

Introduction: The spatial turn in social theory

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For years now, spatial analysis is no longer confined to disciplines that deal directly with the physical dimensions of social existence, such as geography, architecture and urban planning. Over the past half a century, space has infiltrated most of the social sciences and the humanities: sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, psychology and psychoanalysis, literary criticism, and legal studies. After historical analysis—following Hegel and Marx—has dominated these fields of knowledge since the nineteenth century, the time of space has arrived. As Foucault famously prophesized over 40 years ago:

The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world. The nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources in the second principle of thermodynamics. The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein (1986:22).

Foucault's prophesy turned out to be true. It was, perhaps, a self-fulfilling prophesy, since Foucault became extremely influential in so many domains of thought. His profound interest in the architecture, the spatial organization, the bodily practices and the material configurations of human interaction and social organization was not only illuminating in itself, but also inspired scholars in a wide range of disciplines to turn their gaze to the spatial dimension of human activities. But as the articles in this volume show, Foucault is but one among many thinkers—such as Henri Lefebvre (1991), Gaston Bachelard (1964), Michel de Certeau (1984), David Harvey (2001), Saskia Sassen (1991), Edward Soja (1996), and Iris Young (1990), to name a few—who have “discovered” space and used it as a critical and analytical tool during the second half of the twentieth century. This volume includes historical and theoretical accounts of the spatial turn in different disciplines, as well as examples of what spatial analysis looks like in concrete case studies. The articles

by Andermatt Conley, Neuman and Blank and Rosen-Zvi belong to the first type, with each telling a story of different “founding fathers” of spatial thought and of the uses and functions of space in their respective disciplines. Frug, Yiftachel and Fruchter and Harris belong to the second type, each applying critical spatial analysis to a distinct case.

Andermatt Conley offers a fascinating account of the evolution of spatial thought in post-1968 France. Her main argument is that spatial thought evolved over time and was largely shaped by the historical context and by material, technological and spatial conditions. Hence, theoreticians writing soon after 1968, such as Lefebvre and de Certeau, saw space as at least having the potential to liberate the human subject from the grips of the oppressive state. Although space is constructed by official ideology and is therefore oppressive, Lefebvre encourages the public to reclaim their cities and their bodies so they can live alienation-free lives. While Lefebvre sees in the urban setting in which the masses live only a potential of resistance, de Certeau goes even further, arguing that mundane “everyday” spaces are in fact instances of resistance, escape and liberation from the grips of state and capital.

The next generation of theorists Andermatt Conley describes write in the 1980s, with the advent of late capitalism and the budding of globalization. At this stage, the spatial conditions are already very different than those of the late 1960s. Yet, while Baudrillard is ambivalent as to the nature of this spatial transformation, oscillating between optimism as the possibility that it is opening new spaces and pessimism regarding its oppressive reality, Augé and Virilio, writing about the same time, are lamenting the appearance of “non-places” (Augé)—shopping malls, airport lounges, highway rest stops—which mark the triumph of consumer capitalism, and the emergence of new informational technologies, which compress space and time and threaten to obliterate spaces of liberation (Virilio).

Deleuze and Guattari offer an account of these spatial transformations, argues Andermatt Conley. For them, the disappearance of hierarchical, vertical space and the emergence of horizontal, rhizomatic spatial formations open new possibilities for resistance and deconstruction of the modern subject. Yet, she eloquently shows, they, too, shift their position as the historical context changes. While 1968 and the ensuing spatial changes brought about optimism and hope, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 caused Deleuze and Guattari to retreat from their celebratory position and announce the need to reconstruct the subject (and its spaces). The era of globalization and the emergence of the European Union shifted spatial thinking once again. Balibar sees globalization’s spatial conditions as conducive to overcoming some of the oppressive traits of the nation-state: racism, nationalism and xenophobia. However, this does not mean that a universal will emerge; rather, “competing universalities” are emerging, where imperfect citizenship would enable people to form habitable spaces.

Neuman’s article discusses the spatial turn in architecture. Architecture was obviously always about space and understood itself as contemplating spatial

formations and practices. The spatial turn in architecture, therefore, meant something different. In fact, it was the “infiltration” of other disciplines that discovered space into the architectural discourse which marked the turn in architecture. This resulted in a transformation of the architectural discourse about space and spatiality, as well as in the fields of knowledge which provoked this change. Neuman discusses a major area in which such mutual influence took place: the interface between architecture and psychoanalysis. Setting his discussion in the early 1980s, the discourse and practice of architecture was already heavily influenced by Derrida’s post-structuralism and deconstruction. Prominent architects and architecture theorists such as Mark Wigley, Philip Johnson, Daniel Liebskind, Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid and Peter Eisenman, were rethinking and reshaping architectural forms and exhibiting new styles and modes of theorization about them. Thus, when Derrida gradually included more direct attention to psychoanalysis in his work, the architectural field was susceptible to engage in a fruitful dialogue with it.

The next stage was for architectural theorists to move beyond Derrida’s discussion of psychoanalysis to a direct engagement with psychoanalytical theories, from Freud and Lacan to more contemporary writers, such as Klein, Bion and Winnicott. This shift allowed architectural historians and theoreticians to reposition human subjectivity into the architectural realm, as that which both produces and is produced by architecture. Using the work of the two most prominent architectural theorists who used psychoanalysis, Anthony Vidler and Sylvia Lavin, Neuman demonstrates how such interdisciplinary dialogue took place and what its theoretical ramifications are. This discussion is particularly telling, as it shows how the choice between psychoanalytical concepts affects the mode of architectural theorizing, as well as its conclusions. While Vidler focuses on the concept of the “uncanny,” Lavin is interested in the “libido.” Neuman convincingly argues that this difference explains why Vidler reaches rather pessimistic conclusions, while Lavin holds onto more constructive and optimistic views.

Blank and Rosen-Zvi draw a comprehensive map of the various strains of legal geography, and of the different ways of thinking about the relationship between law and space. In their account, the spatial turn in law occurred rather late, only in the middle 1990s. Prior to that time period, legal scholars implicitly dealt with spatial themes in their work; however, they focused only on the material or physical aspects of space, leaving the social and mental aspects unaccounted for. Furthermore, law was mostly seen as either prohibiting or incentivizing the creation of different material spaces, leaving aside deeper effects that the law has on the way people perceive themselves, their communities and their lived-in environs. In addition, one of the important contributions of the law and geography framework was the integration of the seemingly unrelated legal field, which suffered from doctrinal divisions which often hindered the ability to perceive the deeper effects that the law has on individuals, communities and society.

Since the middle of the 1990s, there has been a flourishing of research dedicated to the interplay between law and space, examining the influence of legal rules on the construction of material, social and mental spaces, and exploring the impact that these spaces have on the creation and interpretation of legal principles and doctrines. Blank and Rosen-Zvi identify and describe the work of leading figures in the “law and geography” school of thought, including Nicholas Blomley, Devina Copper, David Delaney, Richard Ford, Gerald Frug, Sandy Kedar, Don Mitchell and Oren Yiftachel, among others, and focus on these scholars’ sources of intellectual influence, as well as on their critical projects within the legal field. Blank and Rosen-Zvi locate a clear critical trajectory in the works of legal geographers who utilize spatial analysis to expose the ideological structures and distributive effects of legal rules.

Frug’s article, “A ‘rule of law’ for cities,” is a lucid example of the stakes of legal analysis in law. The article explores the critical role of legal regulation in shaping and maintaining metropolitan areas throughout the world, with particular emphasis on power dynamics between cities, neighborhoods and the communities which inhabit them. As Frug argues, law is involved in the design of the built environment both when it regulates it and when it refrains from doing so.

Once we understand that law is implicated in spatial and social dynamics within metropolitan areas, the naturalness of the existing order is problematized. Indeed, Frug shows that there is always a choice between different rules and different legal principles and that this choice affects material and social spaces, as well as human responses to changing conditions. What is often seen as an unavoidable spatial-social process (such as “white flight” or gentrification) can be avoided if different legal rules are adopted. More concretely, he proposes to empower city neighborhoods and to authorize them, as a legal matter, to control substantive domains of activity, such as taxation and land use. By carefully devising an alternative “division of labor” between different jurisdictions—the state, the city, neighborhoods, communities and individuals—Frug unveils the constructedness and contingency of the existing socio-spatial order. A new legal ordering can open up new possibilities for community empowerment, individual emancipation and novel modes of sociability.

Yet another illuminating example of the importance of spatial analysis in the social sciences is Yiftachel’s elaborate discussion of the separation regime in Israel/Palestine. Through a meticulous examination of planning policies since the 1950s, he demonstrates how Arab spaces turned into ethnic enclaves, causing ethnic and class tensions within Jewish and Palestinian societies. By injecting space into post-colonial theory, Yiftachel unmasks structures of domination which went previously unnoticed. Especially productive is the usage of Gramsci’s idea of hegemony. Indeed, spatial planning, shows Yiftachel, is yet another method of obtaining and securing hegemony and congealing the domination of the ruling class, race or ethnicity. The paper is an interdisciplinary endeavor, connecting planning, history, political science and social theory.

Yiftachel frames his article around two seemingly unrelated figures—Arieh Sharon, a planner who worked in the 1950s and crafted the first national plan, and Ariel Sharon, Israel's Prime Minister between 2001 and 2006. Although the former was a planner, and the latter, a politician, the article unveils the deep underlying structure of separation which guided both of them, leading to increased ethnic and social tensions in Israel/Palestine, arguing that the same separationist logic is also at work in the Occupied Territories.

Fruchter and Harris offer a bold fusion between literary criticism and urban geography, using the backdrop of racial, ethnic and class tensions in the city of Toronto. Theirs is an idealistic analysis, focusing on literary texts and visual images. Through the examination of provocative texts and the invocation of everyday life in Toronto, they expose "the myth of the multicultural city." This myth is a product of a gap between the real material conditions of segregation, poverty and subordination of non-white minorities and the image of harmonious multiculturalism, which is produced by various ideological mechanisms, such as mainstream literature and popular cinema. Using fringe literary texts that bring to light the hidden experiences of immigrants, the poor and the excluded, Fruchter and Harris challenge the rosy depiction of Toronto and unearth its reality.

In the next stage, they offer a redeeming alternative, based on the concept of tolerance. Tolerance would not mean the eradication of social and political contradictions; rather, it would require everybody to acknowledge their differences and accept that such contradictions enrich their collective lives.

Yacobi's review of Ariella Azoulay's *Constituent violence 1947–1950: Genealogy of a regime and "a catastrophe from their point of view"* highlights the spatial ingredient in Azoulay's book. Yacobi argues that Azoulay describes and critically analyzes the ways in which Israeli space was produced by the Nakba and at the same time served as an instrument in its denial. He focuses on two spatial processes which occurred, according to Azoulay, simultaneously: deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which required surveillance and control of the Palestinians in the years ensuing the establishment of the State of Israel. Yacobi points to Azoulay's failure to deal with Palestinian resistance, leaving them as "passive subjects," and suggests that Israel's policies regarding the refugees were motivated not only by demographic concerns, but also by a desire to appropriate their lands.

Also included in this volume are images and texts from a recent exhibition entitled "*Po, Yafo*" ("Here, Jaffa"), curated by Na'ama Meishar and presented in the Architect's House gallery in Jaffa during the fall of 2010. The exhibition, comprised of photographs, video art and texts, deals with the city space of Jaffa as a place of decay and destruction, but also of resistance, community and hope. The exhibition is a collage of different points of view, as the artists belong to the two national groups inhabiting Jaffa, the Jewish and the Palestinian. Accompanied by the thoughtful texts of the curator, these images breathe life into the theme of the entire volume, namely, the growing importance of space—material, social, mental—in the way we think and experience the world around us.

To announce, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, that there has been a “turn to space” in the humanities and the social sciences is, some might say, to state the obvious. Indeed, spatial theorization has moved from being cutting edge, experimental and controversial to the mainstream of critical theory. It is now a necessary tool in the toolkit of any critical scholar in a wide variety of disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. This volume is an attempt to give account to spatial analysis in this unique point in time, to describe its state of the art and, perhaps, to point to its possible futures.

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