

SOCIAL SPATIALIZATION AND EVERYDAY LIFE:

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Abstract:

This editorial introduction discusses the problematic ‘demonology’ of spatial analyses that attempt to understand the logic of the social in terms of subject-based origins. Taking the poststructuralist notion of decentred subjectivity to task, it uses the metaphor of exorcism to approach everyday life as a haunted space. Instead of identifying the true demons behind the voices rendering an account of everyday life, it shifts methodological attention to the incommensurable multiplicity of traces through which we map and narrate a hermeneutics of becoming.

Identity Thinking and the Problem of Exorcism

Analysing social practices has always been an essential part of sociology and anthropology, if only as a means of grounding the otherwise highly speculative claims made by general theoretical abstractions. In doing so, social scientists in general have for a long time been pre-occupied with behaviour, which in turn point backwards towards ‘reasons’ (sociology), ‘motivations’ (psychology), ‘interests’ (political science), and ‘myths’ or ‘rituals’ (anthropology). This pointing-backwards was also often a pointing-inwards, in which the inner state of the human being takes on the role as cipher, containing the codes and passwords for understanding the otherwise mysterious nature of the social.

When such a sociology, whose ultimate project is to uncover the causality of events, is applied empirically, it starts to resemble pre-modern forms of exorcism. Confessions are forced out of subjects who are deemed possessed by the latent effects of social structures, and whose demonic nature can be revealed using appropriate methodologies. The idea of ‘possessed speech’ has been invoked by Michel de Certeau in *The Writing of History and the Mystic Fable* to describe the elusive and ephemeral nature of ‘voices in the text’.

In his analysis of possessed speech, de Certeau focuses on the relation of present, individual utterances to a set of interpretative systems, and on the “marks” by which the possessed are called to position themselves in these systems’ (Ahearne, 1995: 86).

It is obvious that social sciences are approaching the data, elicited from questionnaires, interviews and ethnographic observations in a similar vein. Data-elicitation is a form of exorcism. The exorcism performed by the pseudo-scientific method of the empirical sociologist functions to make the demons (latent causes) reveal themselves in speech. In an act of exorcism, demons are called upon to identify themselves in a battle of wills. This mainly serves to secure the classificatory systems of the exorcist, which often proved to be worthless when facing a multiplicity of demons deemed responsible for a single act of possession.

A similar critique of social science can be found in Sourayan Mookerjee’s contribution to this volume. Criticising Arjun Appadurai’s (e.g. 1990) grid of disjunctive global flows as reifying the abstraction of scape whilst flirting with a ‘human version of chaos theory’, Mookerjee suggests that imposing classificatory scapes onto the complexity of global flows neglects their primacy as narrative figures. Instead the author offers a ‘horizontal allegory’, a radical localization of the narrative figure in a cinematic exploration of identity. He bases his own analysis on the film *Calendar*.

In an interesting twist, Mookerjea suggests that the film itself accomplishes a radical undermining of subject-centred identification by revealing a difference of difference through repetition. 'When the identity of things dissolves, being escapes to attain univocity, and begins to evolve around the different' (Deleuze, 1994: 67). The search for an originary form is futile, because we are deprived of the universal Eye/I of the transcendental Subject. In the absence of a narrative that expresses a transcendental grounding, identifications reveal nothing. In terms of de Certeau's analysis, the duplicitous voices of the demons possessing the subject will always utter lies.

Post-structuralism, and in its wake a range of theoretical critiques clumsily gathered together under the label of the post-modern, has of course devoted a most serious attack on any subject-centred (or centred-subject) form of (authorized) understanding Being. Critically re-asserting Nietzsche's relentless epic struggle against moralist idealism, this de-centring of the subject proved to be an essential turning point not only in philosophy, but also across the social sciences and humanities. That is to say, the mysteries of the social cannot be unlocked by simply invoking the interiority of the subject as a constitutive ordering device. Exorcism does not reveal any fundamental grounding yet latent, truth.

However, whereas demons make dubious allies and cannot be trusted, they do still have tremendous revealing power. That is to say, once we abandon the assumption that exorcism delivers an original – or to speak with Derrida (1982), once we accept that difference comes before any metaphysics of presence – we are still left a multiplicity of voices assembled under the figure of possession.

In his answers to questions following his paper on hyperreal America, Jean Baudrillard reiterates his famous and celebrated concept of simulacrum and states that 'the very distinction between false and true is impossible' (see Richard Smith, this volume). Suggesting - years before the *Truman Show* - that 'life in America can be considered as a film ... you

cannot distinguish between a movie and America', again points to the relative obsolescence of methods that seek to extract 'truth' out of confessions of those 'caught in the act' (of living the American Dream). Like Jim Carey's Truman, they are unsuspecting actors acting without scripts, in hyperreal arrangements, propped up by deliberate placements of covert advertisements and artefacts. Trying to elicit these secret but non-existing scripts indeed merely induces paranoia and a further thickening of the plot.

Indeed, there is no reason why we should not perform exorcisms of the demons of 'social actors'. Indeed, social science has no other purpose than to exhort confessions. However, we should approach them for what they are – duplicitous utterances: always eccentric and moving outwards. Exorcism is an opening-up of series of narratives that decentre subjectivity.

Thinking Exteriority: Embodiment and Spatialization

This decentring, however, also has a profound effect on how we conceptualize 'exteriority'. It is here that spatio-temporality prominently comes to the fore. By shifting the ground away from an interiority/exteriority Gestalt (Levi Strauss' structuralism is perhaps the perfect culmination of this), attention moves towards 'the relational'. A concept such as intersubjectivity (or intertextuality) provides a useful illustration of how to conceptualize de-centred being-in-the-world. As it highlights the in-between of subjects and thus belongs to no subject in particular, it forces one to consider the space that would otherwise simply be glossed over as void. Suddenly, what happens between matters most.

The relational imperative of theorizing decentred subjects (exteriority) thus immediately invokes the concept of (social) spatialization. Whilst this is indeed a rather self-evident and perhaps even crude conclusion, it is remarkable that very little attention has actually been paid to this, with the notable exception of a few theorists, such as Bakhtin, Lefebvre and de Certeau. Each in their own way, they have made consistent efforts to come to terms with the

‘void’ of relational space, by focusing on language (dialogue), material practices and everyday life. They have thereby also transformed the concept of space and taken it beyond the formalistic axioms of geometry; transforming the ephemeral character of spatialization into a dynamic enigma.

Whereas the spatiality of the decentring of the subject has been relatively neglected, another kind of ‘materiality’ opened up by exteriority has not: embodiment. Although the shift from a centred subject to embodiment is certainly highly compatible with the theorizing the problematic of relational being – and specifically Butler’s (1990, 1993) work on performativity springs to mind here – the attention given to embodiment processes has been rather biased towards the body, rather than embodied practices. The body, being read as a surface of cultural inscription, thereby is at risk of taking on the form of a pseudo-interiority, especially when taken as equivalent of a subject. The problematic then becomes one of correspondence – how does the body engender expressions of subjective interiority? The quest becomes, once more, one of wholeness. Desire becomes, once again, overcoded in the language of the Oedipus Complex, a desire to be One, authentic being. When this happens, we are again trapped in a metaphysics of presence.

If we are to sustain the logical coherence of decentring the subject, we must constantly remind ourselves of the exteriority of desire; never let our discourse slide back into one of identity, the corresponding identities of body and subject that can be revealed through exorcisms. We must situate the desire for identity, for the wholeness of the body-subject, as an exteriority. This is why it is analytically fruitful to speak of embodiment rather than the body, and to articulate this in terms of spatialization rather than space. This is not to say that we should not speak of the body, identity or space at all; far from it, they remain very useful expressions of the processes that come before it: embodiment, identification and spatialization.

The mission of *Space and Culture* is a rewriting of research agenda's, and of concepts, so that whenever we come across the term 'body' or 'space' we are actually reminded of their inauguration in terms of the desires that have solidified them as concepts. It is not to impose a new language, but to refresh our memories and sharpen our analytical grasp (also see Angerer, 1998). It is to develop a methodology of exorcism that is more faithful to its hermeneutic-existential problematic, and as such reflexive about writing itself. We need methodologies that operate critically within and without metaphysics of presence, iterating between both molar and molecular forms of being and becoming. To put it more plainly: whereas communication always draws in discursive practices, this does not mean that we should not deviate from the norms they impose. This is the essence of performativity: one invokes and thereby traverses boundaries set-into-work via dialogic encounters.

Such a 'protocol' means much more than simply 'being reflexive'. It is certainly not a matter of externalising one's imagined self autobiographically, so that one shares oneself with imagined readers. If reflexivity means anything, it must go beyond the metaphor of the mirror, which Lacan (1977) so effectively deployed in an allegory of the coming into being of a subject. The question of possession emerges again: what are we confronting when reflexively calling forth our own demons? Obviously, when we speak with a multiplicity of voices, we will also increase the number of stories. A methodology of possession is not a means of becoming-demon; as one would lose the very performativity of exorcism. Instead it is a mode of exteriorization; one goes beyond the black box of the unified Idea/Subject and actively cultivates the in-between.

The basic premise of identity thinking is a desire for unification between representation and authenticity. This is achieved when the difference between being and language ceases to exist. In spatial terms, such a desire represents itself perhaps most emphatically as a world in which the light has become omnipresent: when there are no longer any shadows for demons to lure

in. The shadow is of course the classical figure that stands as the originating myth of the entire tradition of western metaphysics. It starts in Plato's famous allegory of the cave, where it plays the role of the impostor; revealing an untruth. First a distortion, than a manipulation, and finally a fallacy, the shadow is that which the philosopher must overcome and render obsolete. Plato's search for perfection forced him to assume that between the world of ideas and the world of things, there is no place for the shady simulacrum, which is neither original not copy, but a deceiver, that counters the will to know with the fear of knowing (Deleuze, 1994). However, as Deleuze argues, the simulacrum may be all we have left once representations have been stripped from the mythical idealism that grants them this divine status as Ideas.

The shadow belongs to the twilight zone, the world of liminality, of deviance and impurity; it is the figure of the in-between. The shadow emerges when light encounters an obstacle as it spatializes its being-in-the-world; the shadow marks that other side of the object, its unconscious, to speak with Freud. Its darkness hides all secret fears and desires. The shadow marks non-being, the nothing that is no thing, from which all sense emerges.

Hence, just as shadows are essential for more realistic representation in, for example, computer graphics, so are they indispensable for social spatialization. It is as if we are again in Plato's cave but now refusing to follow the philosopher's daydreaming about losing the chains and looking straight into the light. Instead, we are still looking at the shadows on the wall, the simulacra that haunted this great philosopher until the very end and which he tried to banish. The shadows, however, no longer represent 'objects' but have become flows; they entail variations and differentiations only in intensity, not essence. Without having to resort to any other authentic being than the shadow-flow itself, we do not have to make up stories about origins of Being. Instead, the matter at hand is pure performativity.

A second figure can be used to illustrate this further: resonance. What the shadow does to vision and spatiality, resonance does to hearing and temporality. The resonance is sound that comes after, it is a trace that marks the vanishing event, the present that never sustains. Resonance is what Derrida (1982) called 'differance' - a difference that defers. Resonances can be harmonious as well as dissonant. In harmony, they are attuned to their destiny and amplify the sound-waves. However, in dissonance, the resonance is a remainder that breaks the unity of the whole and marks a minus-in-the-origin, that element that does not belong, a matter-out-of-place.

Sound-traces, or resonances, are of course not purely temporal, as they set into work the specific acoustics, hence space. Likewise, shadows also mark temporality; the earliest forms of time measurement used the length of shadows to indicate the time of day. However, whereas the relationship between the object and its shadow is relatively immediate and mimetic, the relationship between a sound and its resonance is always necessarily delayed. We need both figures if we are to make sense out of spatialization in cultural analyses and do justice to its im/materiality.

Both shadow and resonance are arche-typical forms of spatialization. They highlight that space is always relative and relational to the entities that constitute it (Heidegger, 1986), be it an object of reflection or an utterance of enunciation. Space is thus articulated in particular, temporal mediations; hence, it is 'indexical'. Indexicality is a term used by Garfinkel (1967), who appropriated it within a phenomenological perspective to describe the necessity of the particular, context-specific and relational character of understanding any enunciation. Shadows and resonances are indexical forms of spatialization because they only make sense in relation to the specific situations in which they emerged into being. Shadows are always 'of' some entity, just as resonances always belong to some utterance of sound. They only become figures of obscurity if they lose their indexicality.

However, indexicality can be used in a second way, which relates not to a phenomenological, but to a more hermeneutic tradition; in particular that of the pragmatic language philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1940). Peirce used the term 'index', as a category in between 'icon' (a form of signification that works through resemblance) and 'symbol' (a form of signification that works through a complex system of rules). For Peirce, the index is a form of signification that operates on the basis of a natural referential relationship, such as smoke in relation to fire. According to Eco (1977), the index must be seen as a relational signifier that operates on the basis of material tracing, but without exclusively those of cause-and-effect (Van Loon, 1996). That is, an index is like a trace of something else, indicating that this 'other entity' was once, but no longer, 'present'. Here, the shadow and the resonance are indices of particular entities and utterances, whose presence is deferred by the difference that has set these figures 'into work'. Combining both notions of indexicality, we can see how it relates to spatialization. Spatialization takes place through indexicality. In this sense, space is always particular and relational and as such, constitutes the primary form of cultural analysis, which always requires a specific attunement to particular modes of sense-making that are relational.

Both embodiment and spatialization can be conceptualised in terms of 'flow'. Flow allows us to see the continuities of singularities and their becoming-part of assemblages. Flow allows us to engage with the ephemeral nature of in-between-ness; it indexes movement, speed and frequency (Shields, 1997). It is not concerned with describing and thereby regulating boundaries, separating interiority from exteriority, triggering politics of inclusion and exclusion (Van Loon, 1997). Flow also breaks with the opposition between 'actual' and 'possible'. Instead, it is virtual (Shields, 2000).

Our concept of flow is therefore rather different from Manuel Castells' (e.g. 1996 Ch.6). He conceptualises flow as opposed to place as 'purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors'

(ibid: 412). The space of flows is that domain of the information-order where power and wealth are being accumulated; it is the dominant and dynamic realm of the network society. The realm of information and communication technologies and market transactions determines the speed of social changes and enforces 'progress' and 'economic growth'. In contrast, the space of places is the mundane, banal world of everyday life. Governed by inertia rather than speed, it continuously reminds us of the resistance of atoms (as opposed to bits, i.e. Negroponte, 1995). Spatial and temporal obstacles still matter; it is the world where bodies are 'at work' and cannot be transcended.

The Performativity of Everyday Life

This opposition suggests that flows have no place in everyday life; that material inertia is somehow incompatible with flow. Associated with a process of de-materialization (e.g. digitalisation) and acceleration, flow thus becomes the antithesis of matter and inertia. This, however, is mistaken. Flows (even light) always involve particles (e.g. photons). Even bits have a materiality (albeit sub-molecular). Moreover, speed is not always the same as immediacy or acceleration. Flows may also slow down.

Work on time (Adam, 1998; Hofmeister and Spizner, 1999) clearly shows that everyday life consists of a multiplicity of rhythms. Everyday life thus entails a range of flows, each with their own 'proper time' (e.g. duration, pace, frequency). Likewise, we could argue that everyday life consists of a multiplicity of spatializations, including forms of embodiment. If we were to use 'space of places', we would have to bear in mind the inherently dynamic, volatile, contested, unstable and *multiplicitous* (rather than duplicitous) nature of 'place'.

The variability of materiality and velocity of flows in everyday life makes it extremely difficult to provide general theoretical abstractions. This is why work on everyday life has to resort to a variation of abstractions, including very limited ones, that exclusively engage with

the mundane and banal on their own terms. This is also why simple applications of general theory to studies of everyday life will not work. Instead, taking everyday life seriously means a reversal of abstraction. Theorizing must evolve through the flows of being-in-the-world, and this is very much a reflexive process.

Mirjana Lozanovska's article in this volume provides an excellent example of such grounded work. Starting from the mundane problematic of 'mapping', she appropriates de Certeau's critical notion of historiography to de-scribe the coming-into-being of the Macedonian village of Zavoj as a place. Orthographic projection (another form of exorcism) leaves this place empty, cold and ultimately misleading. Instead, Lozanovska turns to the traces left by experiences, most importantly narratives and practices (especially domestic labour). The architectural frontiers only come to life (as objectifications of space) by means of 'being in the world'. Although consisting of much more than the movements of domestic labour (which in Zavoj are almost completely externalised), much of the spatialization of Zavoj takes places through the routines and repetitions of everyday practices. It is the moving body of (especially) women that 'continuously binds the domestic domain. Here a clear example of the interconnectedness of embodiment and spatialization becomes evident:

The shuttling of her body is like a reel of thread that produces a weave of all the dispersed buildings, a complex knit of the domestic space in which her body is totally enmeshed. The domestic domain is produced as a unity, a well-functioning unified front (Lozanovska, this volume, p000).

It is the ordinary everydayness of being-in-the-world that sets limits to any method of representation. Simply acts of mapping or describing everyday life already prove to be too complex, too versatile, too evasive, for any stable exorcism to render a convincing account. As Llyod Jenkins' descriptions of 11, Rue du Conservatoire (this volume) convincingly shows. Flows of temporalization and spatialization can never be gathered in a cumulative

sense. The ephemeral nature of everyday life makes full accounting impossible. What we are left with are traces, with which we can create maps and tell stories. Only through an interplay between repetition and deviation can we begin to suggest that there is indeed an integral 'place'; only through differentiation can we deduce from this integrity a sense of direction or fate (flow). With every trace opened up, however, we risk unleashing yet another demon to lead us astray so that we wander off, once again, into another domain.

Conclusion

Everyday life has become a central concern for geographers, historians and architects. In each of these 'disciplinary approaches' such concerns are juxtaposed onto concepts of space and culture. But this has very little purchase if we fail to shift our methodological apparatus away from the grid of exorcism. Possession is not a matter of interiority but of exteriority. Demons are not latent but always-already manifest. We will not understand anything about everyday life as long as we seek to reduce it to epiphenomena of hidden and secret 'structures'.

If we are to perform an exorcism of place, when we are approaching a haunted space, we cannot but be on our guard. We require both integral and differential strategies – strive to a sense of descriptive totality as well as selective deduction. The performativity of everyday life is always indexical. It always points towards 'this' or 'that' shadow or resonance, which only make sense in a particular encounter. Just as voices indexical of demons only make sense in the specificity of an exorcism, so do encounters with spatial hauntings require an attunement to the situatedness of their revelations.

Flow provides a new paradigm, but we have barely begun to recognise its radical potential. It entails much more than a new kind of demonology. The mystique of shadows and resonances lies not in what they hide, but in what they reveal. Not all possessions are demonic distortions, motivated by bad faith. Instead, everyday life is also, perhaps more so, inspired by

other kinds of mystical forces. The enthusiasm one feels when experiencing an existential moment, a moment at which the whole reveals itself in a tiny fragment or flash of light, for example, is of a divine nature exactly because it refuses representation and resists being rendered accountable via discursive practices.

The mere fact that everyday life is too complex to be rendered accountable should not make us despondent. It does not mean that we have stopped making sense. Just because we do not have to reproduce it in terms of a more abstract scheme through which we can take a shortcut on our way to totality, does not mean it has become meaningless. What it might do, however, is install a bit more humility in our work as analysts and writers.

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