropriating and transforming (neo-)colonial social space. This is at least in partial contrast to the deterritorializing logic of ‘multitude’ (Hardt and Negri, 2004), which, in the (laudable) interest of avoiding the territorial, state-centric traps of ‘sovereignty’, systematically underestimates the challenge of overcoming real-existing reifications and separations produced, in part, by racialized state strategies. In former colonies, a dialectical understanding of liberation is of course best represented by quasi-Fanonian (left-wing, democratic and proto-feminist) currents within anti-colonial movements. In today’s neocolonial world, Fanon’s insights into ‘false decolonization’, the comprador bourgeoisie and spatial compartmentalization along lines of race and class remain of significant potency for activist analysis. In the African context, Richard Pithouse (2006) has pointed this out with reference to slum-dweller movements in Durban.

While I began these comments about urban reform in Mumbai, I made a detour through New York and Paris as a way of providing a more general account of how we might think of speculation as something other than self-evident. Its intimate connection to forms of the capitalist imaginary certainly bears more investigation, particularly because in our own times, we continue to be engulfed by mega-construction projects ranging from what Keller Easterling calls ‘spatial products’ (Easterling, 2007: 1) — like offshore zones catering to specific services such as tourism or agriculture — to entire cities like Dubai. What I propose, through this reading more generally, is that there appears to be an intimate relationship between construction on these scales, speculation and newer forms of capitalist organization and socialization of subjects. In turn, this claim is related closely to Marshall Berman’s reading of capitalism’s impulse of ‘innovative

15 On such materialist (Marxist and feminist) investigations of post-colonial conditions, see most prominently Bartolovich and Lazarus (2002) and Mills (1996).
16 What I have in mind here are Manuel Castells’s technologically determinist arguments about the space of flows in Network Society as well as neo-Deleuzian strategies of urban research (for a commentary on the latter, see Thrift, 2004).
self-destruction’ (Berman, 1982: 98) through which the essence of capitalism, as process, is realized. In other words, destruction becomes construction. However, destruction here need not be understood literally.

There may be many modalities within which destruction is apprehended. These modalities might share the quality of temporariness or transitoriness or immanent destruction, which forms the condition of possibility of capitalist organization. Yet there are distinctions in the forms through which this temporariness is apprehended and made visible and such forms might include, for example, destruction of particular urban sites by serial bombing as well as preservation by heritage conservation; ruination by de-industrialization as well as by the large-scale circulation of apocalyptic fictional narratives.

‘Innovative self-destruction’ is also, for example, connected to the simultaneous creation of policy and financial instruments in order to ‘extract value from the city’ as Rachel Weber puts it. Private investment in US cities, she argues, has been stimulated by the designation of various neighbourhoods as ‘blighted’ or ‘obsolete’. She writes: ‘Spatial policies, such as urban renewal funding for slum clearance or contemporary financial incentives, depend on discursive practices that stigmatize properties targeted for demolition and redevelopment’ (Weber, 2002: 519). Such discursive strategies, she suggests, are necessary to stimulate investment in areas where development needs are great but chances of private investments are slight. Mortgage financing is another huge arena in which the risks of investment are connected with speculative profiteering on the one hand and the imperatives of planning and policy-making. As the most recent crisis in the mortgage finance industry around subprime lending reiterates, financial instruments like mortgages are always speculative in nature, even when connected to the long-term horizon and the life-cycle of the productive citizen, and as such they introduce an irreducible element of instability in relation to the built environment. The contradictions between the durability of architecture and the instability of the urban condition are especially sharply revealed by a closer understanding of speculative practices.

Each of these forms of destruction/construction is, in turn, connected to the creation of a space of anticipation, where speculative capital reigns, however briefly, extracting enormous value in the short term from ‘subsidized property investments’. In the case of Mumbai, I’d like to propose that the principle representational forms through which this space of anticipation becomes visible are the built environment itself and, perhaps secondarily, the cinema. In the concluding section, I turn to showing how the contemporary urban landscape of Mumbai bears testimony to speculative activity and, specifically, what the forms of the landscape reveal about the particular representational modalities through which speculation works as a transformational and not merely a profit-generating activity.

BOUCHER

Two worlds collide. Colonial processes since the beginning of the twentieth century (especially in the case of English imperialism in Canada and Australia) have aimed to settle nomadic people, notably by the installation of religious institutions and schools in strategic places, which amounts to the foundation of reservations or communities of indigenous tribes. In a very original analysis, Perkins (1998) shows how colonial authorities and settlers in Australia lost a sense of time because they failed to understand their new environment; the seasons that would have helped to mark time in a land where imported clocks were quickly unusable were unknown to Europeans. Not only was the country timeless, but its people — going back and forth in the Ancestors’ world — seemed to be timeless too.

17 An elaboration of the cinematic representation of speculative activity will be found in two of my recent essays — ‘How to read a bomb: scenes from Bombay’s Black Friday’ (Rao, 2007) and ‘A new urban type? Gangsters, terrorists, global cities’ (Rao, n.d.).
Perkins (1998: 349) explains that the ontological order and the pre-eminence of the Dreamtime among Aboriginals ‘contributed to the representation of a timelessness that necessarily implied a homelessness’. Thus, colonial enterprise ‘involved temporal domination as much as territorial control’ (ibid.). The Aboriginal ontological order was misunderstood by Europeans. On the one hand, it legitimized the colonial processes. On the other hand, their miscomprehension of the dreams and the Law renders those dimensions impenetrable and thus uncolonizable. Cresswell (2006; see also Lahiri, 2007) goes further by showing that attempts to control and restrict mobility are characteristic of the modern world. They are found almost everywhere today, taking various forms (airports, photography, poems and dances) that are not unknown to Aboriginals’ everyday life.

However, acts of resistance and non-conformity also emerge everywhere. This is exactly what journeys through dreams are about — and this in two ways. To continue with the Aboriginals of Northern Australia, dreams first allow the preservation and the maintenance of sites on the territory and of the tjukurrpa beings beyond land occupation by settlers. Second, as Lattas (1993) shows in the analysis of how sorcery became a way of embodying the contradictions of colonialism in West New Britain, dreams allow plays where the colonized aren’t spatially and physically limited. Travels in dreams offer people ‘other embodied sites from which to view contemporary existence’, thus holding a ‘power to heal and recreate the world’ (ibid.: 70). Not only were the dreams and the Ancestors’ realm never colonized, but today they also contribute to the dynamic preservation of distinct cultural realities.

CALVACANTI

And that was just the beginning. The 1990s witnessed the establishment of infrastructural upgrading as the chief governmental policy targeting the city’s favelas, epitomized in the launch of the Favela-Bairro program, a 600 million endeavor, partially funded by the World Bank. For the first time favela ‘integration’ into the city was hailed as the solution to the city’s problems, old (poverty and inequality) and new (rising crime rates).

If up until the mid-1970s the specter of removal was woven into daily practices and built forms, the coupling of infrastructural works with the virtual disappearance of removal from the horizon of public policies therefore changed the material conditions in which everyday life unfolded. Simply put, the idea of a ‘consolidated favela’ ceased to be a contradiction in terms, becoming a social form in its own right. Particularly relevant is that the lifting of the threat of removal and governmental investments should not be perceived as quantifiable facts or even landmark events, but as enabling new social and spatial dynamics and processes: their coupling fostered a sense of permanence, which in turn triggered a private construction boom in the favelas: the wooden shack was replaced by the masonry house, as residents tend to narrate the significance of the period.

Hence, unprecedented levels of poverty and inequality notwithstanding, the material conditions of the city’s long-established favelas have unequivocally improved over the past two decades, amounting to what could arguably (and only comparatively to other low-income areas) be considered a comparative ‘gentrification’ of such spaces. Indeed, over the course of my field research, I did not encounter a single informant that would recognize him/herself as belonging to ‘surplus humanity’ or any such generalizing category. They perceive themselves as poor, but not destitute. They view themselves as comparatively well off; they are well aware that their living conditions have improved considerably over the past two decades, that their consumption possibilities have amplified, and that their children have a better chance of making it to university than they did. They invest feverishly in their homes; the banging, clanging, and other sounds of construction work are a constant in consolidated favelas, where the
landscape constantly changes due to the rise of new structures and the incessant piling of additional stories onto existing ones.

Residents’ narratives of the transformation from ‘shack’ to ‘house’ concatenate a story of personal progress. Such an imagination of progress — that hinges on subjective structures of value — is reiterated in the fact that a shack turned into house has a value in the economic sphere through the constitution of highly dynamic favela real estate markets. In particular, the accumulation of capital in the form of home ownership operates a massive transformation in residents’ lifeworlds: the same site that once harbored a valueless shack is converted into a major source of economic and symbolic value through their ‘hard work’.

As part and parcel of the process came the establishment of small-scale businesses (grocery, clothing, bakeries, bars). Particularly lucrative is the business of selling construction materials, which are much in demand, particularly masonry with the new sources of employment and income for many residents in government initiatives, in the emerging businesses and new services. The favela itself has become the source of livelihood for many — including many informants who found jobs not only in government-run programs (some being incorporated as civil servants) and NGOs, but also as bar and grocery store owners, masons, electricians, and in other services that cater exclusively or primarily to the community. All these new opportunities precariously offset the effects of de-industrialization and have contributed to the consumption of durable goods present today in the overwhelming majority of (consolidated) favela households.

SMITH

Has multiculturalism helped me feel better about missing Africa? No! I respond to the notion of multiculturalism as a temporary stance. The most unsettling aspect of remembering Toronto in the early 1990s is the conception of openness among all communities. Multiculturalism in the 1990s was at its pinnacle and offered a new alternative to the urban landscape, a way of ‘culturalizing’ Toronto to be an international player in the world by offering a new way of being. Multiculturalism offers the unity of difference claiming that communities can bind through cultural traditions by overt displays in the form of various festivals and culturalized corners of the city. It told us, immigrants, that we have not lost our home, but gained a new one that will also educate us about other cultures. A plethora of festivals and shows, visits to specific city districts, to Malta Village, Greek town on the Danforth, Chinatown and, of course, a series of apartments and coffee shops off Kipling to Islington Road intersecting with Dixon Road to be known as Little Mogadishu. Multiculturalism, indeed, offered an alternative to being swallowed up by Toronto’s changing landscape.

If Toronto’s streets were overwhelming with traffic jams, raging commuters and social exclusion evidenced through pricey homes and fancy cars, then these festivals and ‘cultural cities within cities’ offered a way out or, better still, a way to shove it at rich Torontonians as they gathered to soak themselves in a little bit of culture. Multiculturalism allowed Torontonians to keep their prejudiced beliefs under wraps, yet still plan to visit those wonderful Mehndi Masati Festivals or Caribana. Oddly enough, those prejudiced beliefs found a new home as the level of crime at Caribana festivals was displayed by the media. It became clear that Caribana finally did not offer an alternative to the ever-consuming Toronto! As the media angled Caribana as a problematic festival, it was hard to escape the racial connotations. Caribana is a symbolic festival of Caribbean culture, therefore the mismanagement of funds, crime infestation and lack of knowledge about what is happening on the part of the organizing team indicated that all Caribbeans behave in the same manner. As the media debate about whether Caribana will or will not occur this summer; you can almost feel
Manipulating the urban fabric: everyday appropriations by toilers, immigrants, artists, favela residents, and dreamers

PIETERSE

The depth of emotional entanglement of the artists I am talking about is often not manifested in the materiality of (post)apartheid society and is simply too vast for direct representation. Beauty, wonder, anger and sometimes even awe are summoned by these artists through an aesthetic language that grabs one by the throat because of the sheer audacity (to fuck with all manner of sacred cows such as history, race, a people, religion, cultural traditions, etc.) conjured in their works. Here I think in particular of the complex, multidimensional morphing ‘animation’ of Kentridge as he drags histories, times, peoples, ideologies, styles and rituals into single frames, at his artistic mercy. Also, the sophisticatedly crass dark humour and parody of a Conrad Botes — who is rumoured to have powers to squeeze a reaction (and erection) from stone — come to mind. The surreal and profoundly moving meditations of Berni Searle, who can make the earth dance to the tune of the body, present themselves. And the hybrid, monstrous syntax of Jane Alexander, who can singularly give form and vision to nightmares that dwell in our subconscious, our pasts and our cyborg futures. Wonder and awe arise irresistibly from the distinctive vision of Santu Mofokeng, who can simultaneously write poetry of the street and soul in visual and oral languages; leaving rivulets of the sublime in his wake.

RAO

Since the early 1980s, deindustrialization has carved out a huge swathe of ruination in the geographic centre of Mumbai. The closure of most of Mumbai’s textile mills following a historic strike of the workers caused a severe economic depression throughout the 1980s, and yet this event failed to stem the growth of population both from natural increase and from migration. Job creation occurred mostly in the informal sector and populations were increasingly also housed in informal settlements — that is, in housing put up outside the regulatory framework. Thus, one might say, the informal critically underwrote the infrastructure through which the city worked as an economy and as a space of life. Yet this proliferation of informality has become an occasion, as we saw in the first section, for making the case for a city in crisis and therefore for a future in jeopardy.

This perception of crisis, in turn, gave rise to several ‘experiments’ in planning that tried to address these issues by redeveloping existing conditions like slums, derelict factories or rent-controlled buildings that had been degenerating for generations because of the lack of investments by landlords. These redevelopment episodes are critical to speculative activity because they anticipate a time in the near future when the government will lift the urban ceiling act and allow large amounts of FDI (foreign direct investment) to flow freely into the real estate sector. Once that happens, of course, the expectation is that the market will take over and the rational laws of demand and supply will prevail, thus greatly lessening speculative opportunities.

What is significant, though, is that these redevelopments took place under the aegis of exceptions to existing policies, which were maintained in place. They were thus experiments. In large measure these planning exemptions were tied to producing large amounts of social housing in exchange for granting rights to private developers to use buildable area (FSI) either on the plots that were being redeveloped or on other plots, elsewhere in the city — i.e. transferable development rights (TDRs). There are numerous
critiques of the kind of uneven growth that these experiments resulted in and the most powerful critiques of all were articulated by groups of activists, largely planners, architects and former bureaucrats who challenged these schemes in court from the point of view of rationality and sustainability. The Mumbai High Court has ruled on several such cases, filed in the public interest, over the last four years, largely in favor of these petitioners and therefore against the ‘builder-politician nexus’. In Mumbai, the rhetoric surrounding these cases is largely articulated in the language of unsustainability, of catastrophic urbanism and generally of an impending urban disaster.

SMITH

I often try to make a mental note of immigrants as I ride the subway, do errands and transit to local events. I ask myself, do immigrants jam Toronto? Certainly as many immigrants gain a foothold in Canada, Toronto becomes an obstacle to their dreams of owning a home. The city’s soaring prices and ill-developed new homes have impacted the immigrant consciousness. Now, the phenomenon of suburbanization is the new wave of immigrant reality — the suburban dream home means socioeconomic progress not only in Toronto, but back home. Since Toronto has failed immigrants, suburbia offers a new site for contention to send word that the ‘been-to’ has made it in Toronto. I mean, must we immigrants be stuck while other Canadians move explicably in their new endeavour? Don’t we have hopes and dreams of accessing Toronto as it becomes increasingly urbanized? Can’t we engineer our own stability in Toronto? Indeed, we were already ‘left behind’ even before we arrived in Toronto! The issue of displacement is increasingly evident, especially among my Somali community. As we packed off in droves from Somalia in the early 1990s, apartments, community social housing and social assistance centers became our new homes. Now, we have large numbers of families attempting to move to suburbia for a better life, denying the lost hopes of Toronto. As a city, Toronto is vilified and romanticized by immigrants. It is difficult to distinguish between our desire and our vehemence toward it as we reinterpret its spaces for re-colonization. The Somali immigrant experience is an indictment of Toronto’s increasing urban swallow. We are still producing less income per immigrant population, our boys are involved in crime, our girls are abandoning our objectives as a community, mothers are caught between lack of education and lack of understanding when they try to help their offspring, and we still cannot get a hold of our men! Can an immigrant population maintain its own cultural position and still grab Toronto?

RAO

What I would like to do now is to examine the consequences of the kinds of terrain produced as a result of these manipulations of the urban fabric. The most dramatic results of these episodes or experiments in urban planning are reflected in landscapes characterized by the juxtaposition of built forms belonging to different temporalities. Abandoned textile mills and nineteenth-century tenement housing blocks are thrown into relief against the luxury high-rise condominium towers and shopping complexes. Shacks housing garbage collectors and rag-pickers lean against mountains of trash inside the city’s massive garbage dumping grounds. Low-tech and hazardous activities, like ship-breaking, as well as high-tech jobs housed in new Technoparks are secreted away from prying eyes and human rights monitors.

These kinds of developments of course become part of urban ‘nature’ if urban nature is understood in terms of the naturalized environments that are produced by infrastructural systems in conjunction with human interactions. Nature, in any urban environment, is of course the product of an inevitable relationship between human need, technology and the naturalization or invisibility of the instrumental nature of the infrastructural apparatus. Throughout Mumbai, however, this general process of the production of urban nature is highly visible rather than invisible. It is visible both in
the low-tech solutions that people devise to provide themselves with simple infrastructural facilities such as toilets, as well as in the high-tech developments that reclaim urban space by recycling obsolete infrastructural facilities like garbage dumps into office and residential complexes or even natural park facilities. What is remarkable is that, unlike other places, these acts of recycling are highly visible and thus throw the idea of urban nature as process into relief. They bring together, in other words, ecological temporality with the temporalities of destruction and construction that characterize the urban built fabric.

These mixed-up terrains produced by the recent manipulations of development rules convey and indeed heighten a sense of familiarity, albeit in their reference to the decaying and the rotting. But this familiarity also evokes an uncanny sensation of being in a present that is ruptured from within. What exactly ruptures the present? I would argue that it is the presence of the future, distilled and represented in contained pockets, which pervets the space of the present. This perverse distillation of the future corrupts and distorts the existing landscape even when this landscape is itself a corrupt version of the ideals of urban planning. These juxtapositions of old and new, therefore, might be understood as design inspired by negative impulses whose chief effect is to endow the existing landscape with a sense of temporariness and transitoriness, to mark it as anachronistic and therefore mark it for erasure even when, within these landscapes, it is in fact the ‘new’ that is actually anachronistic.

In so doing, these projects of transformation are projections of an ongoing logic of modernization that operates by marking urban space as either ‘not modern’ (or pre-modern) or ‘not-yet-modern’ (not in keeping with the normative standards of modern building). In Mumbai, as elsewhere, the ‘not modern’ parts of the built fabric are consigned to the heritage industry, assigned for preservation as tokens of the past, or, in other words, allowed to exist as anachronisms. This implies the ‘mutation’ of the old and existing into something different, while appearing to retain its identity. On the other hand, the ‘not-yet-modern’ aspects of the built fabric are perceived as constant disturbances to the aesthetic sensibility of the modern even while they efficiently fulfil a variety of functions that the modern state fails to fulfil.

The chief function of this kind of built environment designated as ‘not-yet-modern’ — the settlements outside regulation — seems to be that of housing large numbers of ‘toilers’ and directing their activities efficiently and productively. Its function, in other words, appears to be that of turning the activities of people, their provisional and flexible interactions with each other and with the technological apparatus, into the very infrastructure upon which the functioning of the city rests. This term, ‘toiler’ is used by Sandeep Pendse (1995), who argues that it would be more appropriate to use this term rather than applying the conventional Marxist political label of the proletariat or working class. According to Pendse, a very specific experience of space and time constitutes the social existence of the toilers in the city and this experience is more relevant to understanding their social condition than an idealized notion of politics. The built environment also reflects the manner in which these toilers are positioned and deployed in the city’s functioning — their dense relationship with the technological apparatus, which constitutes the city’s infrastructure, is an indication of their position as well as their social experience.

18 Examples of these kinds of recycling include the Mahim Nature Park, a sanctuary for migratory birds, carved out by reclaiming natural mangrove swamps from a rapidly encroaching garbage dump.
19 For an elaboration of this notion of people as infrastructure, see Simone (2004).
20 A number of Mumbai-based, progressive architects argue that it is necessary to recognize how the city functions and design accordingly. They argue that improving upon and maintaining the low-rise, high-density forms that characterize much of Mumbai’s built environment makes more sense than their wholesale destruction and replacement with high-rise, high-density forms driven by an unsustainable ‘politics of verticality’.
CAVALCANTI

So why, one may ask, do Rio’s ‘consolidated favelas’ lend themselves to use as illustrations in ‘slum’-type arguments? The fact is that the bleak portrait of daily life in the favelas is inaccurate, but not without reason. As residents tell it, it all happened very fast: the revolver-bearing young men (who would give way to today’s teens with ‘machine guns dangling down their shins’, as one informant put it) became visible in the favela landscape at roughly the same time as piles of bricks and sand, and the incessant sound of construction work came to pervade its daily life. And as masonry structures arose, they were immediately riddled with bullet marks from the constant shootouts that reverberated both day (against the police) and night (between rival drug factions). This daily context of armed conflicts instills peculiar temporalities and spatialities, reinforcing the drug trade’s symbolic order and feeding the dominant representation of the favelas as particular territories defined by ‘violence’.

The equating, in the public view, of the favelas with areas under the influence of the drug trade (and hence as the source of all crime in a city with extremely high crime rates) produces its own reality effects, notably in the form of social interventions, nongovernmental initiatives and urbanization programs, all of which have the manifest object of contributing to the amelioration of the effects of the drug trade upon favela communities (and, in the last instance aim at containing violent conflict within their boundaries).

PIETERSE

I am preoccupied with the potential of art in the contemporary era of putative freedom, often overshadowed by the spawn of the past. In this ambivalent setting, I believe the role of art is to promote fundamentally different ways of thinking and living all of our temporalities in the present tense because it is the only language with the requisite tools. Differently put, race and racism cannot be overcome outside of an affect-driven multiplicity of (artistic) instigations that can shake loose the self-defeating habit of moving in parallel circles of blame and counter-blame. So, the question still begs: can one transcend racism and does art have any role to play in that struggle?

Of course, this argument must remain conscious of what it will take in both epic and quotidian senses to disintegrate racism. As intimated before, epic structural interventions are well known even if unevenly implemented: e.g. inter-racial (class) redistribution through fiscal and regulatory measures that equalize public expenditures and business opportunities for cash and assets, ideally calibrated to also offset the accumulated advantage of historical cycles of black oppression. In cultural terms, it is about driving a re-signification programme through state regulatory instruments that recognize and sanction the terms of memorialization, public recognition and funding of public culture. In social terms, it is about radically transforming the education system and its relevance to the lives, livelihoods and contexts of the 60% of black South Africans who come from poor households. This implies, at a minimum, making basic education widely available in vernacular languages and raising the rate of investment in management, physical infrastructure, safety, food and social vibrancy of these schools. To my mind, there are very few structural anti-racism measures that are more important than this one.

In social-psychological terms a critical prerequisite for anti-racism to flourish is for the powerful white community to acknowledge how Western white norms remain the starting and end points for what is generally considered to be good, right, beautiful, virtuous, desirable and therefore morally normative, especially in our mediated times. There are, of course, many other structural transformations that can and should be pursued, and in all of these spheres of contestation, there is endless potential for art to play both animating and cataloguing roles, giving both legitimacy and recognition to a vital, but under-nourished politics. This seems all very clear and obvious to me and many of the contemporary pieces in this collection stand testimony to this potential.
Ultimately, aesthetic objections concerning these ‘not-yet-modern’ forms lead to what we might perceive as ‘ethical variability’ in regard to treating these toilers as citizens. The juxtaposition of their environments against an emerging, vertical field of housing and high-tech sites places them in a temporal limbo vis-à-vis the developing city. Their spaces are suspended and marked for erasure even while they are denied access to a regulated housing market. The only way in which they might enter this field is by positioning themselves as currency, as the coin by which developers can gain access to the valuable land that they occupy. The process of converting the poor into capital is intimately connected to the ways in which land is converted into value through instruments like development rights. In the most recent episodes of Mumbai’s redevelopment, the populist measures to provide permanent and secure housing to the poor have been implemented by converting each person into a spatial measurement.

Thus, if a slum-dweller can demonstrate legitimate ‘right to the city’ by showing proof of long-term residence, then she or he is treated by the developer as a spatial calculation. She or he is entitled to a number of square feet, while the developer who resettles her or him is, in turn, entitled to a proportion of that number as free currency that can be exchanged for land elsewhere in the city.²¹

The geography of development is therefore intimately tied to these kinds of schemes while this process of generating spatial capital from persons is endowed with a sense of mystery, surrounded by rumour and backed up by the strong-arm tactics and the ‘informal sovereignty’ of developers and underworld types which allows the maximization of profits from speculations. The mystery, in other words, is essential to maintaining extremely inflated, indeed perverted, land values, the very opposite of the speculative process opened up by rational planning instruments such as the urban grid.

But the continual defeat of these schemes and policies — designed simultaneously as populist strategies and as speculative instruments — by protests launched in the public interest has led to a peculiar effect on questions of design, urban management and politics in Mumbai. The incongruous, indeed ‘ludic’ landscapes on which the concrete effects of these planning ‘episodes’ are registered create a fabric of ruptured temporality, layering one sort of geography over another, ever so slightly out of alignment with each other. In this sense, perhaps we could speak of these ‘ludic’ landscapes as being purposeful and instrumental.

Such landscapes are not only the products of ‘bad’ planning or policy mistakes but rather they are diagnostic and speculative landscapes that provide a glimpse of the future inserted intimately into the present environment. They turn the surface of the city into an archaeological site, embodying different temporalities, which in turn could be excavated and exploited for making a variety of claims upon the city. But more importantly, they allow us to think of speculation as something other than tragic, to think of it through the lens of comedy, as working through a comedic structure. By this I do not mean that the perverted urban design that has been achieved through these planning episodes is ‘hilarious’ or humorous but rather that it follows the temporal structure of the joke, as a form that works through a ‘double-take’, registering a phenomenon differently in the unconscious from the way that it is registered by the conscious gaze. In other words these landscapes are themselves ‘ludic’ because they are incongruous, but not in a self-evident sense.

Thus, if ruin and fictional representations of the city’s ruination promoted a view of the ‘volatility of the built landscape’ that created the space of anticipation necessary for speculation to occur in early twentieth-century New York, I suggest that in the case of Mumbai the surface or built landscape itself, perceived as urban complexion of a sort, provides that representational depth through its comedic form and the manner in which

²¹ I have been exploring this process of slum rehabilitation under the rubric of ‘people as currency’ in my work and have presented a version of this argument in a recent essay (see Rao, 2006b).
it exemplifies ‘perverted’ or bad design. I am suggesting, therefore, that it is useful to specify the forms and representations through which speculation occurs precisely because of the analytic consequences that such a reading might have. The relationship I propose between comedy and speculation must be taken in that spirit. On my reading it is principally a relationship that has to do with the temporality of the landscape and what temporality has to do with the extraction of value from the built landscape.

KIPFER

In the imperial heartlands, anti-colonial traditions used to be embodied, from the 1960s to the early 1980s, by ‘Black’ politics (Sivanandan, 1990), the ‘Third World Left’ (Pulido, 2006), or left-leaning immigrant struggles (Bouamama et al., 1994). These movements all went through a cycle of demobilization due to a combination of bloody repression and selective incorporation (with state-sponsored multiculturalism, affirmative action and anti-racism programmes). Despite their various limitations, their legacy still promises, in the words of Laura Pulido, an ‘expansion of political space’ for anyone interested in a multi-racial, anti-imperial and feminist left (2002, 782; see also Tyner, 2007). It is thus promising that selective Fanonian and Lefebvrian themes have recently been taken up by various forces. Among these, we can cite anti-racist intellectual milieus in France (who have tried to produce a political language adequate to express the aspirations of youth of colour from the popular suburbs (les indigènes de la République — Khiari, 2006) and an inter-urban alliance of struggles against state-sponsored gentrification, public housing redevelopment and racialized law and order in various US cities (Right to the City — Šamara, 2007).

CAVALCANTI

Hence it is not surprising that the favela, in residents’ narratives oscillates between an accomplishment — indexed by the ‘improvements’ — and a stigma, a mode of a priori, external categorization that has very concrete negative impacts upon one’s life. Favela consolidation entrenches this tension by reproducing the favela/formal city divide: what renders recent social and urbanist initiatives legitimate is the consensus that they are ultimately conceived as public security measures aimed at minimizing the ‘social risk’ posed by the favelas. Hence favela urbanization constitutes a means to an end: the ‘reduction of violence through the establishment of the urban order’. 22

Framing social policies in terms of risk contention strategies fixes the favelas as a social category: favela grassroots movements appropriate such hegemonic discourses and hence contribute to the entrenchment of the favela/formal city divide. In a context of high competition for governmental and NGO investments, it becomes necessary to stress the favelas’ lack, poverty and exceptional spatial dynamics, thereby reproducing reigning stereotypes.

In other words, it is only by reaffirming their ‘marginal’ situation that the favelas are entitled to social interventions. Social indicators hint that the very movement that produces ‘consolidated favelas’ — distribution of social projects and urbanization programs, etc. — also deepens inequality among favelas. Though there are no studies documenting the distribution of ‘third sector’ or governmental resources, there is no question that a few (‘consolidated’) favelas are privileged — those that are in more valued areas of the city. Infrastructural upgrading, so often presented as a social panacea, is itself embedded in very specific regimes of power that have not been as of yet fully assessed in social science research and are glossed over by generalizing ‘slum’-type

22 I quote one of the coordinators of the Favela-Bairro program, the largest infrastructural upgrading program implemented to date (cf. Fiori et al., 2000: 56).
arguments, but that are inherent in the emergence of the seemingly self-evident, social and spatial form urban planners have come to refer to as ‘consolidated favelas’.

RAO

In the post-industrial West, refurbishment and preservation through reuse of industrial buildings leads to the temporal arrest of an aesthetic form externally while updating its function or program. Thus, the preserved building ruptures the linear apprehension of time and makes the past available through the uncanny apprehension of form. In places like Mumbai, the issue is about the maintenance and manipulation of densities. The functional densities of the industrial city were long surpassed during the decades in which Mumbai’s population grew exponentially, drawing people magnetically by its image as the only space of opportunity in a slow-moving nation. To return to a functional density now would mean having to banish large parts of the existing population from the city. The solution seems to be to reposition this excessive population, turning the chief function of their existence into one of maintaining, servicing and refurbishing the city’s obsolete industrial infrastructure.

Such activities actually make places like Mumbai competitive in the global economy precisely because they can put their obsolete infrastructure at the service of the more hazardous global industries. Many of the urban planning ‘episodes’, whose effects can be read from their correlated ‘yield’ of structures on the landscape, are part of this exercise of maintaining and manipulating density, positioning residents and resources in order to create the most productive city, however perverse that notion of productivity. In other words, one might view these planning ‘episodes’ as processes of producing urban nature. Using an agricultural metaphor, we might say that if the planning episodes are ‘seeds’ then these structures are their yield.

Yet, the overall picture that such speculation yields is curiously out of alignment, curiously misshapen and out of sync, leaving a landscape partially made up of destroyed ruins and partially made up of half-built or even unbuilt ‘ruins’ that deform the existing patterns of urban design. Here, I use ruins in two senses — first, in the more common sense of the trace left by wilful destruction or by accident in the passage of time; and, second, in the sense given it by Walter Benjamin, as the ‘historical nature’ particular to capitalist social formations, marked by the continual abandonment of forms and products, including, in this case, spatial products or entire built environments wilfully built for obsolescence.

I also suggest, however, that these landscapes are ‘ludic’ and in that sense provide the contexts for speculative activity to materialize the future. These futures are, of course, not without context for the question becomes, how does the urban subject inhabit this landscape of ruins? What forms of historicity or subjective historical consciousness are adequate to navigating this landscape of partial territories that are nevertheless held together by a ‘vision’ of the city as a whole, as an organism that master planning and other ‘visions’ of the future city insist upon (including the visions of Vision Mumbai)? These questions can only be answered by rethinking the place and notion of density in relation to the production of territory.

BOUCHER

My aim here was to demonstrate that it is indeed possible to travel without moving physically. For many Aboriginals, that is exactly what happens while dreaming.

In Occidental cultures, we do link travel and dreams, but it is a spiritual and individual activity, not a socially recognized and valuable experience. Goulet, an anthropologist who has a long career of research among the Dënès Tha in Canada, realized the extent of this gap when discussing with a student the publication of a story that he wrote. The student hesitated to take forward the process because the elder who had told him the
story, had since passed away without authorizing its publication. Goulet suggested that he should then ask the late elder’s permission.

As soon as I had spoken those words, we fell into a deep silence. We suddenly realized that our conversation in the classroom was taking place on aboriginal assumptions. When I suggested that the student ask permission of a dead person, I did so on the basis of notions I had assimilated during my four years with the Dènès Tha. With them, I acknowledged a distinction between ‘our Earth’, the one where we live our everyday life, and ‘the other Earth’, the one where the Ancestors live among other spirits. Following this distinction, the dream is lived as a mediation between the spirits of the living on this earth and the dead in the other land (Goulet, 1994: 115 — my translation).

In a context of colonialism, particularly when territorial negotiations are involved, there is a confrontation between different ways of being in the world. If the ontological principles of Aboriginals rarely meet the legal and moral requirements of the dominant ideology, their dynamic survival and transmission to following generations could be considered a way to resist the hegemonic peoples and cultures in a more subtle, but no less effective, way.

PIETERSE

In my comments here, I have been grasping at a different role for the arts in anti-racism practice. Imagining a post-race condition requires a capacity to live in a different sense of time; a time unmoored from the teleology of slavery and its reverberations across centuries; a time uncoupled from a future utopia of black power and autonomy. Instead, we also need a time that is made full and deep by the enfolding ribbons of affect. This is essentially a non-time, evoked as everyday tragedy by Maffesoli who contrasts it with the time of epic registers:

I would say that the drama of history — be it individual or social — consists in being a perpetual possibility. It is characterized by an ideological tension, and its essential trademark is the ‘project’, or *pro jectum* tending towards the future. Tragedy, on the other hand, is of the present, and is nothing but a series of actualizations: passions, thoughts and creations that exhaust themselves in action, in acts of instantaneous expenditure, without reserve. There is a mythical vision — of which there are many contemporary illustrations — whereby each moment possesses, in some sense, the potential to express the manifold possibilities at the disposal of each person, individually, or of every social group, collectively. Time stands still, becomes intensified, to allow each individual and every situation to give the best of itself (Maffesoli, 2004: 202).

The unbearable burden of apartheid, and its even heavier future, ‘post-apartheid’, crushed the vitalism needed to live vigorously in the present; a vitalism that is unsentimental about the dense swirls of emotion and potentiality that confront us at every turn. If one is to navigate such a non-time effectively, it is essential to draw on the frozen-state affects layered onto the canvasses and screens of the art works I am invoking here and the larger body of South African art. For, as this installation shows, art pieces are as much about the tragedy (in the Maffesolian sense) of the artists’ trajectories as they are passageways to new languages to understand our multiple potentials that rise and fall to the extent that we can rub against the potentials of ‘the other’...
processes under the rubric of ‘splintering urbanism’ and so on. Each of these accounts strives to capture a theoretical anxiety with what I describe as the non-alignment of territories within the imagination of the public and the corresponding problem of the transcendent city, the idea that the space of the city cannot be descriptively captured and lies beyond the limits of all possible experience or knowledge.

This anxiety is particularly acute in the face of the planner’s imaginary, which strives to maintain the fiction of or at least an image of the city as a coherent body, with functional parts. In this context, the contemporary experience of the city, whether of New York, Mumbai, Lagos or Dubai must come to terms with the functional fragmentation and non-alignment of territories while maintaining a fiction of coherence and wholeness. This anxiety is most acutely felt in terms of the proliferation of uncanny spaces, or in other words, spaces in which the linear experience of time is irreducibly ruptured by its representation as either non-modern or not-yet-modern.

But this is only one site at which the non-alignment and fragmentation of territories produced by contemporary processes, including those of speculation, is felt, and the only one that I have been able to discuss here at any length. In the broader sense, contemporary urban experience might well be focused on the problem of producing some kind of provisional alignment between the imaginary of place distributed by planners and marketers and that of the disparate and fragmentary subjective experience of urban space. A common, redemptive urban ontology, or an account of how things got to be the way they are, assumes that the actions and demands of residents are explicitly political and instrumental and that they are directed toward yielding specific reforms and results.

Yet such accounts ignore the possibilities of ethical investments in the urban terrain that are produced by the subjective experiences of density as the principle of arrangement by which human interactions are brought into sync with the aesthetic and technologized environments of architecture and public works. To recognize such ethical investments after all would be to recognize the fact of ‘merely existing’ and getting by or surviving in states of abjection without the possibility of redemption. In my reading, these ethical investments arise from new forms of subjective historical consciousness, in particular, new forms of relating to the future as a horizon. In terrains like Mumbai, the future exhibits a radical instability that is premised on the inability to achieve full reproduction at the level of social relations. What modes of subjectivation are being developed to deal with such instability? This becomes a crucial question to investigate.

My own argument is that paying closer attention to such ethical investments will allow us to recognize and therefore to better understand the kinds of interactions that give rise to provisional alignments of terrains. Urban analysis too becomes a form of ethical investment then because our attention to the process of how terrains get to be as they are, to the kind of human ethic that produces urban nature, leads us away from normative readings and the imposition of categories upon particular situations. An ethical dialogue thus arises between analysis and its objects. Changing our tactics and strategies of analysis in other words, might lead to our apprehending these new modes of subjectivation and, in turn, to our engaging with the emergent and imminent city rather than aspiring for an alignment with a city that has already been left behind.

SMITH

That fateful morning, Toronto became the intersection between opportunity and poverty, difference and inclusion, a way towards and away from home. That morning I felt choices were mine. As the busmen unloaded hopes, trunks and cargos, boxes with multiple signings in case they might by any chance be lost, I felt inclined to tell my mother that I want to return home. Yet I was intrigued at the sight of a new country. I would stare at my mother and interrogate her continuously about many procedures that she was forgetting . . . I did not realize that she was trying to fulfill her duties as a mother to bring me to a land of opportunity. She had a marked difference in her face, full of
worry perhaps, or anathema to the slightest remembrance of the long journey from home. She was irritated and flustered. I was melancholic.

‘I hope we can go this December’, stated my husband, as we waved goodbye to my sister and her two children boarding to Nairobi.

If only.

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Résumé

Dans la recherche urbaine, se dessine une préoccupation croissante pour les formes d’articulation qui relient une multiplicité de grandes villes dans une région souvent identifiée comme ‘les pays du Sud’. Comment des villes comme Jakarta, São Paolo, Dakar, Lagos, Mumbai, Hanoi, Beyrouth, Dubai, Karachi, s’intéressent-elles les unes aux autres et se livrent-elles à des transactions mutuelles selon des modalités qui ne passent que très rarement par les grandes notions actuelles d’urbanisme? Quelles pourraient être les voies de raccordement et de quelle manière des villes différentes reconnaissent-elles et appliquent-elles les contextures diverses nées de leur histoire et de leurs caractères? Six urbanistes se sont réunis pour rendre compte de leur discussion commune de manière à concrétiser des axes possibles d’études en collaboration concernant ces questions.