

The Politics of Third Spaces: Alterity, Spatiality, and the Social

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Critical theorists of space (e.g. Soja, 1989, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991/1974; Massey, 1994b; Harvey, 1996, 2006) have argued that space and society exist in a dialectical relationship. That is, space is produced through social relations and social relations are produced through space. Redefining social phenomena as socio-spatial reasserts space as political, whereby power struggles are presented as reconfigurations of spatial relations, such as exclusions, inclusions, hierarchies, displacements, and mobilities. Centering the analysis on a politicized space reveals juxtapositions in social life, for instance, spaces of difference where alternative experiences, social practices, and identities are performed. The notion of third space (Bhabha, 2004/1994; Soja, 1996) has been deployed to capture these emerging and fluid spaces, always in-between conventional spatial practices and sanctioned representations of space.

This seminar explores various articulations of the notion of third space and some cognate ideas, including borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987), heterotopias (Foucault, 1986/1967), paradoxical space (Rose, 1993), power geometries (Massey 1994a), and spatial practices (de Certeau, 1984/1980). The purpose is to investigate how difference and otherness can be repositioned, if not subverted, through analyses that recapture and destabilize movement, liminality, and marginality.

The readings include selections from:

Anzaldúa, G. (1987) *Borderlands/ La frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

Bhabha, H. (2004/1994) *The location of culture*. Routledge Classics.

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Foucault, M. (1991/1975) *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Penguin Books

Harvey, D. (1996). *Justice, Nature and the geography of difference*. Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (2006). Space as a keyword, in N. Castree & D. Gregory (eds) *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*. (pp. 270– 293), Blackwell.

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- Massey, D. (1994b). *Space, place and gender*. Polity Press.
- Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism and geography*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Rose, G. (1995b). Distance, surface, elsewhere: A feminist critique of the space of phallogocentric self/knowledge, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13(6), pp. 761–781.
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- Soja, E. (1989). *Postmodern geographies*. Verso.
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