it contributes to the making of this world. Individuals and nations act in accordance with beliefs, values, and desires that increasingly are formed and informed, inflected and refracted, through images: from television, advertising, cinema, newspapers, magazines, videotapes, CD-ROM, the Internet, and so on. The impact of information technology on both "mass media" and more traditional media has considerably expanded the cultural and political importance of images. Most notably, the global proliferation of media networks brought about by the space-contracting technology of satellite television now gives images an unprecedented power to affect national and international opinion, not least through their impact on the mutual perceptions of differing national, ethnic, and racial groups. This is the field of *representations*, coextensive with politics, which first came under scrutiny in the semiotics of film and photography and in early cultural studies. The objects of visual culture first examined were such things as narrative films, advertisements, documentary photographs, and so on. Television, however, presented a special problem for existing modes of analysis, as it was more difficult to treat the products of television as discrete and bounded objects. This is one of the points where the following chapters intervene. Nevertheless, I hardly speak of television in the institutional sense. The particular object of my attention is not television, or cinema, or photography, or any other singular form of visual representation. It is rather, in an expression coined by Paul Virilio, the "teletopological puzzle" that is all of these *together*—"together" not as a totality but as a constantly shifting constellation of fragments.

Phenomenologically, the field of visual images in everyday contemporary "Western" cultures (and others, such as that of Japan) is heterogeneous and hybrid. The consumer of images "flips" through endless magazines, "channel surfs" on waves of TV shows. The integrity of the semantic object is rarely, if ever, respected. Moreover, the boundaries of the "object" itself are expanded, made permeable or otherwise transformed. For example, a "film" may be encountered through posters, "blurbs," and other advertisements, such as trailers and television clips; it may be encountered through newspaper reviews, reference work synopses, and theoretical articles (with their "filmstrip" assemblages of still images); through production photographs, frame enlargements, memorabilia, and so on. Collecting such metonymic fragments in memory, we may come to feel familiar with a film we have not actually seen. Clearly this "film"—a heterogeneous psychical object, constructed from image scraps scattered in space and time, arbitrarily anchored in a contingent reality (a newspaper interview, a review)—is a very different object from that encountered in the context of "film studies." This "film" is a representative example of what I think of (albeit perversely) as "television." Such hybrid virtual objects take provisional form in a teletopological space-time largely indifferent to the physical bounds of TV screens and program times. The peculiarity of this space-time of visual representations, the shifting coordinates in which imaginary identities are "fixed," is the object of this book.

PART 2: FANTASIES OF POSTMODERN GEOGRAPHY

> Today everything that derives from history and from historical time must undergo a test. Neither "cultures" nor the "consciousness" of peoples, groups or even individuals can escape the loss of identity that is now added to all other besetting terrors. . . . nothing and no one can avoid trial by space.
>
> **Henri Lefebvre**[38]

In his book of 1989, *Postmodern Geographies*, Edward Soja recalled: "In 1984, [Frederic] Jameson, [Henri] Lefebvre, and I took a spiraling tour around the centre of Los Angeles, starting at the Bonaventure Hotel."[39] Soja describes their itinerary in his final chapter, "Taking Los Angeles Apart: Towards a Postmodern Geography." What Soja encounters on

the tour is a theme park of world space: Los Angeles is, as he puts it, "*une ville devenue monde.*"[40] In his penultimate chapter, "It All Comes Together in Los Angeles," he writes: "There is a Boston in Los Angeles, a Lower Manhattan and a South Bronx, a São Paulo and a Singapore." Consequently, "What better place can there be to illustrate and synthesize the dynamics of capitalist spatialization?"[41] In his own social history of Los Angeles, Mike Davis praises Soja for brilliantly encapsulating the "image of Los Angeles as prism of different spatialities."[42] But he rejects what he sees as Soja's ungrounded assumption that these spatial formations represent the universal shape of things to come, "the paradigm of the future." Davis is similarly critical of Jameson for promoting the same idea, as in, for example, his "famous evocation (in his 'Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism') of Bunker Hill as a 'concrete totalization' of postmodernity."[43] Both Soja and Jameson, Davis complains, "in the very eloquence of their different 'postmodern mappings' of Los Angeles, become celebrants of the myth."[44] Davis's hostility to the idea that the future of the world may be traced in the lines of Los Angeles's freeways may appear self-contradictory, given that the subtitle of his own book about Los Angeles, *City of Quartz*, is *Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. But more importantly, in dwelling on what Soja and Jameson may have in common, we risk losing sight of the substantive *difference* between what they say, and between what each made of his "spiraling tour" from the Bonaventure.

Speaking of the Bonaventure, in the widely discussed essay of 1984 to which Davis refers, Jameson comments:

> This latest mutation in space—postmodern hyperspace—has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings, perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world. . . . this alarming disjunction point between the body and its built environment . . . can itself stand as the symbol and analogue of that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.[45]

The great spatial network of late twentieth-century capitalism is the ultimate object of concern for both Soja and Jameson. But whereas Soja collapses the world into Los Angeles, Jameson collapses both into the Bonaventure. Both Soja and Jameson use the term *hyperspace* to speak of the object of their concern, but they are really speaking of quite different things. Soja refers to "the hyperspace of the city of Los Angeles,"[46] whereas Jameson uses the term to name the space of the Bonaventure Hotel—a building that, he finds, "does not wish to be part of the city, but rather its equivalent and its replacement or substitute."[47] Unlike the form of the city, the form of the hotel is (even allowing for the prism of external constraints that refract any architect's intention) the work of an auteur.[48] It is further significant that Soja speaks in terms of "illustration and synthesis," whereas Jameson speaks of "symbol and analogue." Los Angeles serves Soja as a field of empirically observable data, within which he discerns, as Davis puts it, "the outlines of a paradigmatic postfordism, an emergent twenty-first century urbanism." For Jameson, the Bonaventure offers not empirical data but allegorical form, which does not directly "illustrate" the shape of *future* urban life, but which indirectly "figures" *present* power as lived by those submitted to it. This distinction emerges most clearly in Jameson's book of 1992, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. He writes:

> Bergson's warning about the temptations of spatializing thought remain current in . . . an era of urban dissolution and re-ghettoization, in which we might be tempted to think that the social can be mapped

> that way, by following across a map insurance red lines and the electrified borders of private police and surveillance forces. Both images are, however, only caricatures of the mode of production itself (most often called late capitalism) whose mechanisms and dynamics are not visible in that sense, cannot be detected on the surfaces scanned by satellites, and therefore stand as a fundamental representational problem—indeed a problem of a historically new and original type.[49]

This passage implies sharp criticism of the approach to the urban environment taken by both Soja and Davis, writers who concern themselves with precisely such "caricatures." But we might more usefully accept that the types of spatial descriptions offered by Soja and Davis are simply incommensurable with those provided by Jameson. They are not really in conflict as they occupy different grounds, different registers of description: provisionally (in Derrida's expression, "under erasure") the "empirical" and the "psychological." The means to a more detailed understanding of the terms of the differences between Davis, Soja, and Jameson are provided by the work of the third member of the party on their "spiraling tour" around Los Angeles from the Bonaventure: Lefebvre.

Soja describes Lefebvre as "the incunabulum of post-modern critical human geography, the primary source for the assault against historicism and the reassertion of space in critical social theory."[50] Lefebvre's book *The Production of Space* first appeared, in French, in 1974, at which time it represented the culmination of an engagement with questions of space he had begun in 1968. The English translation was published in 1991, the year Lefebvre died. The most fundamental project of Lefebvre's book is to reject the conception of space as "a container without content," an abstract mathematical/geometrical continuum, independent of human

subjectivity and agency. As his homage to Lefebvre implies, Soja's work continues Lefebvre's project of theorizing space not as a Kantian a priori but as a product of human *practice*. Lefebvre defines what he calls "spatial practice" as "a projection 'onto the ground' [*sur le terrain*] of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice."[51] For Lefebvre, spatial practice is "observed, described and analysed on a wide range of levels: in architecture, in city planning . . . in the actual design of routes and localities . . . in the organization of everyday life, and, naturally, in urban reality."[52] Soja's project, as well as that of Davis, clearly accords with this concept of space as formed when social relations "hit the ground." For Lefebvre, however, spatial practice—that which is "empirically observable"—is only one of "the three moments of social space," which he names "the perceived, the conceived, and the lived." Lefebvre uses the expression "spatial practice" to refer to the register of "the perceived"; he uses "representations of space" to refer to "the conceived," and "representational space" to refer to "the lived." Summarized in bare outline: *spatial practice,* as already observed, is the material expression of social relations in space: a marketplace, a bedroom, a lecture theater, a ghetto. *Representations of space* are those conceptual abstractions that may inform the actual configuration of such spatial practices, for example, Cartesian geometry, linear perspective, Le Corbusier's "modular" or the Quattrocento painter's *braccio*. *Representational space* is space as appropriated by the imagination; Lefebvre writes that it "overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects"[53] and is predominantly nonverbal in nature. For all the difficulties in sustaining any absolute distinctions between Lefebvre's three categories, they nevertheless help us to see the projects of Soja and Jameson as addressing different aspects of an overall, complex problematic of space. In Lefebvre's terms, then, Soja's work may be seen as privileging "spatial practice": the empirical, the perceivable; whereas Jameson's attention is rather to "representations of space": the "symbolic use" of the empirical world. It should be

emphasized however that, for Lefebvre, there can be no question of choosing one form of attention to the exclusion of the other. It is precisely in his attempt to account for the simultaneous imbrication of the physical and the psychological that the ambition, and difficulty, of Lefebvre's work lies. Soja's book, replete with graphs and tables, is constrained by a social science framework. His basic thesis, "spatiality is . . . a social product," is in agreement with Lefebvre. Unlike Lefebvre, however, Soja shows little interest in the problem of the imbrication of social space and mental space. More precisely, he sees mental space as a dangerously threatening supplement to his statical-statistical space. He complains: "Social space folds into mental space, into diaphanous concepts of spatiality which all too often take us away from materialized social realities."[54] However, for all that bar graphs and pie charts keep quiet about it, mental space and social realities are *in reality* inseparable.

In a misrecognition that is the mirror reversal of the one made by Soja, the sociologist author of a book about "images of the city in the detective story," writes that his analysis takes as its object "not some supposed real city, situated somewhere in the world and which the crime novel shows in the manner of a touristic or geographic description, but rather the city of paper which the novel drafts: written, unreal, symbolic, *coded*."[55] But what this author calls the "real city" can never be perceived as totally distinct from the "paper city." The city in our actual experience is *at the same time* an actually existing physical environment, *and* a city in a novel, a film, a photograph, a city seen on television, a city in a comic strip, a city in a pie chart, and so on. For example, a photograph on the cover of a special issue of the French weekly newsmagazine *Le nouvel observateur*[56] shows a graffiti painting rendered on a bleak concrete city wall. Figures with guns and clubs appear in the foreground of the painting. Behind them rises a painted silhouette skyline of high-rise buildings—evoking *at the same time* the HLM (low-rent housing projects) of French cities *and* the iconical downtown skyscraper skyline familiar from the

Hollywood film noir. The magazine's cover story is about violent (mixed race) youth uprisings in the French "projects." Interviewed about her adolescent students, a young schoolteacher from the troubled Paris suburb of Bobigny observes: "They make no distinction between the world of the street, of television and the school." Soja has no access to this hybrid space, at once material and psychical, in which these young people (together with the rest of us) *actually live and act*. He resists, as he puts it, "an ideational process in which the 'image' of reality takes epistemological precedence over the tangible substance and appearance of the real world."[57]

Soja argues from basic common sense. There is a fundamental objection in common sense to considering fantasy in the context of the social and the political. In *Roget's Thesaurus* the word "fantasy" is flanked by "poetry" on one side and "visual fallacy" on the other. The distribution of these terms is in agreement with the broad everyday use of the word. On the one hand, the term *poetry* invokes a more or less intentional act of imagination; on the other hand, *visual fallacy* signals the unintentional, the hallucinatory. Whatever the case, whether the particular sense of "fantasy" in question is nuanced toward the voluntary caprice or the involuntary delusion, in popular understanding "fantasy" is always opposed to "reality." In this definition fantasy is the *negative* of reality. Here "reality" is conceived as that which is "external" to our "inner" lives. In this commonsense view we simultaneously inhabit two distinct and separate worlds. One is mental, private, "internal." The other is physical, public, "external." Political and social considerations are seen as belonging to the latter arena of common empirical realities. The British philosopher Gilbert Ryle noted a lacuna in this widespread notion: "The transactions between the episodes of the private history and the public history remain mysterious, since by definition they can only belong to neither series."[58] It is to this "mysterious" area of transaction that psychoanalysis allows us access through the theory of the *unconscious*.

This theory posits, precisely, "the idea of another locality, another space, another scene, *the between perception and consciousness*."[59] Psychoanalysis is founded on the recognition that what Soja calls "materialized social realities" are not all that are real for us: conscious and unconscious fantasies are as immutable a force in our lives as any material circumstances. The agency of the unconscious has no place in Soja's commonsense worldview, and the word *unconscious* is not to be found in his writing. The same is true of Davis's work. Jameson uses the term quite frequently, but in an idiosyncratic sense that has little to do with the psychoanalytic sense of the word. (I discuss this in my final chapter, "Brecciated Time.") In seeking a way out of the "spiraling orbit," become a vicious circle around a city reductively conceived as nothing other than a literally *concrete* entity, in seeking access to that *other space* of the concrete reality of dreams, to which psychoanalysis is attentive, we may again turn to the work of Lefebvre.

Lefebvre was a veteran Marxist theoretician and militant who at times criticized psychoanalysis for privileging subjective interiority at the expense of lived social relations. Nevertheless, there are key moments in *The Production of Space* when he opens doors onto the objects and methods of psychoanalysis. Lefebvre sees the "problematic" of space as "composed of questions about mental and social space, about their interconnections."[60] Most simply put, he sets out to demonstrate the unity of these "two" realms. In a passage that strikingly evokes Lacan's formulation of the "mirror stage," Lefebvre writes:

> [Space] is first of all *my* body, and then it is my body counterpart or "other," its mirror-image or shadow: it is the shifting intersection between that which touches, penetrates, threatens or benefits my body on the one hand, and all other bodies on the other.[61]

In a psychoanalytic perspective, Lefebvre's insistence on the centrality of the body subverts the distinction he makes between "representations of space" and "representational space." If, as he insists, and as psychoanalysis would agree, "The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body,"[62] then how is he able to see such "representations of space" as geometry as exempt from the same bodily determinations as "representational space"? (see Chapter 1, "Geometry and Abjection"). The answer to this question probably lies in Lefebvre's division of the laboring body from the perceiving body, in which perceptual processes are seen as essentially passive. For example, he speaks of "the passive body (the senses) and the active body (labour)."[63] That Lefebvre may nevertheless be unconsciously aware of a contradiction is intimated in a passing tribute, in *The Production of Space*, to the surrealists—those who celebrated the triumph of imagination over brute perception. During the immediate postwar period, Lefebvre had attacked surrealism's "substitution of poetry for politics." In his book of 1947, *Critique of Everyday Life*, the book in which he is most critical of surrealism, Lefebvre remarks: "Man must be everyday, or he will not be at all." By conscious irony, or unconscious homage (most likely both) the aphoristic form of his sentence echoes the closing line of André Breton's novel of 1928, *Nadja:* "La beauté sera CONVULSIVE ou ne sera pas."[64] According to Lefebvre's biographer, Rémi Hess, Lefebvre was first introduced to Marxism by Breton, and had associated with the surrealists during the 1930s. In 1974, in *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre concedes:

> The leading surrealists sought to decode inner space and illuminate the nature of the transition from this subjective space to the material realm of the body and the outside world, and thence to social life. Consequently, surrealism has a theoretical import which was not originally recognized.[65]

This "theoretical import" of surrealism, as the surrealists themselves acknowledged, is best worked out in psychoanalytic terms. Lefebvre and Lacan were born in the same year, 1901. Both lived through much the

same continuum of French history.[66] Like Lefebvre, Lacan also had early relations with the surrealists. It was within the historical matrix of the moment of surrealism (see Chapter 4, "Chance Encounters," and Chapter 5, "Seiburealism") that he formed the ideas that would lead to his now famous (and often reductively understood) notion of the "mirror stage" in the formation of identity (see Chapter 6, "Paranoiac Space").

Lefebvre is a *discriminating* thinker. *The Production of Space* contains criticism of semiotics and poststructuralism, of Derrida and Foucault. Yet, as the *afterword* to the English translation notes, "Lefebvre never rejects such formulations outright. He always engages with them in order to appropriate and transform the insights to be gained from them in new and creative ways."[67] Lefebvre's dense and complex arguments do not develop in an orderly linear succession. The book appropriately invites a "spatial," rather than a "temporal," reading—analogous to the way in which the Situationist International (also no strangers to Lefebvre) recommended that urban space be navigated, "*à la dérive*." In his article of 1958, "Theory of the Dérive," Guy Debord writes:

> The lessons drawn from the dérive permit the drawing up of the first surveys of the psychogeographical articulations of a modern city. Beyond the discovery of unities of ambiance, of their main components and their spatial localization, one comes to perceive their principal axes of passage, their exits and their defenses. One arrives at the central hypothesis of the existence of psychogeographical pivotal points.[68]

The modern city provides the common site of the observations in the chapters that follow ("follow," as I have already observed, more *à la dérive* than in the manner of a thesis). The "city" here, however, is not to be understood in the established terms of urbanists and city planners, nor in the sociometric terms of the new geographers. It is rather to be

considered as a neuralgic node in what Jameson calls "the great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects,"[69] and as a hybrid and heterogeneous site of (self/other) representations (see Chapter 4, "Chance Encounters," and Chapter 7, "The City in Pieces").

In 1984, Jameson discussed the capacity of certain "postmodernist texts" to evoke, "a whole new postmodern space in emergence around us." He concluded: "Architecture . . . remains in this sense the privileged aesthetic language."[70] Almost a decade later, however, in the book in which he seems most closely to return to the questions of global space he first addressed in 1984, Jameson chose to write about cinema. Such a sliding of attention from architecture to cinema was prefigured by Benjamin. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin writes:

> Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction. . . . Today . . . [r]eception in a state of distraction, which . . . is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise.[71]

It is precisely "profound changes in apperception" that preoccupy Jameson. More precisely, as already noted, it is the failure of apperception which concerns him—what he sees as our physical and intellectual incapacity to comprehend the "new hyperspace" of postmodernism, the vehicle and form of the new global capitalism. In *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, in a passage that may recall his concluding remarks about the Bonaventure, Jameson writes:

> In our time the referent—the world system—is a being of such enormous complexity that it can only be mapped and modeled

indirectly, by way of a simpler object that stands as its allegorical interpretant, that object being most often in postmodernism a media phenomenon.[72]

The "media phenomenon" he chooses to talk about is cinema. Unavoidably, however, we can today only position this cinema in relation to that of which he does not speak, the "structuring absence" of his book: television. On the one hand, in everyday language, *cinema* means "narrative cinema." Phenomenologically, the film is localized in space and time: in the finite unreeling of a narrative in a particular theater, at a particular time, and on a particular day. The word *television*, on the other hand, means television programs of all kinds: news, current affairs, and documentaries; sports events, rock concerts, opera, and ballet; serialized soap operas, "quality" dramatic productions, and episodic situation comedies; police, Western, and science fiction adventures; science, cooking, gardening, and other educational and "special interest" programs; "telefilms" and, of course, the broadcasting of films originally made for the cinema. Television presents itself as if it "covers" life itself. The urban dweller who turns away from the image on her or his television screen, to look out of the window, may see the same program playing on other screens, behind other windows, or, more likely, will be aware of a simultaneity of different programs. Returning from this casual act of voyeurism they may "zap" through channels, or "flip" through magazines. Just as Benjamin refers to architecture as appreciated "in a state of distraction," so television and photography are received in much the same way. The cinematic experience is temporally linear. For all that narrative codes may shuffle the pack of events, the spatial modulations that occur in the diagesis are nevertheless *successively* ordered and experienced as a *passage* through space and time. The global space-time of television, however, is fractured and kaleidoscopic. In this, it is closer to the ubiquitous environment of photography than to cinema. On the first page of his book of 1980, *La chambre claire*, Barthes writes: "I declared that I liked Photography against the cinema—from which, however, I never managed to separate it."[73] In his essay of 1971, "For a Metahistory of Film," Hollis Frampton observes:

> Cinema is a Greek word that means "movie." . . . There is nothing in the structural logic of the filmstrip that can justify such an assumption. Therefore we reject it. From now on we will call our art simply: film.
>
> The infinite film contains an infinity of endless passages wherein no frame resembles any other in the slightest degree, and a further infinity of passages wherein successive frames are as nearly identical as intelligence can make them.[74]

Barthes's difficulty in definitively separating the still from the moving image is given a pragmatic grounding in Frampton's observation that there is no intrinsic reason why "cinema" should show movement—as the individual frames of a film need not *necessarily* differ from each other. Such observations help deconstruct the strict binarism of the conventional opposition between moving and still image, and prepare the ground for a consideration of the mediatic environment as a whole—which demands a revised understanding of the space and time of the general field of representations. Here again, psychoanalytic theory is indispensable. Shoshana Felman has remarked that psychoanalysis is "a unique and original mode of learning," with:

> a very different temporality from the conventional linear—cumulative and progressive—temporality of learning, as it has traditionally been conceived by pedagogical theory and practice. Proceeding not through linear progression but through breakthroughs, leaps,

> discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action, the analytic learning process puts in question the traditional pedagogical belief in intellectual perfectibility, the progressist view of learning as a simple one-way road from ignorance to knowledge.[75]

"Leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action"—I can think of no more appropriate description of the way we receive the contemporary image environment. The meanings that govern us are not arrived at by "a simple one-way road." The metaphor is familiar: the road of history, the road of life. Entering the shadow of the declining phase of the twentieth century, Lefebvre identified the "trial by space" to which "everything that derives from history" would submit. Lefebvre was a Marxist who joined others, notably Michel Foucault, in rejecting all historicist teleologies—all one-way roads—as woodenly implausible. The problem of history nevertheless remained, albeit in pieces, its fragments now swept to the margins of the newly spatial critical paradigms. Lefebvre was perhaps the first to identify "loss of identity" as a "besetting terror" of the trial by space. In our present fin-de-siècle increasing displacements of populations between nations, changing distributions of racial and ethnic populations *within* nations, and the mutating geographies of post–cold war global politics are redrawing old maps of identity—national, cultural, and individual. An identity implies not only a location but a duration, a history. A lost identity is lost not only in space, but in time. We might better say, in "space-time." Lefebvre, and the postmodern geographers who followed him, sought to emphasize the time of lived social space over timelessly abstract "mental" space. The chapters that follow were written with no respect for this distinction between the social and the psychical, as the distinction is itself an abstraction, a fantasy. I begin, "degro zero," with the supposedly subjectless abstract space of geometry.