Urban Theory With an Outside

Since the supplement comes from the outside, it also introduces the dangerous element of the incalculable, because the supplement is not calculated by the rules of that which it supplements.

(Gayatri Spivak 2014, p.12)

I write this article not as an urbanist. That is to say, working broadly across Human Geography, cultural studies and postcolonial theory, I have never really considered myself an Urban Studies scholar. In fact, Urban Studies scares me insofar as I have come to realize that whatever else Urban Studies is, it is a field of cultural and intellectual production; it is a sub-discipline with its own 'international geography'[1] comprising a vast terrain, a network involving people, institutions, book series, specialist journals, conferences, conference sessions, workshops, canonical and counter-canonical thinkers, degree programs, and not least debates. It is also axiomatic, and I hope relatively uncontroversial, to stress that the debates and knowledge produced within Urban Studies focus broadly on cities, the urban, and urbanization processes. These investigations take myriad forms, some more critical than others, but what I want to stress right at the outset of this paper is that I am acutely aware that I approach these debates from the outside.

It is from this position outside Urban Studies that I want to begin by suggesting one key point: Urban Studies' own field of intellectual production cannot help but reify the knowledge objects constituent of its own 'identity', which to reiterate comprise the city, the urban, and urbanization. After all, what would Urban Studies be without these anchors? There is nothing particularly ground-breaking

about this observation, but it does have implications for the claim that, as Neil Brenner has boldly put it, planetary urbanization can be described as 'Urban Theory Without an Outside' (2014, p.14). This, it seems to me, is a claim that pushes urbanization's explanatory capacity across the extent of planetary space (and beyond).

My argument in this paper is not that planetary space should not be subject to this urban analytical gaze. Nor is it to dispute the productive claim that, following Lefebvre, urbanization is a process of capitalist agglomeration that has become the "basic parameter for *planetary* social and environmental relations" (ibid., p.18). Instead, I want to suggest that the planet itself cannot simply be reduced to this urban analytical gaze, and that if it is, it is done so at some analytical cost. As such, I want to suggest in this paper that planetary urbanization might productively dialogue with its own adjectival prefix: the motif of the planet, and the ways this has been mobilized beyond Urban Studies. Work at the intersections of comparative literature and area studies has mobilized 'the planet' as a motif to destabilize, decentre and pluralize universal claims (not reject them). In contradistinction to the globe, given to us by the standardizing ambition and imperial effects of globalization, the planet instead stands for difference, unknowability, it *must* remain "in the species of alterity" (Spivak 2003, p.72). To bring this figuration of the planetary motif, or as Spivak has called it 'planetarity', into Urban Studies means that urbanization might be considered one amongst many processes involved in socio-spatial dialectics, some known and some not (yet) known to urban theorists. In other words, if the planet can stand as a motif for difference then it should propel Urban Theory toward an acknowledgement of, and dialogue with, its own outside. Likewise, *if* 'the city' is just one result of urbanization processes (as Brenner, Gandy, Harvey, Merrifield, and other planetary urbanists remind us in Brenner's 2014 anthology *Implosion/Explosion*), then it does

not necessarily follow that urbanization is *the only* socio-spatial process that gives 'cities in a world of cities' their heterogenous characteristics (cf. Robinson 2011). In this sense, this paper argues that Urban Theory *must* look to its outside lest urbanization – that Manichean concept-metaphor to which an 'Urban Theory with No Outside' lays claim – dissimulates *other* socio-spatial formations at large in multiple modernities. It is my argument that it is from this outside that productive supplements to planetary urbanization's theoretical logic can usefully be mobilized.

Urban Studies: an Ideological Edifice?

Part of my claim in this paper is that Urban Studies is a distinctly ideological edifice, but this is a claim that can be leveled at any subdisciplinary or disciplinary formation insofar as it implicates the languages, concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and systems of representation whose routine deployment unwittingly stabilizes particular forms of power with that particular formation (Hall 1996, p.26; Jazeel 2014, pps.88-89). Indeed, the planetary urbanization project itself has already delineated the ideological workings and effects of Urban Studies, and to good effect. Building on Lefebvre's (2003 [1970], p.1) foundational declaration that "Society has been completely urbanized", David Wachsmuth (2014), for example, has recently stressed how more than a material entity, the city can usefully be conceived as a concept, a thought object rather than a real object. In this analysis, 'the city' is usefully positioned as a future oriented spatial representation that exceeds urbanization processes. Rather than just a category of analysis, it is also a category of practice that can precipitate its own emergence.

Angelo and Wachsmuth (2014) develop this point to reflect on how the very *process* of analyzing 'the city' is precisely the kind of practice that reproduces it as a

geographical imagination. They make this argument in the context of Urban Political Ecology's identitarian distinction from Political Ecology, where, as they stress "not only has political ecology itself continued to stubbornly exclude the city from its analysis, but the bulk of empirical research in urban political ecology has been tethered exclusively to the city" (ibid., p.377). This, they rightly point out, results in a kind of "methodological cityism", a term they use to refer to the "analytical privileging, isolation and perhaps naturalization of the city in studies of urban processes where the non-city may also be significant" (ibid.).

Two things strike me about this exciting intellectual maneuver. First, their work brings to Marxist analyses of urbanization processes a useful cultural theoretical perspective that considers 'the city' to operate as a text as much as it as a political economic reality. Indeed, through readings not dissimilar to a kind of literary theoretical critique this kind of generative engagement with the text of Urban Theory highlights the (re)production of precisely those concepts that anchor Urban Studies and constitute it *as* a subdiscipline and community. I would argue in fact that even postcolonially and poststructurally inflected variants of Urban Studies have difficulty escaping the ways that city-ness reconstellates myriad spatial forms *as* cities through the very representational qualities of its own textual production. For example, Colin McFarlane (2010, p.725; also see Robinson 2006) has persuasively argued how "[w]hen *we* make a claim about 'the city', or about a particular form of urbanism, the claim is implicitly – and crucially, inevitably – to some extent a comparative claim, because *our* claims and arguments are always set against other kinds of urban possibilities or imaginaries" (my emphasis). McFarlane's attempt to pluralize the city-form for the urban theoretical imagination is suggestive, but must be read in the context in which it is made: in the pages of the *International Journal of Urban and*

Regional Research where he uses the collective personal noun 'we', and pro-noun 'our', to address his implied readership, a community of urban studies scholars. This has the inevitable effect of reinstantiating 'the city' at the centre of McFarlane's methodologically provocative treatise, of ultimately reconstituting the abstract taxonomical object that he so invitingly threatens to reconfigure. This, in fact, is a (postcolonial) tension at the very heart of Urban Studies: "how to reconcile the explosion of the city form with the tenacity of the concept itself?" (Wachsmuth 2013, p.354). Indeed, as I have suggested, this is not a problem confined to urban studies; even postcolonial theory must struggle against its own reification as a theory object (see Martinez-San Miguel 2009). For example, Gayatri Spivak signals precisely this kind of struggle against the ideological reification of postcolonial theory *as* postcolonial theory in the very title of her 1999 book, *Against Postcolonial Reason: towards a history of the vanishing present* (Spivak 1999).

However, the second thing that strikes me about Angelo and Wachsmuth's (2014) critique of methodological city-ism is that it stops short of subjecting 'urbanization' to the same kind of productive and introspective critique. In other words, if we can observe methodological cityism at work, why can we not point to methodological urbanization as well? In this sense, their critique of cityism leaves us in something of a dissatisfying limbo: Urban Studies can admit 'the city' to be a production, a category of practice, only to accept that urbanization is always and incontrovertibly its only underlying motor. This is a move that may well denaturalize 'the city', but at once naturalizes urbanization. Christian Schmidt's (2014a) useful outline of the thesis of complete urbanization is quite clear on the Manichean ambition held out for the concept of urbanization itself. Paraphrasing Lefebvre, Schmidt states how complete urbanization asserts that the whole world is, with few

exceptions now, caught up in processes of urbanization, and importantly that "*[t]oday's reality* can no longer be grasped using the categories 'city' and 'country,' but must be analyzed using the concepts of urban society" (ibid., p.69, my emphasis). In this formulation, urbanization (or 'the urban society') is pinpointed as that process which accounts for the entirety of "today's reality", an admission that comes clean about the universal ambition attached to urbanization. Given Lefebvre equates urbanization with capitalist agglomeration in the twenty-first century, this is of course an explicitly historical materialist expression, but one that allows little room for those dimensions of "today's reality" that the urbanization lens falls short of explaining.

Elsewhere, Schmidt (2014b) proceeds to think Lefebvre's urban revolution thesis through Lefebvre's formulations about the production of space. He does so in an astute reading of the Swiss movie *Reisender Kreiger* [Eng. *Travelling Warrior*] (d.Schocher 1981), which Schmidt argues is a quintessentially 'urban' movie in Lefebvrian terms insofar as the main protagonist, a travelling perfume vendor who moves through a collection of Swiss landscapes on his travels up and down the country, becomes an agent of urbanization in and through urban and rural space. Perfume is the unlikely tool of this complete urbanization inasmuch as it is the commercial imperative that drives the protagonist forward and through the extent of Swiss space. The relevance of Lefebvre's production of space thesis is in the way Schmidt shows spatial practice, the representation of space, and the lived experience of space to entwine in the production of this *distinctly urban narrative* (in Lefebvrian terms). This is a useful reading of *Reisender Kreiger*, but one that takes urbanization as an apriori departure point for its analysis. In other words, this is an *urban* reading of a movie about urbanization. It thus at once naturalizes urbanization as spatial practice, representation of space, and lived experience of space. My argument here is

not that Schmidt's reading is in any sense invalid. Rather, it is that to read complete urbanization from a film-text that, Schmidt suggests, offers a distinctly urban narrative is an example of the kind of methodological urbanization that leaves little alternative interpretative space.

To be clear, despite the debates that have transpired in recent years within Urban Studies, my argument here is not so much that planetary urbanization is itself ideological. It is that planetary urbanization is part of the broader ideological edifice that is Urban Studies. Louis Althusser's (1978 [2008], p.49) writings on ideology are careful to stress that what seems to take place outside ideology, in reality takes place in it. In this sense, the performative force of the claim that planetary urbanization is tantamount to an 'urban theory with no outside' is precisely the claim it makes on and within Urban Studies. That is to say, this is a claim that seems to announce there can no longer be any critical analytical work that does not take urbanization into account because, as Schmidt (2014a, p.69) tells us, "today's reality… must be analyzed using the concepts of urban society." But let us be clear, this is a claim made by urban theorists, *to and in* Urban Studies.

If Althusser's reading of ideology was a way of understanding the reproduction of the relations of production, then we should also recall that one of Althusser's prior questions was how one delimits the where of the reproduction of the relations of production, or as he put it "what is a society?" (1978 [2008], p.8). In this sense, ideology always has both historical and materialist premises; that is, mental frameworks and systems of representation emerge from, reflect, and signify the material conditions and circumstances in which they emerge (Hall 1996, p.29). But this is a process that is always entirely within the social, thus for Althusser "labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a

reproduction of its submission to the established order" (ibid., p.6). My point here is that like any sub-disciplinary or disciplinary field, Urban Studies has its labour power, training programs that reproduce skills, and an established order. To claim, therefore, that planetary urbanization is a kind of urban theory with no outside is a claim on and to this established order, an inflationary gesture made *within* the ideological carapace of Urban Studies. 'There is nothing beyond urbanization' is the claim made to Urban Studies. But there is most definitely an outside to Urban Studies. It is an intellectual space that I (strategically) claim in this paper. My point in doing so is to not deny the importance of critically engaging urbanization processes and their effects. Rather, it is to ask what *other* processes does the naturalization of urbanization deflect our critical analytical gaze from? In other words, what planetary processes beyond and before urbanization are at work in the socio-spatial dialectic? And analytically, what would it mean to put urbanization in interdiction as we seek to understand socio-spatial dialectics in modernity at large, and even as we seek to read the city and putatively urban spaces? Paraphrasing a recent intervention by Ananya Roy (2015), 'why must critical urban theory necessarily be urban?'

To a View From the Outside

Roy's (2016, p.820-21) question of critical urban theory is posed, as she puts it, "'from the standpoint of an absence'"; a methodology she adopts in order to consider the "not-urban… as a necessary supplement to the urbanization of everything."[2] Likewise, in this section I want to move towards planetary urbanization's theoretical outside; to the site of its supplements. In particular, I move to the terrain of cultural theory and postcolonial studies, and what I want to stress is that from these positions the story that planetary urbanization tells bears family resemblances to much other

critical theoretical work with very different historical lineages and affinities, including cultural studies, imperial history, and relational spatial theory. For example, as Kanishka Goonewardena's (2014) refreshing contribution to Brenner's *Implosion/Explosion* anthology reminds us, Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* (1973) is a book that deserves to be read alongside Lefebvre's *The Urban Revolution*. Williams' now classic critique of the deeply ingrained mythology that country and city are separate is both cultural for its focus on English literature, and Marxist for its attempt to bridge an imaginative "separation between the processes of rural exploitation, which have been, in effect, dissolved into a landscape, and the register of that exploitation, in the law courts, the money markets, the political power and conspicuous expenditure of the city" (1973, p.61). If this seems to anticipate elements of planetary urbanization, it is also noticeable that, as Goonewardena (2014, p.220) writes, "Williams, partly because of his professional identification as a literary critic remains relatively unknown to or undervalued by many students of urban theory". In other words, *The Country and The City* is not an Urban Theory text, nor one that urban theorists might typically 'go to'. As such, it is not a text about 'the city' or 'urbanization' processes per se, but about exploitation and geographical imaginations gleaned through literary sources. Indeed, the value of Goonewardena's insistence on putting *The Urban Revolution* and *The Country and The City* in conversation with one another is that it highlights a productive line of confluence between Urban Studies and (Marxist) Cultural Studies. Thinking between the two focuses a critical analytical gaze on both the urbanization and cultural processes of Lefebvre and Williams respectively; these both contribute to a shift in planetary urbanization's analytical gaze to "'the production of space' not limited to *either* the city *or* the country" (Goonewardena 2014, p.229).

But Williams' *The Country and The City* seems to anticipate another of Urban Theory's 'outsides' in its observation that the 'city and country' model is an analytic that also holds for the system of British Imperialism, which saw the systematic exploitation of colonial space in the service of both the country house and imperial metropolis (1973, pps.334-336). This is a theme taken up by imperial historians and postcolonial geographers who, under the rubric of 'imperial cities', demonstrate how "European cities have been shaped by the global history of imperialism in ways that matter even in a post-imperial age" (see Driver and Gilbert 2003, p.3). Though the project does not acknowledge a debt to Williams, this historical research is attuned to the ways that experiences of empire and urbanism intersect (also see Schneer 2001). Indeed, Driver and Gilbert's important anthology *Imperial Cities* (2003) draws attention to manifestations of Empire in cities like London, from the material and intellectual marks of architecture, science and cultures of collecting in the mid-nineteenth century construction of 'Albertopolis' in South Kensington (see Smith 2003), through to more ephemeral Victorian practices of suburban gardening and planting 'exotics' (Preston 2003). If these were processes and practices that betray an imperial geography of overlapping histories and intertwined territories, they also index urban and social registers of exploitation and plunder that were Empire's stock-in-trade (see Jazeel 2012). In this sense, the political implications of the imperial city thesis stretch way beyond Lefebvre's (2003 [1970], pps.77-112) mobilization of the 'Global' ('level G') scale in his understanding of the city. The imperial cities scholarship feeds into broader revisionist kinds of historical, geographical and sociological work that have, for example, galvanized an activist student movement to suggest #RhodesMustFall; forms of activism that have arguably brought postcolonial debate firmly into the mainstream.

If an intellectual debt to Williams is more implicit than explicit in the imperial cities project, then the theoretical influence of Doreen Massey (1994, 2005) is more clearly evidenced. Indeed, her insistence on the ontological relationality of place forms a key optic of Driver and Gilbert's thesis. Massey's post-Heideggerian reconfiguration of place (and space) as constellatory not enclosed, dynamic not static, flow not pause, provides a necessary vehicle for the mobilization of the imperial city. Indeed, her progressive and relational spatial thinking can be traced back through her connections to British Cultural Studies, particularly Stuart Hall, and its commitment to outward facing and relational understandings of not just space (see Massey 2000), but also identity, education, popular culture, social policy and so on (Gilroy et al 2000). (Perhaps here we can also trace the mark and influence of Raymond Williams.) However, Massey's long-standing insistence on the relationality of space is notably absent from planetary urbanization's founding insistence on an "an emergent process of extended urbanization… producing a variegated urban fabric which, rather than being simply concentrated within nodal points or confined within bounded regions, is now woven unevenly and yet ever more densely across vast stretches of the entire world" (Brenner 2013a, p.90; also see Brenner and Schmidt 2013; Brenner 2014; Schmidt 2014a). That Massey does not feature in the emergence of this paradigm is surprising but perhaps understandable given she worked hard to not be categorized as an urban theorist *per se*. In other words, in spite of publications like *World City* (2007) – a book in which Massey teases out in quite visionary ways London's relational (or planetary) geographies to develop a spatially revivified conception of political responsibility – hers might well be considered a view from outside Urban Studies.

There are doubtless many more views from the outside that one could collate here, but my intention is not to provide an exhaustive list of writers with whom planetary urbanization *must* somehow engage. Doing so, as Natalie Oswin (forthcoming, pps.5-6) warns in her contribution to this special issue, is to inflate planetary urbanization's 'analytical epicenter' in ways that would do epistemological and political violence to those views from the outside. In other words, like Oswin my aim is not to bring more into the ideological edifice of Urban Studies. That said, neither is it my intention to police boundaries in the intellectual division of labour. It is instead to suggest how familiar various strands of the planetary urbanization thesis are from the perspective of someone positioned on the outside. Importantly, however, it is the slightly different inflection of these approaches – influenced as they are by cultural, historical and spatial theory – that offer perspectives beyond the Manichean reach of 'complete urbanization'. They variously reveal the importance of culture and its textualities, of Empire and its world-forming residues, and of ontological relationality in bringing into representation what goes on in cities or in and through planetary space. They show the *difference* it can make to think from urban theory's outside. In other words, all this works sits at an important tangent to Urban Studies, being more routinely taught and debated in fields like cultural studies and cultural geography, historical geography and imperial history, and human and social geography. Urban Studies, and particularly planetary urbanization, might usefully look to these outsides to supplement and interject its narrative about the complete urbanization of society. The following section, by way of an example, demonstrates just how and why this kind of supplemental analysis is imperative.

Dissimulated geographies (in the city): the anti-colonial spatial politics of Colombo

If the intellectual labour of Urban Studies (re)produces and naturalizes concept-metaphors key to its identity, namely 'the city', 'the urban', and of course 'urbanization', then in doing so it creates 'planes of equivalence' (Mufti 2016, p.11) to render legible *as* cities, *as* the urban, and *as* urbanization, what is in fact a vast and heterogenous range of socio-spatial formations and process. As long as the nature of these socio-spatial processes remains obscured by the hegemony of a critical gaze within Urban Studies that intertwines the city, the urban and urbanization, but has trouble seeing beyond that holy trinity, we might in fact refer to these socio-spatial formations and processes as 'subaltern geographies' insofar as their contextual nature and workings are dissimulated (see Jazeel 2014). As I have shown, however, urban theory does have multiple outsides, all with long histories of engaging urban topologies, relationalities and exploitations. What I want to draw attention to in this last section then are socio-spatial processes beyond and before the city, the urban and urbanization. That is to say, processes that have their own generative dynamics that cannot be collapsed into the capacious logic of urbanization; socio-spatial processes that are made less discernible precisely because of the expansive claims made in the name of the planetary urbanization debate within Urban Studies.

To do this, I turn now to a city I have come to know not through Urban Studies, but through a very different kind of disciplinary lens: South Asian Studies. The city is Colombo, the former capital of Sri Lanka, and a city whose very existence can be traced through its colonial history. As Nihal Perera (1998) has shown, following Colombo's establishment as a major port city by the Portuguese in the 15th and 16th centuries, its strategic, economic and administrative importance grew gradually, until around the 1870s and 80s when the British established Colombo as the colony's major administrative centre. It was from Colombo that they governed

across island space, and at the same time the city also became a major node in an imperial network of trade as well as a major travel port in British South Asia. Its position thus was cemented within an imperial urban system and an interlaced network of mercantile exploitation across Empire. Accordingly, in the 1870s there was a significant growth in the number of colonial institutions and building projects in the city (hotels, council and administration buildings, museums, etc.), but also in infrastructure projects that centrifugally connected Colombo to the whole island in ways that effectively created a unified island space economically and materially, if not politically: roads, railways, telegraph lines, colonial rest houses, up-station recreational facilities, and all that was required to bring the profits of the island colony's plantation economy efficiently back to the colonial capital, Colombo, and into the global (read imperial) economy.

There is no doubt that these mid to late nineteenth century ostensibly urban developments signaled a kind of implosion/explosion process through which the colonial state was effectively precipitated. In other words, if urbanization is indeed capitalist agglomeration, then Colombo was an emergent city form that drove urbanization processes across Ceylonese and ultimately imperial space. Furthermore, following economic liberalization in 1977 these patterns have continued well into the present (see Nagaraj 2016). The uneven balance of national political, professional and creative expertise in Colombo today is a result of colonial and mercantile history as well as late twentieth century neoliberal urban development, and to this extent planetary urbanization gives us a valuable lens through which to read the city's continued extractive relationship with its constitutive outside. As Vijay Nagaraj (2016, p.430, emphasis in original) has recently put it, "Colombo's position as *city of capital* has been more secure than its status as *capital city*".

However, in the colonial and postcolonial city there is always a far more complex entwinement of socio-spatial processes at work. For example, of mid-nineteenth century Calcutta, Ranajit Guha has suggested how the colonial city should be read not as a territorially divided space, but instead a city split in time between the rhythms of native society on the one hand, and on the other the time of colonial administration and agglomeration (also see Mufti 2016, p.131). He shows how the colonial temporality of rapid economic development, of work and productive labour, was persistently braided with the disjunctive perforations of "indigenous time prone to slowing down, interrupting, and otherwise hindering the smooth and effective flow of a master time" (Guha 2008, p.330). The value of Guha's reading of Calcutta's historical urban geography is in his reminder that the city was and continues to be comprised by supplementary narratives and socio-spatial logics that, in the light of the valuable methodological lessons we have learnt from Subaltern Studies (see Jazeel 2014), we must work hard to reveal in their manifold singularities.

Returning to Colombo, a more historically attuned analysis of the city's post-independent trajectory reveals spatial processes that provide an important corrective, or supplement, to the smooth, seamless and universal narrative of urbanization outlined above. Specifically, it reveals a set of anti-colonial national spatial practices that reject the so-called complete urbanization of society, both ideologically and politically. Ceylon's first social democratic and nationalist government came to power in 1956 precipitating a post-independent period of non-revolutionary socialism and anti-colonial nationalism. S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike – the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) candidate – swept to electoral victory on a platform of left, populist Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, fuelled by explicitly anti-Christian, anti-Tamil, and anti-Plantation Tamil positions. This was the beginning of a sustained and lasting period

of Sinhala-Buddhist political and cultural hegemony that has led to conditions of insecurity for ethnic minority populations in post-independent Sri Lanka; conditions that precipitated Sri Lanka's bloody civil war, and arguably continue today.

One of the first things the SLFP government did was to decentralize the national budget, allowing district authorities to take charge of regional development. They embarked upon a series of small-scale building and development projects in (mostly Sinhala) villages, and new rural colonization projects that involved back-to-the-land agricultural development schemes aiming at national self-sufficiency. If the colonial administration had sought in various ways to civilize the regressive and wild nature of Ceylon's arid backlands and untamed jungles (see Jazeel 2013, pps.27-46), then post-independent agriculture and patriotism schemes sought to saturate these peripheral spaces with an indigenous (read Sinhala) body politic. Crucial to this anti-colonial re-signification of Ceylonese space, was the State's attempt to simultaneously re-signify Colombo, the colonial city, which anti-colonial nationalists hoped would become less and less important economically and symbolically in this new proto-national schema of things. If a protectionist and socialist national economic policy opened significantly with the election of the UNP government in 1977, anti-colonial Sinhala nationalist ferment only heightened. And it was with some symbolic and rhetorical verve then that President J. R. Jaywardene continued this national process of turning away from the (colonial) city and towards the village, the country, and the historical landscapes that featured in Ceylon's Pali Vamsa texts. These were the sites, spaces and territories in which many believed a reservoir of pre-colonial and uncorrupted Sinhala essence and temporality could be found, and hence through which appropriately anti-colonial teleologies could be forged. The turn away from the city was therefore also an attempt to step outside colonial time.

This reached its apotheosis in 1982 when the UNP government relocated parliament from Colombo to a brand new building in the satellite district of Rajagirya, in a town called Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte, just 10km south of Colombo. Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte became the new legislative capital city of Sri Lanka, which is to stress that since 1982 Colombo has not technically been the country's capital city; a point of far more symbolic than practical relevance given the proximity of Colombo to Kotte (the latter is effectively now a suburb of the former) and post-1977 attempts at attracting foreign capital directly into Colombo (see Nagaraj 2016, p.431). But Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte is a historic Sinhalese metropolitan centre, where a Sinhala King, Parakramabahu VI, attempted to establish rule over the whole island in the mid 15th century. As such, the choice to relocate parliament here was a deeply symbolic articulation of anti-colonial Sinhala nationalism, as was the manner by which the incumbent President did this, styling himself as a latter day Sinhala hero king (Perera 1998, pps.177-181).

A closer look at the parliament building itself is also instructive (see Figure 1), for the State commissioned Sri Lanka's most celebrated tropical modern architect, Geoffrey Bawa, for the task of designing it. Bawa was one of an emergent clutch of Ceylonese modernists who were trained in London, mostly at the Architectural Association in the 1940s and 50s, and influenced by the critical regionalist style and architectural discourse taught by Otto Koenigsberger, Jane Drew and Kenneth Frampton (Lefaivre and Tzonis 2001; Jazeel 2017). Their architectural work in Ceylon variously translated International and European Modernism, as well as classical influences, into what these architects thought would be an adequate expression of a quintessentially Sri Lankan modernism. In this sense, they can be considered alongside Ceylon's more famous group of literary and artistic modernists,

'The '43 Group' (see Weerasinghe 2005). Like members of the '43 Group, Bawa, as well as architects like Minnette de Silva and Valentine Gunesekera (see Pieris 2007), drew on the post-colony's own intellectual, cultural and historical resources as they worked to fashion a native modernism of sorts that, whilst avowedly internationalist, could provide a corrective to colonialism's violent interruptions of native time (see Jazeel 2013, 2017; Pieris 2007).

[Figure 1 about here]

Bawa's parliament building is a striking and sprawling modernist monument to the post-colonial nation-state (Figure 1). In the context of Sri Lanka's post-independent ethnic politics, the building's iconography has been read both sympathetically (see Perera 1998, p.261; Vale 1992), and more critically (Jazeel 2013; Goonewardena 2004). But what is more important for my argument here is its litany of references to non-metropolitan times and spaces, all of which consciously look away from the city and instead reference the (Sinhala) village, a pre-colonial and agrarian landscape geography, and the former interior kingdom of Kandy. For example, the main building's double pitched roof is a direct reference to the distinct roof style characteristic of Kandyan architecture, the four pillared pavilions surrounding the main building and horizontal concrete pillars that adorn the four sides of the main structure recall the audience or assembly halls across Kandyan towns and villages which historically have provided shelter and rest to travellers and pilgrims. The complex itself is built on reclaimed land set amidst a lake, and there is an extensive network of stepped, ornamental terracing across the grounds making strong visual connections to Sri Lanka's two millennia of tank (reservoir) building and the

agrarian paddy cultivation on which the prosperity of pre-colonial Sinhala kingdoms was built (Jazeel 2013, p.119).

Bawa was partly responsible for ushering in a new style of domestic tropical modern architecture that continues to appeal to Sri Lanka's dominant, wealthy and cosmopolitan upper middle class (see Robson 2002). This class still regularly commissions tropical modern architects to design their new urban homes or *wallawas* (country houses/estates). Such projects, including many urban homes located in Colombo's suburbs, are often also peppered with referents to the wider Sri Lankan landscape. The use of vernacular and rural building materials is common, for example, as is the deployment of rural craft for feature work or interior decoration. Allegorically, the planetary urbanization lens may give us the tools to read the emergence of this tropical modern style as a process involving the (urban) agglomeration of rural style, labour, materials and craft. Indeed, this is both an accurate and valuable reading, but it is not the whole story. There is far more going on when we read these postcolonial architectural formations and their geographical imaginations in the context of the historical and anti-colonial urban geography of Colombo sketched above. What these processes index is a politics of style and modernism that works hard to produce spatialities that extend imaginatively out and into the space of independent nation-state, particularly and especially the rural locations in which a national essence is thought to reside. The village and its association with an imagined geography of pre-colonial purity is key here. In fact, it is not uncommon for tropical modern architecture to evoke combinations of three key elements of the (Sinhala) village that Sinhala nationalists were articulating through populist post-independent rhetoric: the *wewa* (lake/reservoir), *dagoba* (Buddhist temple), and *kumbhara* (paddy fields) (Jazeel 2013, p.113).

In tracing this recent history of Colombo's relationship with Ceylonese/Sri Lankan space, and of architectural productions of a rural imagination that seek to sidestep colonial time, my point has simply been to stress a deeply anti-urban, anti-colonial geographical aesthetic at work. What I mean to emphasize is how colonial time has ultimately been the temporality of urbanization in post-independent Ceylon, and a conscious turning away from the city, from urbanization, from the coloniality of Colombo's extractive relationship to the national polity, has been an anti-colonial spatial tactic. One that, as I have stressed elsewhere (Jazeel 2013), has had disastrous consequences in terms of the ethnicization of postcolonial Sri Lankan nationhood. This is not to suggest that Colombo is not still the nation-state's commercial powerhouse. It undoubtedly still is, which is a point that provides grist to the mill of planetary urbanization's optic and likewise means we should not choose to ignore its valuable analytical imperatives. However, it is only by holding planetary urbanization in interdiction – by which I mean acknowledging its actual existence whilst prohibiting entry into its conceptual terrain – that we are able to bring into representation these quite different socio-spatial processes. In other words, it is by holding planetary urbanization in interdiction that we are able to avoid the ideological effects of the kinds of methodological urbanization I have critiqued above.

The kinds of rural orientation to geographical imaginations *in* the city but not *of* urbanization that I have teased out seem to split asunder a facile rural-urban binary. In doing so, they provincialize the lenses of the city, the urban, and urbanization in the most productive of ways, enabling us to usefully work into their erasures, their blindspots. Instead, it is the work of colonial and postcolonial historical geography, and of reading the culture of architecture as text, that makes visible these socio-spatial

processes beyond urbanization. It is, in fact, a deeply contextual regional or area studies lens that lends acuity to the spatial narrative proffered here.

The post-independent story of Colombo is not unique here. Rather, I offer it simply as one example of a spatial history *of* the city that analytically exists outside some of Urban Studies' familiar debates, and outwith the planetary urbanization optic. It is worth adding that similar such work on other urban and city formations that seeks to push back against the totalizing tendencies of planetary urbanization is gaining traction; work that either exists in the folds or Urban Studies, or is positioned beyond it, in those putative outsides that I suggest planetary urbanization might make greater efforts to dialogue with. For example, Jamie Gillen's recent ethnographic study of geographical imaginations of rural-urban migrants in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, as well as forms of rural nostalgia in the city, reveals how rural imaginations not only give meaning to urban practices in Saigon, but also "how the countryside is strengthened and reinforced in the city rather than abandoned or forgotten" (2016, p.326). For many of his respondents, 'normal life' is to be found in the country, and the urban experience is but a stepping stone for rural return (ibid., p.334). Again, my point is not that Gillen's work disproves the planetary urbanization thesis, but by sidestepping a kind of methodological urbanization it draws our attention to important modes of resistance to urban society, and also to the ways that rural imaginations make the city over. Likewise, Claire Mercer's (2016) work on the suburbs in Dar es Salaam usefully develops the spatial trope of the 'postcolonial suburb' to signify the ways that the city's growth at its fringes is not just urban overspill, but instead redolent with a middle class who look to the rural and fashion suburban livelihoods with orientations to the country not the city. For many of these suburban residents, selfhood is bound to the rural, and the rural plays a central role in the social life of the

suburbs. What Mercer (ibid., p.20) deftly shows is how, contra planetary urbanization, these processes make more sense when seen in the context of "a long tradition of research in African Studies that demonstrates the continued significance of the rural for shaping contemporary urban African life". In this context, the value of Mercer's point is in the ways it should remind us of the importance of the view from outside Urban Studies.

<p style="text-align:center">∗ ∗ ∗</p>

As I have suggested in this paper, just as Angelo and Wachsmuth (2014) warn of a kind of "methodological cityness" in urban research, planetary urbanization's Manichean ambition runs the risk of a methodological urbanization that leaves little room to account for historical difference in the analysis of socio-spatial processes in modernity at large. Nonetheless, my aim in this paper has not been to in any way *disprove* the planetary urbanization thesis. It remains a valuable analytic lens to diagnose the spatial forms that capitalist agglomeration processes take today. Neither has my aim been to position myself in the nest of debates that have grown in recent years around the urban age/urban society, and urban studies/critical urban theory approaches. It has instead been simply to offer a perspective at a remove from these debates, and in doing so to remind that an outside does exist; Urban Studies does have an outside. It is from this outside that a usefully unsettling supplementary historical logic/analysis can emerge. The imperative of the supplement is important here (also see Roy 2016; Peake 2016), for it is precisely that which reminds any knowledge formation of the difference that it does not yet know. The supplement is that which points to blindspots, absences, that the supplemented never quite knew it had.

Returning therefore to the quote that comprises the epigraph of this paper, for Urban Studies the supplement is that which must remain "not calculated" (Spivak 2014, p.12) by its own rules; at least, it is that which must remain indifferent to urbanization *in order* to stretch our understandings of the socio-spatial processes at work in the production of cities in a world of difference. I have suggested that it is precisely the supplementary nature of those perspectives from the outside that stand to pluralize understandings of urban histories and modernities at large. For planetary urbanization to mean anything then, it must look towards not just its own outsides, but Urban Studies' own outsides too.

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Notes

[1] I am drawing here on Aamir Mufti's (2016, p.8) recent critical description of "world literature" as a similarly produced field of cultural production.

[2] Roy is paraphrasing Nancy Fraser's (1985) critique of Habermas in which she poses the question 'What's critical about critical theory?'