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Learning from Manchester: Uneven Development, Class and the City[1]

This paper argues that one of the greatest challenges mounted to urban theory is accounting for the simultaneous unfolding in the Global South of "planetary urbanization" and world's greatest industrial revolution. In order to show that industrial cities are still pertinent to urban theory, I revisit Victorian Manchester and Fredrick Engels' classic account of it. I argue that Engels was a pioneer of what I dub "anthropology of the impersonal" and his "discovery" of class became the cornerstone for Marxist thought. Yet, his in-

novation has remained under-appreciated, and the astonishing career of the "dual city" concept is a good case in point. I argue that its popular embrace stems from the way it brings "uneven development", "class" and the "city" in a gripping metaphor. Although Engels showed how these concepts were intertwined, he kept them theoretically separate. He did so because he used them not only for describing how capitalism worked, but also as tools for triggering a political change.

What was unfolding in Mumbai was unfolding elsewhere, too. In the age of global market capitalism, hopes and grievances were narrowly conceived, which blunted a sense of common predicament. Poor people didn't unite, they competed ferociously amongst themselves for gains as slender as they were provisional. And this undercity strife created only the faintest ripple in the fabric of the society at large. The gates of the rich, occasionally rattled, remained unbreached. The politicians held forth on the middle class. The poor took down one another, and the world's great, unequal cities soldiered on in relative peace.

<div style="text-align: right">Katherine Boo, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers:*
Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Slum, p. 237.</div>

It has been argued that "the political economic tradition has from the outset developed one strand of Marx's thought, the theory of the capitalist totality, at the expense of another, the theory of class."[2] This asymmetry has been grossly exacerbated over the last few decades. Vast literature on the logic of late capitalism, post-Fordism, flexible accumulation and the like, was accompanied by a veritable "retreat from class."[3] In this paper, I argue that the notion of uneven development can be enormously useful for mitigating the aforementioned imbalance. It is so because uneven development sits precisely at the intersection of the theory of capitalist totality and the theory of class. The former aspect of uneven development has been well developed by Neil Smith, whose classic book has been renewed for three editions. Smith successfully merged two strands in that theorizing, one following Trotsky's notion of combined and uneven development (further developed in the world systems school), and the other stemming from Henri Lefebvre's and David Harvey's work on the "urbanization of capital." Uneven development as a theory of class, however, has remained underdeveloped, despite the fact that Smith paid considerable heed to the phenomenon of class both in the numerous articles he wrote and in his work more generally. This paper is intended to fill in this gap.

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2   J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff, "Toward a Poststructuralist Political Economy," in *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism*, ed. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 1, emphasis original.

3   Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Retreat from Class: A New "true" Socialism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1998).

Anthropology of the impersonal

Writing in 1984, Smith warned against a highly popular, yet intellec-
tually futile, understanding of uneven development as "universal meta-
physics" – a Manichean struggle between good and evil. It is sometimes
also described as the "Matthew effect" – the "law" trying to grasp why
the rich seem to get ever richer and the poor – poorer. My argument is
that this is an opaque interpretation of uneven development as a tool for
class analysis. This approach is perhaps best exemplified in the continued
popularity of the concept of the "dual city." It stems from thinking of
spatial forms as reflections of (or metaphors for) social relations. The
"dual city" idea brings class, uneven development and urban space to-
gether in a gripping metaphor; this metaphor, in turn, has been useful
in mustering moral indignation against growing social disparities. It is
very handy for describing, to borrow a phrase from the TV series The
Wire, the "Dickensian aspect" of contemporary urban life. Often, as in
the classic description of New York as a city rift between "air people" and
"street people," it made good literature.[4] It was perhaps so because the
"dual city" idea emphasized difference – and all good literature hinges
on a conflict. This is also the case with Katherine Boo's compelling re-
portage on a Mumbai slum. Boo uses tools offered by literature (rather
than those offered by science) in order to garner empathy for the poor
– which, in our callous dog-eat-dog world, is a precious good indeed.[5]
There are, however, limits to this; and my aim here is to show that in-
stead of collapsing uneven development, class and the city into one jum-
bo "dual city" metaphor, we should rethink the fundamental relationship
between these three concepts. In other words, we need to ponder anew
how uneven development and class are intertwined in the urban milieu.

The metaphysical interpretation of uneven development as class,
the eternal "dialectic of darkness and light, of despair and promise"
can be "traced back to the Italian poet Dante, somebody Frederick En-
gels called the last great poet of the Middle Ages and the first poet
of modern times."[6] The trope of the "two cities" appears even earlier.
In Plato's Republic, for example, we find a description of Greek cities
rent by struggles over property: within each city, Plato wrote, "there are
two" cities, "warring with each other, one of the poor, and the other of

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4   Jonathan Raban, *Hunting Mister Heartbreak* (London: Picador, 1991), 80.
5   Katherine Boo, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, 1st ed. (New York: Random
House, 2012).
6   Andy Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (London and
New York: Routledge, 2002), 16.

the rich."[7] Likewise, feudal cities have been described as fundamentally and hopelessly dual.[8] In the classic text Two Cities Otto of Friesing contrasted the Jerusalem (the Augustinian eternal City of God) and Babylon – the city of Satan, time and earth. This in turn has been used as the overarching metaphor for one of the classic books on medieval history, describing Europe rent by the conflict between the Church and the Emperor.[9] My argument is that the "dual city" metaphor has nothing to do with capitalism. What is specific about capitalism and the modern city is that the impersonal became the basic "interface" of human inter-action – and it eclipsed the feudal "personal" relationships in the village and small town and between the dominant and dominated classes.

As we shall see, one of the most burning questions in Victorian Britain, which was, arguably, the very first capitalist society in the world, pertained exactly to the nature and dynamics of this new, impersonal, societal "glue". While for some the mechanism of the "invisible hand" became a viable ex-planation, others, and Karl Marx most notably, developed the language of class analysis for tackling this question. Marx has often been criticized for his "dualistic" class concept, i.e. (allegedly) believing that society comprises only two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. I will show in this pa-per that this interpretation is as futile and simplistic as the idea of the "dual city" (which, in fact, represents a direct projection of the "vulgar" dual class concept onto the urban tissue). I argue that the cornerstone of Marx's "unfinished project" of class theory (his chapter of Capital on class was never completed) is in fact directly indebted to Fredrick Engels. It is often noted that the prototype of the "dual city" is Victorian Manchester, and its first analysis, published in 1848 by Engels, is often noted as the ur-text for the "dual city" discussion. Curiously, this text itself is rarely scrutinized. Pace the stereotypical descriptions of Engels as the "vulgarizer" of Marx's thought, I will argue that it was Marx who never fully came to terms with intellectual conundrums posited by Engels and that his sophisticated ac-count of the relation between the capitalist city, class and uneven develop-ment has been "vulgarized" in the common use of the "dual city" notion.

Despite the fact that urban theory seems to be trying really hard to move "beyond the West,"[10] and studying industrial cities has been

> Contemporary urban studies have not yet reconciled with the fact that recent "urban climacteric" and the emergence of "planetary urbanization" was accompanied by the largest industrial revolution in human history

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7   Plato and Allan David Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 100.

8   Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 77.

9   Malcolm Barber, *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe, 1050-1320* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

10   Tim Edensor and Mark Jayne, eds., *Urban Theory beyond the West:*

Engels was one of the very first people to conduct first-hand empirical study of urban life under capitalism but at the same time embraced the novel forms of estrangement in order to envision new forms of sociability that transcended the lure of intimacy that most of his contemporaries succumbed to

hardly in vogue in the past few decades, I concur with Richard Sennett that the experience of industrial capitalism "laid the groundwork for our present-day problems."[11] This is perhaps even more true today than in the 1970s, when Sennett penned these words down, arguing against the "post-industrial" thesis. Contemporary urban studies have not yet reconciled with the fact that recent "urban climacteric" [12] and the emergence of "planetary urbanization"[13] was accompanied by the largest industrial revolution in human history. Some, like Paul Mason, have already made the argument that the historical experience accrued in the West may turn out highly pertinent to the global working class amalgamating in the South as we speak.[14] My argument is that there is something to learn from Victorian Manchester. This lesson has to do with the way one of its early scholars, Fredrick Engels, pioneered the art of what I call "anthropology of the impersonal." As Sennett argued, early responses to the tremors of industrial capitalism turned impersonality – still a virtue in the eighteenth century – into a moral evil. Public space ceased being a legitimate ground where one could interact with strangers yet remain aloof from them. Urban and public medium was refashioned into a field for the disclosure of personality and an important realm for private/individual, and not public, experience. Engels was one of the very first people to conduct first-hand empirical study of urban life under capitalism but at the same time embraced the novel forms of estrangement in order to envision new forms of sociability that transcended the lure of intimacy that most of his contemporaries succumbed to.

The shock city

"Phantoms and specters! The age of ruins is past. Have you seen Manchester?" exclaimed a character in a Disraeli novel, written just after its

A World of Cities (Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2012).

11   Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 219.

12   Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 5.

13   Neil Brenner, *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014).

14   Paul Mason, *Live Working or Die Fighting: How the Working Class Went Global* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2010); see also: Beverly J. Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Ching Kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007).

author had seen the city.[15] Victorian Manchester stirred up highly am-
biguous emotions. For Thomas Carlyle it was uncanny, "more sublime
than Niagara, […] every whit as wonderful, as fearful, as unimagina-
ble, as the oldest Salems [Jerusalem] or prophetic city."[16] There lurked
some "precious substance, beautiful as magic dreams, and yet no dream
but reality […] hidden in that noisome wrappage."[17] For many others,
however, Manchester manifested itself as "entrance to hell realized."[18]
Alexis de Tocqueville, for example, described Manchester thus: "from
this filthy sewer pure gold flows. Here humanity attains its most
complete development and its most brutish; here civilization works
its miracles, and civilized man is turned back almost into a savage."[19]
Awe at this "very symbol of civilization" and this "grand incarnation of
progress" was nearly always superimposed by anxieties imparted from
the forbidding urban landscape.[20]

Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees suggested that "it is easy
to caricature industrial towns," and both superlatives and indictments
they received were grossly exaggerated. Rising, it seemed, nearly over-
night and on a "clean slate," towns like Manchester were atypical of the
Industrial Revolution. "Much more common in the European setting,"
they stressed, "was the vast array of older cities [such as London and
Paris] linked by their central place functions into which industry moved
slowly."[21] Yet, this was precisely why Manchester was so alarming: else-
where, we can read in yet another exposé, "industry has been grafted upon
pre-existing state of society," whereas in Manchester "industry has found
no previous occupant, and knows nothing but itself. Everything is alike,
and everything is new; there is nothing but masters and operatives."[22]

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15   Thomas Carlyle quoted in: Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the
Working Class* (New York: Norton, 1985), 37.

16   Thomas Carlyle quoted in: Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Penguin
Books, 1990), 93.

17   Thomas Carlyle quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 35.

18   Sir William Napier quoted in: Ibid., 46, on the "satanic Manchester" and
Engels as the modern Dante, see also Andy Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist
Tale of the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 32, 37.

19   Alexis de Tocqueville quoted in: Peter Geoffrey Hall, *Cities in Civiliza-
tion* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1998), 310.

20   Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 88. See also: Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees,
Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cam-
bridge University Press, 2008), 63.

21   Paul M Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe,
1000-1950* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 248. See also:
Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 130

22   Léonard Faucher quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working*

Manchester, the "shock city" of the Industrial Revolution, jarred the Victorian eye and conscience because it was unprecedented and unique.[23] Here the paternal feudal ethos was obliterated: "the separation between the different classes […] is far more complete [in Manchester] than in any country […] there is far less personal communication between the master cotton spinner and his workmen […] than there is between the Duke of Wellington and the humblest laborer on his estate."[24]

Because for centuries Manchester remained outside the British medieval urban system – it was neither a municipal borough, nor a town sending representatives to Parliament, but a manor – it could facilitate the development of the "newest, most free and most modern kind of industrial economy" that was not constrained by the medieval guild system.[25] Like Liverpool, Manchester was a key node of the Atlantic space-of-flows linked more intimately with distant territories than with the domestic economy.[26] The latter was still dominated by traditional economic pursuits and landed rather than "mobile" property. "Well into the Edwardian twilight," Arno J. Mayer argued, "there were fewer and smaller fortunes in manufacture and industry than in landowning, commerce, and private banking."[27] Furthermore, "preindustrial economic interests, prebourgeois elites, predemocratic authority systems, premodernist artistic idioms, and 'archaic' mentalities" dominated Europe until the World War One." In this sense, the perception of the nineteenth century as driven by dynamo of industrialization is indeed "partial and distorted."[28] Nonetheless, Manchester did represent the "urban frontier of the future,"[29] precisely because its excesses, the fact that here like nowhere else opulence and penury brushed shoulders, were a portend of a novel principle of social order that mounted a challenge to the "old regime" and its yardstick of hierarchy. Manchester was the very first city dominated by nouveaux riches and nouveaux

Class, 59.

23   Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 133.

24   Canon Parkinson quoted in: Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 114, emphasis original; see also: Ira Katznelson, *Marxism and the City* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 148.

25   Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 6-7.

26   Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

27   Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 93.

28   Ibid., 4-5.

29   Harold L. Platt, *Shock Cities: The Environmental Transformation and Reform of Manchester and Chicago* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 15.

pauvres. Unlike the old aristocracy and the old poor, the bourgeoi-
sie and the proletariat "had grown up together and were tied to each
other," yet they "had no tradition of rank, no myth of legitimacy, no
'prestige of decent' […] endowed by the patina of centuries" to rely
on.[30] Unlike in historical urban centers, classes in Manchester were
"people without history," to borrow a phase from Eric Wolf, and their
"myth of origin" had to be established.

    "Every age has its shock city," argued Asa Briggs. At the eve of
the American global hegemony, responses similar to those imparted
by Manchester were conjured up by Chicago.[31] While the Chicagoan
narratives of horror and fascination have been generally acknowledged
as the cornerstone of urban anthropology,[32] the accomplishments of the
"small army of intrepid explorers"[33] who swarmed to Victorian shock cit-
ies have not been included in that canon. The sole exception is the *Con-
dition of the Working Class in England* that has been sometimes dubbed
"ethnographic,"[34] but nonetheless paid relatively little heed to. Unlike
what was later called the "Chicago school," those who described Victori-
an Manchester were not professional scholars. Most notably, Engels was
a "veritable autodidact of the old school,"[35] well acquainted with German
philosophy, but never employed at a university. He came to Manchester
to work for his father's textile firm. When he ventured into the Mancu-
nian "noisome labyrinth," he did so in his spare time. For that reason the
fruits of his labors have been generally described by a term less dignified
than "science," i.e. slumming. It did, nevertheless, facilitate a profound
"beginning of and a break in and simultaneous transformation of the
German cultural tradition,"[36] that might continue to be as indispensable
for urban anthropology as the heritage of the Chicago school.

The conundrum of poverty

"Invented" by the Roman Emperor Nero, slumming, argued Peter
Hitchcock, emerges "when a class in dominance seeks to understand

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30   Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford,
CA.: Stanford University Press, 1959), 6.

31   Platt, *Shock Cities*, chap. 4.

32   Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, chap. 2.

33   Platt, *Shock Cities*, 15.

34   For example by Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 149.

35   Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, 32.

36   Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 92-93.

the logic of its excessive existence and identity by foraging among its minions." This is how in Victorian Britain, slumming ceased to denote passing bad money or bad faith and started meaning "an excursion into the nether worlds of the poor and destitute" often in the form of "parties […] put together as a form of entertainment or pastime 'out of curiosity.'" Just as in Ancient Rome slumming was merely a "facet of a decadent geist," in industrial Britain it "became the ward chiefly of a newly extravagant bourgeoisie, cognizant not only of its dubious heritage" but also curious of proletariat who "gave to its constituency both integrity and fear."[37] In Victorian Manchester, the emphasis was initially on "fear." What was uncanny about Manchester was that the new principle of social differentiation that produced the nouveaux riches and nouveaux pauvres was impersonal. Men who visited Manchester, Steven Marcus argued, "were abruptly discovering that human existence […] had evolved in such a way that masses of human beings were now being constrained to conduct lives under conditions of unimaginable extremity." These early accounts, argued Marcus, ushered in "the distinctively modern experience of the extreme;" thus Victorian urbanization represented "one of these junctures at which a part of all of us today was first created."[38] Even Friedrich Engels, who grew up amidst an industrial landscape in his native Germany and should have been unimpressed by Manchester, was initially paralyzed by what he had seen. It was literally, he admitted, "impossible to convey an idea" of the horror. "On re-reading my description" of Manchester, he confessed, "I am forced to admit that instead of being exaggerated, it is far from black enough to convey a true impression of the filth, ruin, and uninhabitableness."[39]

Little wonder most reactions to this new reality were defensive, and subjected the slum to "hifalutin literariness" and "compulsive and factitious mythologizing."[40] De Tocqueville's critique of the business aristocracy, for example, "found a safe way to relieve his anxiety" that "a society of affluence and leisure but seemed to be destroying the

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37   Peter Hitchcock, "Slumming," in *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion*, ed. María Carla Sánchez and Linda Schlossberg, Sexual cultures (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 161-166.

38   Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 45.

39   Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England: From Personal Observations and Authentic Sources* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 87, 92. Also Dickens wrote on his first visit to Manchester thus: "I have seen enough for my purpose, and what I have seen has disguised and astonished me beyond all measure", quoted in Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 30.

40   Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class,* 44-45.

very thing it was ultimately seeking to enhance, the quality of daily life." His solution to the paradox of uneven development (coevality of progress and backwardness) lay in his conclusion that Manchester was "the result not of laws of economic and technological progress, but of an unbridled form of individualism." "Everything," he wrote, "in the exterior appearance of the city attests to the individual powers of man."[41] Likewise, concluded Carlyle, "soot and despair are not the essence" of Manchester.[42] He presented penury "in terms of 'accidental' rather than necessary causes […] [deflecting] the theme of exploitation into issues of urban sanitation and sexual excesses without reference to causal factors."[43] "I am persuaded," another account of that sort read, "that Manchester must long continue to present an appearance of great destitution and delinquency which does not belong to the town itself, but arises from a class of immigrants and passengers." As a result, "the immense misery becomes merely an 'appearance,' not a reality; and even as appearance it does not 'belong'" to Manchester nor does it belong to the poor but "it 'arises from' them detachably, like some kind of visible effluvium."[44]

"When the significance of poverty was realized" argued Karl Polanyi, "the stage was set for the nineteenth century."[45] As Victorian historiography tended to bracket the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and typically contrasted its own epoch to the "golden" Middle Ages,[46] the estrangement of Mancunian denizens seemed disturbingly novel. Yet, intellectual recoil from unsettling misery was neither new nor specific to Victorian Britain. Debates in question unfolded against the backdrop of the so-called Speenhamland laws. Introduced in 1795 and abolished in 1834, Speenhamland offered a legal framework for a minimum level of outdoor relief linked to the price of bread. During the Speenhamland period, Polanyi suggested, British society was rent by two contradictory forces. First, paternalism protected common

41   Platt, *Shock Cities*, 7, 11.

42   Thomas Carlyle quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 35.

43   Aruna Krishnamurthy, " „More than abstract knowledge": Friedrich Engels in Industrial Manchester," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 02 (2000): 430.

44   Cooke Taylor quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 52.

45   Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Beacon paperbacks 45 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 111.

46   This was, amongst others, the strategy assumed by Carlyle; see also: David Ward, "Victorian cities: How modern?," *Journal of Historical Geography* 1, no. 2 (April 1975): 146.

people from the market system by providing them with an allowance irrespective of how they worked. Second, as a result of accelerating industrialization and a new wave of enclosures the ranks of proletariat swelled. Such combination compelled people "to gain a living by offering their labor for sale, while at the same time [deprived] their labor of its market value." As a result, "Speenhamland led to the ironical result that the financially implemented 'right to live' eventually ruined the people whom it was ostensibly designed to succor."[47] While industrial production expanded unabated, so did the number of paupers. To some, like Jeremy Bentham, this only proved that poverty was an integral part of plenty. "In the highest stage of social prosperity," he suggested, "the great mass of the citizens will most probably posses few other resources than their daily labor, and consequently will always be near to indigence."[48] To most, however, Speenhamland taught the lesson that expansion of poverty was a direct consequence of protection of the poor, and that paternalism had to be terminated. This lead to the wholesale embracement of laissez-faire: "out of the horrors of Speenhamland" regretted Polanyi, "men rushed blindly for the shelter of a utopian market economy."[49]

There was, hence, a temporal correspondence between the advent of "shock cities" and the fall of Christian morality that impelled the rich to aid the poor. Once Speenhamland was abrogated, argued Polanyi, "compassion was removed from the hearts, and the stoic determination to renounce human solidarity in the name of the greatest happiness of the greatest number gained the dignity of secular religion."[50] Empathy and solidarity were replaced by nascent sciences that lent a high-brow veneer to the view that poverty was nature surviving in society.[51] As Philip

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47   Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 78-81.
48   Jeremy Bentham quoted in: Ibid., 117.
49   Ibid., 102.
50   Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 102.
51   This was the origin of the notion of a "primitive society" as a "pristine precipitate" of past evolutionary stages, for a vehement critique see: Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990). The classic example of such an approach are the !Kung bushmen of the Kalahari desert, who to this very day are marginalized on the basis of poverty being part of their nomadic culture, see: Adam Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations Of a Myth*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 7-8, 211-216, and Edwin N. Wilmsen, *Land Filled with Flies: A Political Economy of the Kalahari* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), especially 52-61 for a discussion on class; for a compelling description of how the !Kung have been struggling with the Bushmen myth between 1951 and 2000, see: John Marshall,

Mirowski argued, physics and economics applied an identical intellectual template to nature and society respectively. Neo-classical economists, driven by "physics envy," openly imported their key concepts from physics: "money," argued Mirowski, was the equivalent of "energy," "utility" was synonymous with "potential energy," and the mechanism of invisible hand was nothing but thermodynamic equilibrium.[52] Moreover, intellectual separation between the two sciences was pivotal for maintaining their purportedly objective character. Economics as social physics, and physics as nature's economics, derived their tautological legitimacy from each other. At the same time both were constituted as belonging to a realm outside of human competence.[53] The initial paralysis at the face of human suffering was now justified scientifically: one was to study, and not to change, the objective laws of nature. Penury was no longer to be alleviated but actually maintained; for Malthus, starvation constituted a positive check on population growth. "Hunger," Joseph Townsend argued, "will tame the fiercest animals, it will teach decency and civility, obedience and subjection. In general it is only hunger which can spur and goad [the poor] on to labor."[54]

The discovery of class

"It cannot come as a surprise," however, "that such mental escapes and avoidances were a regular resort, and were taken by men of good will as

A Kalahari Family (Documentary Educational Resources, 2003).

52   Philip Mirowski, *More Heat Than Light: Economics as Social Physics, Physics as Nature's Economics*, Historical perspectives on modern economics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

53   Robert Boyle is attributed to be the first one who envisioned an independent realm subject to the scientific laws that was outside of the human society, see: Steven Shapin, Simon Schaffer, and Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life: Including a Translation of Thomas Hobbes, Dialogus Physicus De Natura Aeris by Simon Schaffer* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), see also an analysis of how physical and social space became divorced in Neil Smith, *Uneven Development*, 66-72.

54   Townsend quoted in: Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 112-113. On the use of nature in economic theory see also Marshall David Sahlins, *The Use and Abuse of Biology: An Anthropological Critique of Sociobiology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976) and Philip Mirowski, ed., *Natural Images in Economic Thought: "Markets Read in Tooth and Claw"*, Historical perspectives on modern economics (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and for an analysis of how nature was produced by industrial capitalism, see Neil Smith, *Uneven Development*, chap. 1 and 2.

well."[55] Especially that it was not only the sight of poverty but the entire urban experience that was shocking, if not debilitating. "Throwing together of millions of people in the city," wrote Engels, produced "that 'strange' effect whereby 'a man cannot collect himself.'" The city, as it was later more comprehensively elucidated by Benjamin and Simmel, was "no longer experienced in a unified way," but instead "reduced to a seemingly random series of half-impressions, images and thoughts only partially registered."[56] The distinguishing trait of modern city is that under capitalism there is no fixed relationship between spatial forms and social relations. In Ancient Greece, as Sennett noted, an urbanite "could use his or her eyes to see the complexities of life. The temples, markets, playing fields, meeting places, walls, public statuary, and paintings of the ancient city represented the culture's values in religion, politics and family life." Nowadays, however, "it would be difficult to know where in particular to go in modern London or New York to experience, say, remorse." Likewise, "there is no modern design equivalent of the ancient assembly" – the physical embodiment of the institutions of democracy. "What once were the experiences of places appear now as floating mental operations."[57] This is why Engels had to find a way of understanding this without falling short to simple metaphorical reductionism.

By putting the obverse side of the "sublime Manchester" to the forefront, Engels gradually overcome the shock, and paragraph by paragraph restored poverty-as-appearance back to the "essence" of the city. Unlike others, he actually made the reader see the urban squalor. But this was more than just a parade of horrors. By searching for the agency responsible for the propinquity of wealth and penury, he put forward the very basis for a theory of uneven development. "The cause of the miserable condition of the working-class is to be sought," he wrote later, "not in these minor grievances, but in the capitalistic system itself."[58] The very process of writing became Engels' strategy whereby he "collected himself" from the shock foisted upon both amateurs and professionals of urban anthropology. As Marcus points out, Engels' book "begins without an organizing conception, and large parts of it consist of Engels'

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55   Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 52.

56   Krishnamurthy, " „More than abstract knowledge": Friedrich Engels in Industrial Manchester," 438.

57   Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life Of Cities*, 1st ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), xi.

58   Writing in 1892, Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 27, emphasis original.

casting about for a notion that will intelligibly subordinate the material that keeps continually slipping away."[59] Only in the very last chapter did he find the "general structure […] a coherent totality, a concrete, complex and systematic whole" of his personal experience of Manchester,[60] something David Harvey once called "structured coherence" of a place.[61]

Just as the feudal wealth and poverty could be explained by a system based upon personal domination, here, Engels argued, "the relationship of the manufacturer to his operative has nothing human in it; it is purely economic."[62] The new principle of estrangement was hence wholly abstract, and external to both parties involved. It hinged on the class mechanics – "before the privilege of property all other privileges vanish."[63] Yet, his idea of class was quite different from what we normally assume class analysis is. He did not reify the concept. It has been often pointed out that Engels did not craft a well-rounded class theory, but rather provided "raw components of a new theoretical structure" for Marx. Yet, Marx's theory of class remained as unprocessed as that of Engels'. This seems to be, however, intentional, for class in Engels' rendering was not a thing, but a process – both social and cognitive. To retain its dynamic, he had to keep it "unfinished."[64]

Engels' intellectual contribution is often reduced to the passage where he declared: "we German theoreticians still knew much too little of the real world to be driven by the real relations." This is why in order to develop "more than a mere abstract knowledge of my subject," Engels explained, "I forsook the company of dinner parties […] and spent many a happy hour in obtaining the knowledge of the realities of life."[65] This often-quoted excerpt suggests that together with the bourgeois dinner parties Engels repudiated German idealist philosophy. Not quite. His innovation was more than just the fact that he ventured into the "Dantesque underworld" of working class Manches-

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59   Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 148.

60   Ibid., 178.

61   David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Oxford, [England]: B. Blackwell, 1989), 139-144.

62   Ibid., 313 For an insightful analysis of the historical roots of the separation of the economic and political realms in Europe see a review of Carl Schmitt's work in: Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), chap. 1.

63   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 312.

64   Gareth Stedman Jones, "Engels and the Genesis of Marxism," *New Left Review* 106, no. I (1977): 85.

65   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 14, 9.

Suggested what Henri
Lefebvre spelled
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abstract

ter and described what others preferred to disavow.[66] He also wrote: "I know [Manchester] as intimately as my own native town, and more intimately than most of its residents know it,"[67] and hence suggested what Henri Lefebvre spelled out later: immediate experience of the city is insufficient for comprehending it in its totality; the city as a whole can be understood only in the abstract.[68] We can see him as a pioneer of (urban) anthropology – but his strand of anthropology, undertaken in a capitalist city, was unlike that performed later on in the tropics, a study of the impersonal. It was not a study of a community, but a study of class.

Engels arrived at this conclusion only by the very end of his book. He opened it, on the contrary, with a presentation of what can be inferred from a first-hand experience of the city. "The dissolution of mankind into monads," he wrote, is "carried out to its utmost extreme" in large cities. "What is true of London, is true of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, is true of all great towns. Everywhere barbarous indifference, hard egotism on one hand, and nameless misery on the other, everywhere social warfare, every man's house in a stage of siege." Urban crowds "have nothing in common […] their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his side of the pavement," they even do not "honour [one] another with so much as a glance."[69] The more individuals are "crowded within a limited space," the greater their private isolation becomes. Capitalism, by creating large agglomeration and facilitating "war of all against all," splinters its subjects into isolated monads trapped in their private worlds. De Tocqueville or Carlyle succumbed to this atomizing quality of city life and "personalized" their "slumming" narratives. In order to overcome the unsettling "intensification of nervous stimulations," as Simmel once put it,[70] and understand the city in its totality, Engels had to develop more than mere personal knowledge of his subject. Paradoxically, it was his Manchester experience, and uniqueness of that place, that allowed him to move beyond the spatial and epistemic fragmentation and pioneer what I call "anthropology of the impersonal."

What singled out Manchester from all large British cities was that "the modern art of manufacture has reached its perfection" only in

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66   Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, 37.

67   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 81, emphasis mine.

68   Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 59-68.

69   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 64-65.

70   Georg Simmel quoted in: Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, 64.

Manchester, and its "effects upon the working-class" developed "here most freely and perfectly, and the manufacturing proletariat present[s] itself in its fullest classic perfection."[71] Indeed, Manchester was the harbinger of novel land uses, marked by the increasing division between work and home, commerce and manufacturing, and, most importantly, between the slum and the suburb. The poor had no other choice but to live a walking distance from their work, whereas the "money aristocracy" could leapfrog the inner city squalor and pollution thanks to a system of omnibuses that brought them to their suburban villas equipped with numerous amenities, including "free, wholesome county air."[72] The spatial separation of slum and suburb was nowhere in Britain as deep and perfect as in Manchester. Precisely for that reason, as Asa Briggs stressed: "[i]f Engels had lived not in Manchester but in Birmingham, his conception of 'class' and his theories of the role of class in history might have been very different. In this case Marx might have been not a communist but a currency reformer. The fact that Manchester was taken to be the symbol of the age [...] was of central political importance in modern world history."[73]

From working classes to the proletariat

In order to appreciate how novel this was, we need to bear in mind for most the political response to urban capitalism lay in combating urban "corruption" and trying to rescue the last residues of intimacy and human warmth against the grain of dehumanizing and alienating urban world. "If people are not speaking to each other on the street," Sennett noted, "how are they to know who they are as a group? [...] Those silent, single people at cafes, those flâneurs of the boulevards who strutted past but spoke to no one, continued to think they were in a special milieu and that other people in it were sharing something with themselves. The tools they had to work with in constructing a picture of who they were as a collectivity, now that neither clothes nor speech were revealing, were the tools of fantasy, of projection."[74] The key realization of such fantasy was the idea of community – whether it was a working class neighborhood or a middle class suburb.[75] Just as

[I]f Engels had lived not in Manchester but in Birmingham, his conception of 'class' and his theories of the role of class in history might have been very different. In this case Marx might have been not a communist but a currency reformer

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71   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 81.
72   Ibid., 85.
73   Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 116.
74   Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 222.
75   See also: August Carbonella, "Beyond the Limits of the Visible World:

most commentators succumbed to that illusion, Engels recognized the political potential inherent in the impersonal nature of the new form of social inequality; hence, he embraced the proletarian class rather than cherished the working-class community.

Although Engels' notion of class might appear somehow "raw" in hindsight, in order to capture its extraordinary dynamism, I suggest introducing the distinction between "proletariat" and "working class" as proposed once by Étienne Balibar. The former denotes class as a political and revolutionary subject facilitating transcendence of capitalism, while the latter refers to class as a product of capitalism and the necessary condition for its continuous reproduction.[76] Although Engels himself admitted: "I have continually used the expressions working-men and proletarians, working-class, propertyless class and proletariat as equivalents,"[77] Balibar's distinction underpins the very core of Engels' dynamic usage of class. The unique spatial predicament of Mancunian workers propelled Engels, as Ira Katznelson pointed out, to confront "a striking paradox of the orderly way the social classes are arrayed in space in spite of the absence of planning." Therefore Engels "pioneered in the analysis of the spatial structure of the city,"[78] by demonstrating how capitalism ushered in "the concentration of workers in autonomous working-class communities, where, free from direct supervision of their employers or the state, they could create such institutions as reading rooms, and working man's clubs and societies."[79] Although isolated from the bourgeoisie and "systematically [shout out] from the main thoroughfares," the working class was far from being internally homogeneous. Instead, it was divided by age, ethnicity, religion and gender, fractured in various professional sub-groups working in different departments of the economy (mining, textiles, agriculture etc.), and dwelling in various urban organisms (Manchester, Dublin, Glasgow etc.). This is why, as Eric Wolf once pointed out, we should speak of the "working classes" rather than a single working class.[80] They are highly diversified, and actually compete with one another on the

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Remapping Historical Anthropology," in *Critical Junctions: Anthropology and History Beyond the Cultural Turn*, ed. Don Kalb and Herman Tak (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 88-108.

76   Étienne Balibar, "In Search of the Proletariat: the Notion of Class Politics in Marx," in *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 125-149.

77   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 15.

78   Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 149.

79   Ibid., 151.

80   Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, 276-7, 358, 385.

labor market.

The diverse and fragmented working class communities constitute for Engels a single entity as proletariat. Competition and unbearable conditions of work and life have stripped workers of everything but their humanity. Therefore, there is "no cause for surprise if the workers, treated as brutes, actually become such." A worker is "a passive subject of all possible combinations of circumstances" and "his character and way of living are naturally shaped by these conditions." Yet, workers "can maintain their consciousness of manhood only by cherishing the most glowing hatred, the most unbroken inward rebellion against the bourgeoisie in power." The working class, therefore, can "rescue its manhood, and this he can do solely in rebellion." As working-class, their lot is dramatically worse than that of a slave or a serf who were provided at least with means of subsistence. The industrial worker "has not the slightest guarantee for being able to earn the barest necessities of life." From a political perspective, however, workers are ahead of the slave or serf. Because their servitude is concealed by patriarchal relations, the latter "must have remained an intellectual zero, totally ignorant of his own interest, a mere private individual. Only when estranged from his employer, when conceived that the sole bond between employer and employee is the bond of pecuniary profit" did "the worker begin to recognize his own interest and develop independently […]. And to this end manufacture on a grand scale and in great cities has most largely contributed."[81] Engels, thus, does not cherish the working-class community, or its culture. Rather, he hopes for their coming-of-age as a proletariat. Only as a proletariat can the working classes transcend the war of all against all, and mature into a class by becoming "the true intellectual leader of England."[82] Therefore, Engels' usage of class was both descriptive and political.

To see in the wretched working classes a potential political subject, the proletariat, Engels' "anthropology of the impersonal" had to transcend the fragmented city. Thus, his book is not a monograph on Manchester. Its sections not devoted to Manchester, but to the description of the mining and agricultural proletariat, and long passages on industrial towns such as Glasgow or Dublin, were critical for this process of abstraction. This is why Mancunian workers were spectral in a double sense. First, as "brutes" deprived of all but humanity that he saw in Manchester and described at length. The proletariat as a revolution-

81   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 153-162.
82   Ibid., 275.

ary subject was spectral too, in the sense that it was contingent upon recognizing the emancipatory potential of the unity of their class. It is to this potential political subject that Engels dedicated his book. "One is tempted to say," argued Hitchcock, "that Engels is addressing ghosts, for the working 'men' he invokes in the opening passage would have been long gone before the text reached them in a recognizable form."[83] The proletariat did not yet exist, but was politically conceivable. Unlike in Balibar's argument, for Engels the possibility of subaltern wrath amalgamating into revolution hinged upon interplay of the two facets of class – the empirical (working classes) and the political (proletariat) – and not upon their separation. This is precisely why Engels does not differentiate the two in his text. They bear on each other because both were engendered by urban capitalism; the maturation of the working classes into a proletariat can be set off only in a city.

Since Engels recognized the novelty of Manchester and its social relations, he did not compare it to pre-industrial cities. Neither did he disavow penury, nor saw it as residual. By bringing the obverse of Manchester's economic prosperity to the forefront, Engels sought to establish theoretical understanding of the industrial city. He demonstrated how extraordinary accumulation of wealth was contingent upon proliferation of poverty and hence gave us the linchpin for a relational theory of uneven development.[84] It is important to remember that both uneven development and class manifested themselves for Engels through the urban experience of industrial capitalism. In Manchester, Engels noted, "the working-class has gradually become a race wholly apart from that English bourgeoisie […]. The workers speak other dialects, have other thoughts and ideals, other customs and moral principles, a different religion and other politics than those of the bourgeoisie. Thus they are two radically dissimilar nations, as unlike as difference of race could make them."[85] It was in largest cities, he stressed, where "the opposition between the proletariat and bourgeoisie first made itself manifest."[86] Not only do "class," "uneven development" and "the city" share a common origin, but they are somehow coterminous. Yet, and this is my crucial point, these concepts (just as the working class and proletariat) ought to be keep intellectually distinct.

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83   Hitchcock, "Slumming," 167.
84   Charles Tilly, "Relational origins of inequality," *Anthropological Theory* 1, no. 3 (September 1, 2001): 355-372.
85   Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 162.
86   Ibid., 161.

Beyond the "dual city" metaphor

Collapsing them into one another, as in the case of the "dual city" idea[87], leads us to an intellectual (and political) cul-de-sac. Although it has been generally acknowledged that Engels' "description of segmented city space and cross-class isolation might have been something of an exaggeration,"[88] his study became the ur-text for the dual city concept. Just as cities in the age of absolutism and mercantilism were "marked by great individual character," the Industrial Revolution had a profound homogenizing effect on urban space. Sennett argued that it was Baron Haussmann (hired by Napoleon III to rebuild Paris after the 1848 revolution) who was the first to reduce social diversity of residential areas and turned neighborhoods into uniform economic zones. Thanks to his efforts, the population of Paris "became at once homogenized on a small turf and differentiated from a turf to turf." Nowadays we are "so accustomed to think that the economy of an area 'fits' the level of affluence of its inhabitants" that we find it difficult to imagine social diversity of pre-industrial neighborhoods. Yet, we can speak of the tendency towards spatial congruence of class and community only from the mid nineteenth century.[89] The "dual city" idea precisely mistakes class for community. Yet, Baron Haussmann merely turned something that evolved "more by omission than by commission" in Manchester (to borrow Engels' phase) into a full-fledged urban policy. Only between 1835 and 1845, for example, "Manchester achieved a higher degree of suburbanization than London did in the whole century from 1770 to 1870."[90] Certainly, with Hassusmann's aid, the spatial "pattern which had been pioneered in Manchester was repeated, with variations, all over the world," as Mark Girouard argued.[91]

Therefore, as Manchester ceased to be the one and only "chimney of the world," and industrial urbanization wreaked havoc in other

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87   For a useful summary see: Chris Hamnett, "Social Segregation and Social Polarization," in *Handbook of Urban Studies*, ed. Ronan Paddison (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 162-176

88   Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 149-150; see also David Ward, "Victorian cities: How modern?," *Journal of Historical Geography* 1, no. 2 (April 1975): 150-151 and David Ward, "Environs and neighbours in the "Two Nations" residential differentiation in mid-nineteenth-century Leeds," *Journal of Historical Geography* 6, no. 2 (April 1980): 133-162.

89   Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 135.

90   Robert Fishman quoted in: Platt, *Shock Cities*, 17.

91   Mark Girouard, *Cities & People: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 269.

European states and their colonies, it seemed that social polarization engendering "two nations" and "two races" came along in the "Manchester package." Thereby, a "small crack" in the urban tissue of early nineteenth century Cairo, argued Janet Abu-Lughod in her seminal text on the "dual city," had "widened into a gaping fissure" by the end of it. Colonial and industrial Cairo was divided into a "pre-industrial native city" and a "colonial city with its steam-powered techniques, its faster pace and wheeled traffic, and its European identities." Cairo was but an example: "the major metropolis in almost every newly-industrialized country," she stressed in 1965, "is not a single unified city, but, in fact, two quite different cities, physically juxtaposed but architecturally and socially distinct." [92] To be sure, Abu-Lughod's assertion was quickly challenged. It was pointed out that non-European capitalist cities were not dual, but at least triple, with distinct zones occupied by whites, natives and immigrants, and slums smeared across all three zones.[93]

It has become a rule of thumb in the dual city debate that those who employed the concept also lamented its poor explanatory capacity. Trying to verify if the "dual city" was still applicable in the late 1980s, Manuel Castells and John Mollenkopf argued that "the complexity of New York's social structure cannot be reduced to a dichotomy between the two extremes of the scale of income distribution."[94] Instead, they singled out six major occupational groups within the economy of the New York City.[95] As a result, they replaced the binary class dichotomy with the core-periphery metaphor: "cultural, economic, and political polarization in New York takes the form of a contrast between a comparatively cohesive core of professionals and a disorganized periphery fragmented by race, ethnicity, gender, occupational and industrial location and the spaces they occupy."[96] There was a caveat too: a large group, according to Castells and Mollenkopf, did not fit their model at all. This is precisely what Susan Fainstein and Michael Harloe high-

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92   Janet Abu-Lughod, "Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no. 4 (July 1965): 429-430.

93   Judit Bodnar, "Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames," *MS*: 5-6.

94   Manuel Castells and John Mollenkopf quoted in: Susan S. Fainstein and Michael Harloe, "Conclusion: the divided cities," in *Divided Cities: New York & London in the Contemporary World*, ed. Susan S. Fainstein, Ian Gordon, and Michael Harloe, Studies in urban and social change (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 254.

95   Upper level executives, managers, professionals, clerical workers, the public sector, and finally those outside of the labor market.

96   Manuel Castells and John Mollenkopf quoted in: Susan S. Fainstein and Michael Harloe, "Conclusion: the divided cities," 254.

lighted in their Divided Cities.[97] Likewise, reviewers of Divided Cities emphasized that "the complexity of [urban] processes cast doubt on any simple summary (such as the notion of a 'dual city')."[98] Even Peter Marcuse's effort to square the sophistication of this metaphor by proposing a notion of a "quartered city"[99] had been criticized for "insufficiently [reflecting] the complex political, social, and cultural divisions related to the new model of urbanization." [100]

Criticism notwithstanding, the "dual city" metaphor returned with a vengeance whenever polarizations within and without capitalist cities were being addressed. For example, writing on racial divisions in contemporary American cities, Alice O'Connor argued that "in major cities nationwide, overall economic growth is accompanied by higher than average rates of unemployment and poverty, concentrated especially in low-income, working class minority neighborhoods."[101] Also Alexander Reichl embraced the core-periphery metaphor, arguing that there is a clear contrast between "spectacular gains" in core neighborhoods and stagnation of those outside it.[102] More recently, Loïc Wacquant postulated that: "postindustrial modernization translates, on the one hand, into the multiplication of highly skilled and highly remunerated positions for university-trained professional and technical staff and, on the other, into the deskilling and outright elimination of millions of jobs as well as the swelling of casual employment slots for uneducated workers." Hence, for example, "the city of Hamburg," writes Wacquant, "sports both the highest proportion of millionaires and the highest incidence of public assistance receipt in Germany."[103]

97   Ibid., 255.

98   Chris Tilly and Marie Kennedy, "Review: Cities: Beyond the Fragments," *Contemporary Sociology* 22, no. 6 (November 1993): 839-840.

99   Peter Marcuse, ",Dual city': a muddy metaphor for a quartered city," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, no. 17 (1989): 384-403.

100   Handsruedi Hitz, Christian Schmid, and Richard Wolff, "Zürich Goes Global: Economic Restructuring, Social Conflicts and Polarization," in *Social Polarization in Post-industrial Metropolises*, ed. John Vianney O'Loughlin, Jürgen Friedrichs, and John Vianney O'Loughlin, Jürgen Friedrichs (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 130-131.

101   Alice O'Connor, "Understanding inequality in the late twentieth-century metropolis: new perspectives on the enduring racial divide," in *Urban Inequality: Evidence from Four Cities*, ed. Alice O'Connor, Chris Tilly, and Lawrence Bobo (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), 1.

102   Alexander J. Reichl, "Rethinking the Dual City," *Urban Affairs Review* 42, no. 5 (May 1, 2007): 659-687.

103   Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 264.

Uneven development and relational class analysis

We are doomed to lurch from embracing to criticizing the "dual city" unless we understand that Marx inherited Engels' thinking, or rather tinkering, with class with all the strings attached. Marx's double vision of class, or its two facets i.e. theoretical and empirical/historical, corresponding to Engels' proletariat and working-class, has been widely acknowledged. When understood as a social grouping rather than a social process, "class analysis involves sorting individuals into mutually exclusive class categories, often a frustrating analytical project."[104] In his historical writings, and most notably in the Eighteenth Brumaire, Marx did not squeeze empirical reality into a Procrustean bed of a preconceived class duality. Instead, as Balibar and many others have noted, "the 'two-class' or 'three class' schemas explode in a series of subdivisions," and Marx arrived not at a dichotomous class structure, but rather at its numerous and sociologically distinct "fractions."[105]

As in Engels' case, "the interplay between two seemingly disparate conceptual systems – the historical and the theoretical – is crucial to the explication of the class concept in all of its fullness."[106] The key point is that class's empirical manifestations are ontologically separate from class as an abstraction. For both Engels and Marx, class was essentially relational,[107] and by being relational it was necessarily abstract. By extension it was dual too, because duality was simply a derivative of its relational character. As Charles Tilly insisted, categories of inequality, i.e. a set of "paired and unequal categories" such as black/white, male/female, citizen/foreigner, Muslim/Jew and so forth do structure the world of social interaction, but are nonetheless "to an important degree organizationally interchangeable."[108] What he called "durable inequality," and what I mean by uneven development, is perpetuated precisely through oscillations between different categorical principles.[109] Most such categories are subject to what Sennett described as the logic of pu-

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104   Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff, "Re/Presenting Class," 17.
105   Such as industrial proletariat, lumpenproletariat, petite bourgeoisie, industrialists, financiers, merchant capitalists, management, landed aristocracy, peasantry; Balibar, "Masses, Classes, Ideas," 144. See also: David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Verso, 2007), 24-26; Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 110-113.
106   Harvey, *Limits*, 27.
107   For this see, for example, E. P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1980), 11.
108   Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 7-9.
109   Ibid., 233.

rification. In a community, "the only transaction for the group to en-
gage in is that of purification, of rejection or chastisement of those who
are not 'like' the others. Since the symbolic materials usable in forming
collective personality are unstable, communal purification is unend-
ing, a continual quest for the loyal American, the authentic Aryan, the
'genuine' revolutionary."[110] Such principles of inclusion and exclusion
are of course subject to change, and the spatial formations that under-
pin them will likewise always melt into air eventually. And it is this very
melting-into-air, the ever-changing social landscape, that constitutes
the modus operandi of class.

It is better, therefore, to speak of urban dualities in terms of uneven
development. The dual Manchester clearly resulted from the wage la-
bor relation – something Neil Smith described as capitalism's tendency
for equalization. It is a process whereby the wage labor relation, and
all its corollaries, is universalized in geographical expansion. Hence,
equalization facilitates homogenization of space, and the "annihila-
tion of space by time is [its] ultimate if never fully realized result."[111]
Yet, equalization is always counterbalanced by differentiation. The lat-
ter follows from division of labor, and in turn divides space into vari-
ous scales. This includes production of the urban scale, and the city
as a competitive labor market. Equalization produces the "proletariat,"
and is manifested mainly in the place of work. Differentiation, how-
ever, engenders the "working-class," and is responsible, for example,
for the separation of the place of work from the place of residence or
the residential zoning of cities. Inconclusive dual city debate, therefore,
stems from an erroneous interpretation of the relation between equali-
zation and differentiation. Together with fears of a "single industrial
society"[112] or "one-dimensional man," "dual city" belongs to the family
of capitalist dystopias spurred by equalization but always counterbal-
anced by differentiation. Searching for a dual city in the literal sense is,
therefore, a wholly quixotic endeavor. It may add to the avalanche of
moral indignation against modern cities, but hardly contributes to our
understanding of how they actually work.

Nowadays, class is no longer produced in the hidden abode of pro-
duction, and then merely "displaced" onto the fragmented spaces of
the city.[113] Rather, we should speak of class in terms of uneven develop-

110   Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 223.
111   Smith, *Uneven Development*, 114.
112   Adna Ferrin Weber quoted in: Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of
Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 129.
113   Kian Tajbakhsh, *The Promise of the City: Space, Identity, and Politics in*

ment, precisely because class antagonisms have been spatialized (but not "displaced") on both global and urban scales. Class, therefore, is not only "the process of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labor,"[114] but also a relation in space as well as in time. It follows that the way inequality is perpetuated nowadays is far more complex than it was in the age of Engelsian Manchester. In City, Class and Power, Manuel Castells once advocated for a "new type of Marxism, a Marxism rooted in the theory of class struggle rather than in the logic of capital, a Marxism which is more concerned with historical relevance than with formal coherence, a Marxism more open to its own transformation than to the doctrinal faithfulness to the 'sacred texts.'"[115] Like many others, he soon abjured this project, and himself "even more thoroughly treated the linkage between capitalist accumulation and class struggle in a formalistic and reductionist way."[116] He turned to the notion of the "dual city" to scrutinize "new" forms of inequality.[117] My argument is that this is a blind lane. The putative duality of industrial Manchester, colonial Bombay, and contemporary New York City are fundamentally different. Reducing them to a common spatial metaphor is to actually obscure the social processes responsible for the proliferation of inequalities.[118] Uneven development conceived as "universal metaphysics" blunts its theoretical edge by relapsing into a narrative of a Manichean struggle between the rich and the poor.[119] Notions such as dual city or dual society, by reifying what is a historically-produced relation into a quasi-sociological entity, cannot be more than a metaphor. And it is precisely beyond the language of spatial metaphors that we need to move.[120]

Contemporary Social Thought (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 74-81.

114   Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff, "Re/Presenting Class," 18.

115   Manuel Castells, *City, Class, and Power* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 12.

116   Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 140.

117   Manuel Castells, "Information Technology, the Restructuring of Capital-Labor Relationships, and the Rise of the Dual City," in *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*, ed. Ida Susser (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2002), 285-313.

118   Bodnar, "Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames," 19, 17.

119   Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1991), 98.

120   Neil Smith and Cindi Katz, "Grounding Metaphor: towards a spatialized politics," in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, eds. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 67-83.

From class to the urban revolution

If it is true, as Lefebvre maintained, that the industrial revolution was all but a minor prelude to a more formidable one, the urban revolution[121], then it follows that the task of combating increasing polarization can be achieved only through urban-based contentious politics. In a devastating review of a quintessentially Rousseauian, to wit, anti-urban, Planet of Slums, Tom Angotti argued that Mike Davis' apocalyptic clarion is "an expression of moralistic outrage that one would expect from a Westerner who discovered for the first time that the conditions of most people living in cities around the world are much worse than in Los Angeles and Amsterdam." Further, Davis' "dualistic analysis oversimplifies the complex urban world," and takes us a step back in forging "the new geography of centrality and marginality."[122] The dual city metaphor underlines most of the book, and especially the chapter titled "Haussmann in the Tropics," where he describes how in Nairobi, Dhaka, Bombay, Delhi, and other Third World metropoles, the vast majority of urbanites inhabit "slums of ant-hill density, while the wealthy enjoy their gardens and open spaces."[123] Financialization in the West, and urban explosion in the Third World were accompanied by the greatest industrial revolution in world history. "The urban," as Lefebvre insisted, "does not eliminate industrial contradictions,"[124] only the relation between the two constantly evolves. The Chinese economic takeoff has been fuelled, for example, by exacerbating the rural-urban dichotomy, and not eradicating it.[125] Indeed, as Neil Smith put it "global urbanism is a highly contradictory process: […] gentrification centralizes the city; suburbanization decentralizes it; rural-urban migration [sustains industrialization and] recentralizes the metropolis: all of this calls out for a scaled analysis of uneven urban development in a global world."[126]

Just as our political culture and institutions gradually accommodated to the Industrial Revolution, today they are unsuited for meeting

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121   Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 139.

122   Tom Angotti, "Apocalyptic anti-urbanism: Mike Davis and his planet of slums.," *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (December 2006): 962.

123   Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 95.

124   Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 167.

125   Joel Andreas, "Changing Colours in China," *New Left Review* 54 (2008): 129.

126   Neil Smith, "Afterword to the Third Edition," in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 263-264.

By revisiting Engels' "sacred text," I hoped precisely to excavate portents of the new in the lineaments of the old and to stimulate our stunted imagination to envision a better, more democratic and just future.

the challenges mounted by the Urban Revolution that, if Lefebvre was right, is still under way. Hence, Mike Davis' inventory of ills found in urban infernos – painted with a truly Dickensian brush – continues an old tradition of anti-urban indignation. "There is nothing in the catalogue of Victorian misery, as narrated by Dickens, Zola or Gorky, that doesn't exist somewhere in the Third World city today," writes Davis. "Primitive forms of exploitation," he stresses, "have been given new life by postmodern globalization."[127] If so, then as Angotti insisted, we ought to revisit Engels and not Dickens for understanding contemporary marginality. Except for describing urban decay, Engels also "launched a scathing critique of the urban reformers whose moral outrage led to the totally ineffective solutions"[128] that merely shifted the problem around without ever solving it. Restricting critique to scaremongering only attests that "our stunted imaginations have largely lost the ability to think what a society other than capitalism" might look like. "It is time," calls Neil Smith, "to think about revolution again."[129] Indeed. By revisiting Engels' "sacred text," I hoped precisely to excavate portents of the new in the lineaments of the old and to stimulate our stunted imagination to envision a better, more democratic and just future.

The retreat from class, and the embrace of more "tangible" subjectivities such as race, ethnicity or gender, marks an important regress as far as such emancipatory politics are concerned. It is one of the greatest illusions of contemporary urban life that community-based politics (no matter if in favor of inclusion or exclusion) can mitigate the "atomizing" quality of the modern city and political disenfranchisement of its residents. On the contrary, as Sennett put it, "when people today seek to have a full and open emotional relations with each other, they succeed only in wounding each other." As a result, community-oriented "acts of fantasy" only reinforce the real urban isolation. Furthermore, "the more a fantasized [collective] personality dominates the life of a group, the less can that group act to advance its collective interest."[130] This is how class does not become an object of political contention, and holds itself uninjured.

As Gáspár Miklós Tamás has pointed out, most of our political efforts are directed at the struggle to abolish forms of inequality that

127   Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 186.

128   Tom Angotti, "Apocalyptic anti-urbanism: Mike Davis and his planet of slums.," *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (December 2006): 966, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2006.00705.x.

129   Neil Smith, "Another revolution is possible: Foucault, ethics, and politics," *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* 25, no. 2 (April 2007): 191.

130   Ibid., 223, see also: 298-300.

are pre-modern: racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, ageism, and so forth. Likewise, what he described as "Rousseauian socialism" has aimed at combating social exclusion, privilege of birth, discrimination, relations of obedience and deference that are not the hallmarks of capitalism but of the persisting "old regime."[131] "Socialism as a political move-ment," wrote Tamás, "was the tool of capitalist modernization not only in the East, but also in Central and Western Europe; the bourgeoisie itself did, historically speaking, very little by way of creating, or even fighting for, modern capitalist society."[132] Wherever socialist revolu-tions broke out, they did so in territories subservient from the point of view of class, where pre-capitalist forms of inequality loomed large. In 1917, Russia was a feudal and not a capitalist society. It was also predominantly rural and not urban. The very same applies to countries that became socialist after 1945. Only "direct (coercive) social domina-tion was ever overturned by popular revolt."[133] Dissolution of the dual industrial city, and the emergence of "capitalism without a proletariat," or in fact without the working-classes in Balibar's sense, as well as with-out the bourgeoisie the way "we know them historically, as two distinct cultural, ideological and status groups,"[134] is not a hindrance but an opportunity. Class rule has become ever more impersonal and abstract than in the days of Engels. Nowadays, the capitalist class is "anony-mous and open, and therefore impossible to hate, to storm, to chase away." Yet, this very fact "makes the historical work of destroying capi-talism less parochial, it makes it indeed as universal, as abstract and as powerful as capitalism itself."[135]

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131   Gáspár Miklós Tamás, "Telling the Truth about Class," ed. Leo Pantich and Colin Leys, *Socialist Register* (2006): 230.

132   Ibid., 238-239.

133   Ibid., 253.

134   Ibid., 254.

135   Ibid., 255.

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Abstrakt: Prezentowany artykuł dowodzi, że jednym z największych wyzwań stojących przed teorią miejską jest wyjaśnienie jednoczesnego rozwoju „planetarnej urbanizacji" w Globalnym Południu oraz największej w historii świata rewolucji przemysłowej. Aby dowieść, że miasta przemysłowe są wciąż istotne dla teorii miejskiej, wracam do czasów wiktoriańskiego Manchesteru i klasycznej relacji Engelsa na jego temat. Twierdzę, że Engels był pionierem tego, co określam mianem „antropologii bezosobowego", a poczynione przez niego „odkrycie" klasy stało się kamieniem węgielnym teorii marksistowskiej. Teoretyczna innowacja Engelsa nie została jednak wystarczająco doceniona, a dobrym tego przykładem jest zaskakująca kariera idei „miasta dualnego". Twierdzę, że popularność tego pojęcia wynika z tego w jaki sposób umożliwia ono zlepienie „nierównomiernego rozwoju", „klasy" oraz "miasta" w chwytliwą metaforę. Pomimo tego, że Engels pokazał sposób, w

jaki te pojęcia są ze sobą splatają, to na poziomie teoretycznym zakreślił wyraźne granice między nimi. Uczynił tak, ponieważ służyły mu one nie tylko do opisu tego jak działa kapitalizm, lecz również miały stać się potencjalnymi narzędziami do przeprowadzania politycznej zmiany.

Słowa kluczowe: nierównomierny rozwój, klasa, Manchester, Engels, teoria miejska