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The City: Between Topographic Representation and Spatialized Power Projects

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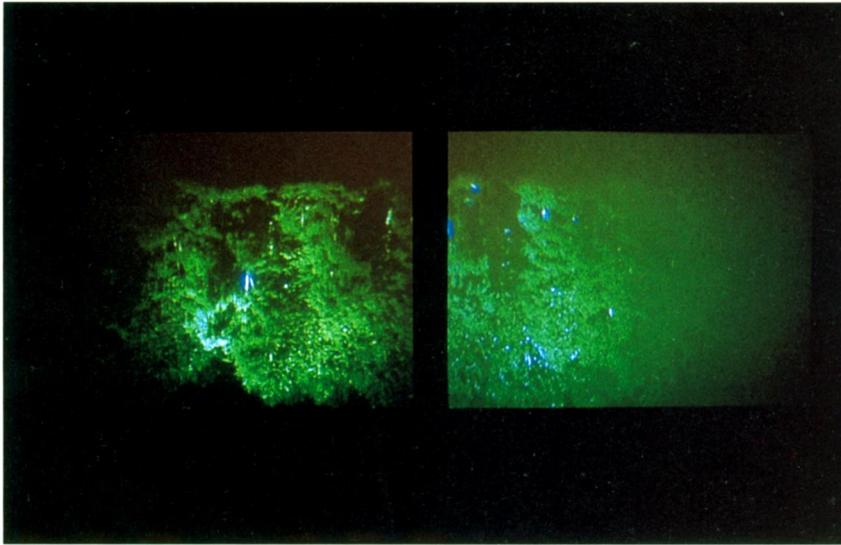


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When introducing the panel, I spoke of a conference called “Curating Now,” held in New Plymouth, New Zealand, where I spoke as one of three “international” guests and where I met Hipkins and other participants in that country’s intensely small and interesting contemporary art scene. This was

truly an event where the local was at issue and the global seemed extremely far away, though the discussion was strangely related to ongoing discussions and provincially based arguments that we encounter here in Los Angeles about the institutions and the issue of so-called local artists and the problem with art criticism. Hipkins has since pointed out to me that these extremely local events are how abstract notions like the “Pacific” come to have meaning—that perhaps these specific conversations and the particular relationships in the exhibition are akin to the spatial-



**Rodney Graham. *Public Fishing Areas, 1979–1983.***  
23 gelatin silver-prints, 16 x 20 in. (38.4 x 48 cm) each.  
The Marjorie & Leonard Vernon Collection, Los Angeles.

ized circuits that Sassen defines in her work as creating micro-environments with a global span. I am interested in this as a model for curatorial practice in the international realm.

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Examining a city or metropolitan region in terms of its built topography is, perhaps, increasingly inadequate in a global digital era. On the one hand, topography does not engage what are today the dominant accounts about

globalization and digitalization, accounts which evict place and materiality and hence what we might call the topographic moment. Yet, as I will argue below, the digital and the global are deeply imbricated with the material and the local in the case of a global city. Topographic representations of such a city fail to capture the fact that components of a city’s topography may be spatializations of global power projects and/or may be located on global

circuits, thereby destabilizing the meaning of the local or the sited, and hence the topographic representation of such a city.<sup>1</sup>

My concern in this brief essay is to distinguish between the topographic representation of key aspects of the city and an interpretation of these same aspects in terms of spatialized economic, political, and cultural dynamics.<sup>2</sup> This is one analytic path into the issues that lie at the heart of *Flight Patterns*—the attempt to do a re-reading of the city through representations of its post-colonial relationship to topography.<sup>3</sup> I shall focus on what may probably best

## **Between Topographic Representation and Spatialized Power Projects**

**Saskia Sassen**

### **The City:**

1. I use the term *topography* here in its literal meaning. Elsewhere, as in such constructs as “the topography of digital space,” I use the term in a more figurative sense.

2. These are all complex and multifaceted subjects. It is impossible to do full justice to them or to the literatures they have engendered. I have elaborated on both the subjects and the literatures elsewhere. For this audience, perhaps the

be described as the spatialization of power projects arising out of globalization and digitalization. This brings a particular type of twist to the discussion on urban topography and spatialization, since both are associated with dispersal and increased locational options for firms, markets, and households with resources/power. Topographic representations fail to capture the fact that cities continue to be key sites for the spatialization of power projects, even in a global digital era. Nor do topographic representations allow one to capture the fact that cities are also key sites for the spatializing of a different type of power project, perhaps better thought of as contestatory. Here my argument is that global cities make possible the emergence of new types of political subjects arising out of conditions of often acute disadvantage. A topographic representation of poor areas of a city would simply capture the physical conditions of disadvantage: poor housing, bad transportation infrastructure, decaying schools. Although these subjects clearly cannot do full justice to the variety of topics covered by *Flight Patterns*, hopefully they will contribute a particular, specialized angle into some of the issues the exhibition raised.

### I. Spatialized Power Projects

Cities have long been key sites for the spatialization of power projects—whether political, religious, or economic. There are multiple instances that capture this spatialization in cities and metropolitan regions. We can find it in the structures and infrastructures for the control and management of past colonial empires and of current global firms and markets; we can also find it in the segregation of population groups that can consequently be more easily produced as either cheap labor or surplus people; in the choice of particular built forms used for the representing and symbolic cleansing of economic power, as in the preference for “Greek temples” to house stock markets; in what we refer to today as high-income residential and commercial gentrification to accommodate the expanding elite professional classes, with the inevitable displacement of lower-income households and firms. We can also see it in the large-scale destruction of natural environments to implant particular forms of urbanization marked by spread rather than density and linked to specific real-estate development interests, such as the uncontrolled strip-development and suburbanization in the Los Angeles region.

Yet, the particular dynamics and capacities captured by the terms *globalization* and *digitalization* signal the possibility of a major transformation in this dynamic of spatialization. The dominant interpretation posits that digitalization entails an absolute disembedding from the material world. Key concepts in the dominant account about the global economy—globalization, information economy, and telematics—all suggest that place no longer matters. And they suggest that the type of place represented by major cities may have become obsolete from the perspective of the economy, particularly for the leading industries, as these have the best access to, and are the most advanced users of, telematics.

These are accounts that privilege the fact of instantaneous global transmission over the concentrations of built infrastructure that make transmission possible; that privilege information outputs over the work of producing those outputs, from specialists to secretaries; and that privilege the new transnational

more pertinent sources are in art and architecture related publications. See the series of annual volumes of the ANY project, especially “Sited Materialities and Global Span” and other articles in the last few volumes (Cynthia C. Davidson, ed., *Anytime* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999] and Davidson, ed. *Anything* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000]); “Revisiting the Edge,” in Peter Noever, ed., *Micro Space/Global Time* (Los Angeles: MAK Center for Art and Architecture and Vienna: MAK); “Electronic Space and Power,” in Catherine David and Jean François Chevrier, *Politics, Poetics: Documenta X, The Book* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz, 1997); “Immigrants,” in *Immigrant Artists and Art*, exh. cat. (Bronx: Bronx Museum of Art, 1995); France Morin, *Trade Routes* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1993) (no cat.).

3. See Connie Butler, “In the Field/On Location,” in Butler, ed., *Flight Patterns*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000).

corporate culture over the multiplicity of cultural environments, including reterritorialized immigrant cultures, within which many of the “other” jobs of the global information economy take place.<sup>4</sup>

One consequence of such a representation of the global information economy as placeless would be that there is no longer a spatialization of this type of power today: it has supposedly dispersed geographically and gone partly digital. It is this proposition that I have contested in much of my work, arguing that this dispersal is only part of the story and that we see in fact new types of spatializations of power.<sup>5</sup>

My reading of digitalization and globalization seeks to detect the imbrications of the digital and nondigital domains and thereby to insert the city in mappings of the digital, both actual and rhetorical—mappings from which the city is easily excluded. It is a reading that seeks to detect when and under what conditions the global economy hits the ground and localizes in concrete built environments. But the risk in this type of effort lies in generalizing, in using metaphors and figurative language—in brief, to hover above it all. We need to go digging.

How do we reintroduce place in economic analysis? And how do we construct a new narrative about economic globalization, one that includes rather than evicts all the spatial, economic, and cultural elements that are part of the global economy as it is constituted in cities? A topographic reading would introduce place, yet, in the end, would not do much better than these dominant accounts about globalization and digitalization. It would fail to capture the fact that global dynamics might localize in localized built environments.

## 2. Sited Materialities and Global Span

It seems to me that the difficulty analysts have had in understanding the impact of digitalization on cities—indeed, on multiple configurations—essentially results from two analytic flaws. One of these (especially evident in the United States) confines interpretation to a technological reading of the technical capabilities of digital technology. This is fine for engineers. But when one is trying to understand the impacts of a technology, such a reading becomes problematic. A purely technological reading of the technical capabilities of digital technology inevitably leads one to a place that is a nonplace, where we can announce with certainty the neutralizing of many of the configurations marked by physicality and place-boundedness, including the urban.<sup>6</sup>

The second flaw, I would argue, is a continuing reliance on analytical categorizations developed under other spatial and historical conditions—that is, conditions preceding the current digital era. Thus the tendency is to conceive of the digital as simply and exclusively digital and the nondigital (whether represented in terms of the physical/material or the actual, all problematic though common conceptions) as simply and exclusively that: nondigital. These either/or categorizations filter out alternative conceptualizations, thereby precluding a more complex reading of the impact of digitalization on material and place-bound conditions.

One such alternative categorization captures imbrications. Let me illustrate this using the case of finance. Finance is certainly a highly digitalized activity; yet it cannot simply be thought of as exclusively digital. To have electronic

4. This privileging entails the eviction of a whole array of activities and types of workers from the account about the process of globalization, which, I argue, are as much a part of it as is international finance. The eviction of these activities and workers from the dominant representation of the global information economy has the effect of excluding the variety of cultural contexts within which they exist, a cultural diversity that is as much a presence in processes of globalization as is the new international corporate culture.

5. See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

6. Another consequence of this type of reading is to assume that a new technology will ipso facto replace all older technologies that are less efficient, or slower, at executing the tasks the new technology is best at. We know historically that this is not the case.

financial markets and digitalized financial instruments requires enormous amounts of materiel, not to mention human talent (which has its own type of physicality). This materiel includes conventional infrastructure—buildings, airports, and so on. Much of this materiel is, then, inflected by the digital. Obversely, much of what takes place in cyberspace is deeply inflected by the cultures, the material practices, the imaginaries, that take place outside cyberspace. Much, though not all, of what we think of when it comes to cyberspace would lack any meaning or referents if we were to exclude the world outside cyberspace. In brief, digital space and digitalization are not exclusive conditions that stand outside the nondigital. Digital space is embedded in the larger societal, cultural, subjective, economic, and imaginary structurations of lived experience and the systems within which we exist and operate.<sup>7</sup>

The complex imbrications between the digital (as well as the global) and the nondigital bring with them a destabilizing of older hierarchies of scale and often dramatic rescalings. As the national scale loses significance, along with the loss of key components of the nation-state's formal authority over the national scale, other scales gain strategic importance. Most especially among these are subnational scales, such as the global city, and supranational scales, such as global markets or regional trading zones. Older hierarchies of scale, emerging in the context of the ascendance of the nation-state, which continue to operate, are typically organized in terms of institutional size: from the international, down to the national, the regional, the urban, and the local. Today's rescaling cuts across institutional size and, through policies such as deregulation and privatization, cuts across the encasements of territory produced by the formation of nation-states. This does not mean that the old hierarchies disappear, but rather that rescalings emerge alongside the old ones, and that they can often trump the latter.

These transformations, which continue to entail complex imbrications of the digital and nondigital and between the global and the nonglobal, can be captured in a variety of instances. For example, much of what we might still experience as the "local" (an office building in our neighborhood) is actually something I would rather think of as a "microenvironment with global span," insofar as it is deeply internetworked. Such a microenvironment is in many senses a localized entity, something that can be experienced as local, immediate, proximate, and hence captured in topographic representations. It is a sited materiality.

But it is also part of global digital networks, which give it immediate far-flung span. To continue to think of this as simply local is not very useful or adequate. More important, the juxtaposition between the condition of being a sited materiality and having global span captures the imbrication of the digital and the nondigital and illustrates the inadequacy of a purely technological reading of the technical capacities of digitalization, which would lead us to posit the neutralization of the place-boundedness of that which precisely makes possible the condition of being an entity with global span. And it illustrates the inadequacy of a purely topographical reading.

A second example is the bundle of conditions and dynamics that marks the model of the global city. Just to single out one key dynamic: the more globalized and digitalized the operations of firms and markets, the more their

7. See "Digital Networks and Power," in Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash, eds., *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, (London: Sage, 1999), 49–63.

central management and coordination functions—and the requisite material structures—become strategic. It is precisely because of digitalization that the simultaneous worldwide dispersal of operations, whether factories, offices, or service outlets, and system integration can be achieved. And it is precisely this combination that raises the importance of central functions, which are largely placebound. Global cities are strategic sites for the combination of resources necessary for the production of these central functions.<sup>8</sup>

Much of what is liquefied and circulates in digital networks and is marked by hypermobility remains physical in some of its components. Take, for example, the case of real estate. Financial services firms have invented instruments that liquefy real estate, thereby facilitating investment and circulation of these instruments in global markets. Yet, part of what constitutes real estate remains very physical. At the same time, however, that which remains physical has been transformed by the fact that it is represented by highly liquid instruments that can circulate in global markets. It may look the same, it may involve the same bricks and mortar, it may be new or old, but it is a transformed entity. We have difficulty capturing this multivalence through our conventional categories: if it is physical, it is physical; and if it is liquid, it is liquid. In fact, the partial representation of real estate through liquid financial instruments produces a complex imbrication of the material and the dematerialized moments of that which we continue to call real estate.

Hypermobility or dematerialization are usually seen as mere functions of the new technologies. This understanding erases the fact that it takes multiple material conditions to achieve this outcome. Once we recognize that the hypermobility of the instrument, or the dematerialization of the actual piece of real estate, had to be produced, we introduce the imbrication of the material and the nonmaterial. It takes capital fixity to produce capital mobility, that is to say, state-of-the-art built environments, conventional infrastructure—from highways to airports and railways—and well-housed talent. These are all, at least partly, place-bound conditions, even though the nature of their place-boundedness is going to be different from what it was a hundred years ago, when place-boundedness might have been marked by immobility. Today it is a place-boundedness that is inflected, inscribed, by the hypermobility of some of its components/products/outcomes. Both capital fixity and mobility are located in a temporal frame where speed is ascendant and consequential. This type of capital fixity cannot be fully captured in a description of its material and locational features, as in a topographical reading. Conceptualizing digitalization and globalization along these lines creates operational and rhetorical openings for recognizing the ongoing importance of the material world even in the case of some of the most dematerialized activities.

### **3. Analytic Borderlands**

As a political economist, addressing these issues has meant working in several systems of representation and constructing spaces of intersection. There are analytic moments when two systems of representation intersect. Such analytic moments are easily experienced as spaces of absence. One challenge is to see what happens in those spaces and what operations (of analysis, of power, of meaning) take place there.

8. There are other dimensions that specify the global city; see Sassen, *The Global City*.

One version of these spaces of intersection is what I have called analytic borderlands. Why borderlands? Because they are spaces that are constituted in terms of discontinuities and usually conceived of as mutually exclusive. In constituting them as analytic borderlands, discontinuities are given a terrain, rather than reduced to a dividing line. Much of my work on economic globalization and cities has focused on these discontinuities and has sought to reconstitute their articulation analytically as borderlands, rather than as dividing lines.<sup>9</sup>

Methodologically, the construction of these analytic borderlands pivots on what I call circuits for the distribution and installation of economic operations; I focus on circuits that cut across what are generally seen as two or more discontinuous systems, or institutional orders, or dynamics. These circuits may be internal to a city's economy, and perhaps at the other extreme, they may be global; in the latter case, a given city is but one site on a circuit that may contain a few or many other such cities.

Internal circuits allow me to follow economic activities into terrains that escape the increasingly narrow borders of mainstream representations of the urban economy and to negotiate the crossing of discontinuous spaces. For instance, it allows me to locate various components of the informal economy, whether in New York or Los Angeles, on circuits that connect it to what are considered advanced industries, such as finance or design. A topographic representation would capture the enormous discontinuity between the places and built environments of the informal economy and the financial or design district in a city, and fail to capture their complex economic interactions and dependencies.

International and transnational circuits allow me to detect the particular networks that connect specific activities in one city with specific activities in cities in other countries. In my research I unpack the global economy into a variety of often highly specialized cross-border circuits. For instance, if one focuses on futures markets, cities such as London and Frankfurt are joined by São Paulo and Kuala Lumpur; if one looks at the gold market, all of these except London drop out, and Zurich, Johannesburg, and Sydney emerge. Continuing along these lines, Los Angeles would appear as located on a variety of global circuits, including binational circuits with Mexico, which would be quite different from those of New York or Chicago. This brings to the fore a second important issue. We can think of these cities or urban regions as crisscrossed by these circuits and as partial amalgamations of these various circuits. Topographic representations would fail to capture much of this spatialization of global economic circuits, except, perhaps, for certain aspects of the distribution and transport routes.

#### **4. Forging New Political Subjects**

Cities are also key sites for the spatializing of a different type of power project, perhaps better thought of as contestatory. Digital networks are contributing to the production of countergeographies of globalization. Political activists can use digital networks for global or nonlocal transactions, and they can use them for strengthening local communications and transactions inside a city or rural community. Recovering how the new digital technology can serve to

9. This produces a terrain within which these discontinuities can be reconstituted in terms of economic operations whose properties are not merely a function of the spaces on each side (i.e., a reduction to the condition of dividing line), but also, and most centrally, of the discontinuity itself, the argument being that discontinuities are an integral part, a component, of the economic system.

support local initiatives and alliances across a city's neighborhoods is extremely important in an age where the notion of the local is often seen as losing ground to global dynamics and actors and digital networks are typically thought of as global.<sup>10</sup>

I conceptualize these "alternative" circuits as countergeographies of globalization because they are deeply imbricated with some of the major dynamics constitutive of the global economy, yet are not part of the formal apparatus or of the objectives of this apparatus. The formation of global markets, the intensifying of transnational and translocal business networks, the development of communication technologies that easily escape conventional surveillance practices—all of these produce infrastructures and architectures that can be used for other purposes, whether money laundering or alternative politics. The strengthening and, in some of these cases, formation of new alternative political global circuits is embedded or enabled by the existence of a global economic system and its associated development of various institutional supports for cross-border money flows and markets.<sup>11</sup> These countergeographies are dynamic and changing in their locational features. And they include a very broad range of activities, from emancipatory to criminal. Clearly, the LA region is traversed by what is probably close to the full range of these circuits.

What is important for my argument in terms of the localizing of global circuits in specific places and the transformation of the meaning of the locally sited entity is the following. Through the Internet, local initiatives can become part of a global network of activism without losing the focus on specific local struggles. It enables a new type of cross-border political activism, one centered in multiple localities, yet intensely connected digitally. Activists can develop networks for circulating not only information (about environmental, housing, political issues, etc.), but also political work and strategies. There are many examples of such a new type of cross-border political work. For instance, SPARC, organized by Sheela Patel, began by organizing slum dwellers in Mumbai (Bombay) and centered on women. It now has a network of such groups throughout Asia, as well as some cities in Latin America.

Current uses of digital media in this new type of cross-border political activism suggest very broadly two types of digital activism.<sup>12</sup> A first type consists of actual city centered—or rural community-centered, for that matter—activist groups who connect with other such groups around the world. This is in my view one of the key forms of critical politics that the Internet can make possible: a politics of the local with a big difference—these are localities connected with each other across a region, a country, or for that matter the world. This is a politics of the global centered on local issues and local political actors. Because the network is global does not mean that it all has to happen at the global level.

Second, the architecture of digital networks, primed to span the world, can actually serve to intensify transactions among residents of a city or region. It can serve to make them aware of neighboring communities, gain an understanding of local issues that resonate positively or negatively with communities in the same city, rather than—in the name of the power of telecommunications—with those that are at the other end of the world. Or it serves to intensify transactions around the local issues of communities at opposite ends of

10. See on this subject, for example, Lovink and Riemens, "Digital City Amsterdam," in Saskia Sassen, ed., *Cities and Their Cross-border Networks* (London: Routledge, 2001).

11. This is, in my reading, a crucial aspect of the organizational architecture of globalization. I have made a parallel argument for the case of international labor migrations and for trafficking in women for the sex industry. See "Women's Burden: Countergeographies of Globalization and the Feminization of Survival," *Journal of International Affairs* 53, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 503–24.

12. There is a third type of digital network centered politics which is not quite as directly pertinent to a discussion of the relation of power to topography. This is a type of politics that does most of its work in the digital network and then may or may not converge on an actual terrain for activism as was Seattle with the World Trade Organization meeting. Much of the work and the political effort is centered on the transactions in the digital network. Organizing against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment was largely a digital event. But when these digital political actions hit the ground, they can do so very effectively, especially in the concentrated place that cities are.

the world. It is a peculiar mix of intense engagement with the local, with place, and an awareness of other “locals” across the globe.<sup>13</sup> This is not the cosmopolitan route to the global. This is about the global as a multiplication of the local.

The cross-border network of global cities is a space where we are seeing the formation of countergeographies of globalization that contest the dominant economic forms the global economy has assumed. The demonstrations by the antiglobalization network have signaled that global corporate power can be engaged directly on the ground in certain types of places. There is a potential for developing a politics centered on places understood as locations on global networks. This is a place-specific politics with global span.

The large city of today, especially the global city, emerges as a strategic site for these new types of operations. It is a strategic site for global corporate capital. But is also one of the sites where the formation of new claims by informal political actors materializes and assumes concrete form. The loss of power at the national level produces the possibility for new forms of power and politics at the subnational level. The national as container of social process and power is cracked. This cracked casing opens up possibilities for a geography of politics that links subnational spaces, such as urban regions, and allows nonformal political actors to engage strategic components of global capital.

These are types of political work deeply embedded in people’s actions and activities. They are also forms of political and institution-building work centered in cities and networks of cities and in nonformal political actors. We see here the potential transformation of a whole range of “local” conditions or institutional domains, such as the household, the community, the neighborhood, the local school and health-care entities, where, for instance, women “confined” to domestic roles emerge as the key actors. From being experienced as nonpolitical, or domestic, these “domestic” settings are transformed into “microenvironments with global span.”

The space of the city is a far more concrete space for politics than that of the nation. It becomes a place where nonformal political actors can be part of the political scene in a way that is much more difficult at the national level. Nationally, politics needs to run through existing formal systems: whether the electoral political system or the judiciary (taking state agencies to court). Nonformal political actors are rendered invisible in the space of national politics. The space of the city accommodates a broad range of political activities—squatting, demonstrations against police brutality, fighting for the rights of immigrants and the homeless, the politics of culture and identity. Much of this becomes visible on the street. Much of urban politics is concrete, enacted by people, rather than dependent on massive media technologies. Street-level politics makes possible the formation of new types of political subjects that do not have to go through the formal political system.

It is in this sense that those who lack power, those who are disadvantaged, outsiders, discriminated minorities, can gain presence in global cities, presence vis-à-vis power and presence vis-à-vis each other. This signals, for me, the possibility of a new type of politics centered in new types of political actors. It is not simply a matter of having or not having power. There are new hybrid bases from which to act. This a counterspatialization of power in the city.

13. See Lovink and Riemens. There has been an explosion of urban sites on the Web, signaling the possibility of a whole new version of urbanism: Web urbanism. See my review of these types of websites in “Hot.list,” *Artforum* 37, no. 3 (November 1998): 30.

## Conclusion

As cities and urban regions such as Los Angeles are increasingly traversed by nonlocal, including global circuits, much of what we experience as the local because it is locally sited, is actually a transformed condition, in that it is imbricated with nonlocal dynamics or is a localization of global processes. One way of thinking about this is through spatializations of various projects—economic, political, cultural—that produce a specific set of interactions in a city's relation to its topography.

Saskia Sassen is the Ralph Lewis Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, and Centennial Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics. Her most recent books are *Guests and Aliens* (New Press, 1999) and *Globalization and its Discontents* (New Press, 1998). *The Global City* will be published in an updated edition this year, and *Cities and Their Cross-Border Networks*, which she edited, will also be published this year by Routledge. Sassen is co-director of the Economy Section of the Global Chicago Project and is the chair of the newly formed Information Technology, International Cooperation and Global Security Committee of the Social Science Research Council.

On February 8, 2001, the shiny gates of Disney's California Adventure opened in Anaheim to deliriously excitable queues of visitors. Disney's newest theme park is divided into three California-themed lands—Golden State, Paradise Pier, and Hollywood Pictures Backlot—with the first featuring a simulation of the state's majestic national parks called the Grizzly Park Recreation Area. While my experience of the park to date has been restricted to the public site

### Gavin Hipkins

## Pleasures of the State

of expectation at [www.disney.com](http://www.disney.com), the Grizzly Park Recreation Area already seems familiar, even intimate. Having visited numerous similar generic wildernesses via the mass media fosters this territorial intimacy. From postcards of Ansel Adams's pristine valleys to David Lynch's scary *Twin Peaks*, platitudes of redwoods and national parks play the role of a globally recognizable original wilderness.

Scores of texts have been written on Disneyland. Stacy Warren has recently referred to this mandatory academic engagement with the theme park as entering what she calls Theoryland.<sup>1</sup> I won't linger too long in the "happiest place on earth," but we do briefly need to relocate Disneyland to consider the identity politics implied by the creation of a new continent in Orange County as a site of reterritorialization. If Disneyland comprises a handful of nowhere lands (Tomorrowland, Adventureland, Toon Town), Disney's California Adventure is highly specific by comparison. This shift from nowhere to somewhere constitutes a process of restabilization in the face of identity uncertainty (our true blood is dissipated, our communities ethnically confused) and an imaginary loss of pioneering roots: a desire to relocate "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," to recall Frederick Jackson Turner's famous speech of 1893.

Like Disney's Frontierland, Disney's California Adventure appears to be a safe place, protected not only from dangerous animals, but also from the urban environment (real wildness). From the Grizzly River Run (a mountain river rapids ride) to the Redwood Creek Challenge Trail (an obstacle course in which visitors climb rocks and slide through the tree canopy on cables), this mini-wilderness is truly for the adventurous. The myth of wilderness and an

1. Stacy Warren, "Cultural Contestation at Disneyland's Paris," in *Leisure/Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*, ed. David Couch (London: Routledge, 1999), 111.