

Other Times, Other Spaces

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Call for Papers

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Tunisia

Subject Fields:

Borderlands, Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Cultural History / Studies, Digital Humanities, Humanities

As philosophical concepts, time and space are earthbound and imperfect (Deleuze&Guattari, 1994). As products of the human mind, they are historical; their explanatory or revelatory power when worked into theory—literary, historical or political—is tied to their timeliness, to whether they are adequate to the historical moment that brought them into being. The conference, “Other Times, Other Spaces», explores the changeability of these concepts and their effects in and out of the world. What insights does current astrophysical research (Hawking, 1988) bring to the field of human and social sciences?

The late 20th century foregrounded new concepts of space. Arguing for a balance between “critical spatial, historical, and social thinking,” Bakhtin had demonstrated that human experiences were ‘chronotopic’, the materialization of “time” in “space”. In *The Production of Space*, Henry Lefebvre argued that space is neither a natural geography nor an empty container filled by history. It is rather something that human beings produce over time. Building on this concept, Edward Soja, called for a similar balanced dialectics between space and time, as well as geography and history, creating thus a novel and different way of thinking these concepts, as a more balanced “triple dialectic,” known as “third space” (1996). Edward Said reconceptualized space in *Orientalism* (1978) and V.Y. Mudimbe in *The Invention of Africa* (1988). In *Borderlands/ La Frontera* (1987), Chicana Gloria Anzuldumade borders the center of space; Bell Hooks’ opened up the ‘gaps’ that ‘make space for oppositional practices’ in ‘Postmodern Blackness’. (1990)

In the 21st century, many theorists foreground space and time in motion: David Damrosch’s *What is World Literature* (2000) explores circulation; Sanjay Subrahmanyam writes about networks of ‘connected histories.’ In *The New Time and Space* (2015), John Potts revolutionizes the spatial-temporal dialectics by opening it to the current advances in communication technologies which are transforming “the way we understand and experience time and space.” In this age of complex networks and virtual communication, our traditional conceptions of time and space have been radically modified, creating as Potts argues, virtual paradigms wherein time becomes a “montage of fractures” and geographical/ physical space turns into a virtual world.

This technical revolution has immensely impacted human cognitive capacities and roles. Social communication has shifted from the traditional conviviality of coffee-shops to cold cyber cafés muted by digitalization of human relations, but alive and intense in online communities. Artist Cristoph Büchel’s Venice Biennial *Barca Nostra* (2019) brings us out of virtual circulation to the real space of contemporary migration with its sustained tension between the free mobility ideal and the lived reality of camouflaged “legalized” restrictions, and the scandalous dramas at sea and beyond. A

monument some 1,1000 migrants who died trapped in the hold of this Libyan fishing boat, bringing the recovered wreck into the museum caused outrage and praise. For too many migrants circling the globe, the border they cross is death.

“Other times, Other Spaces” explores history (time and space) as something in constant transition, something in the making here

and now. The world has witnessed wars, pandemics, and natural and man-made disasters. Today, we are more than ever threatened by climate change, depletion of resources, devastating pandemics, and disparities between the rich and the poor, North and South and West and East. The fears of the past are haunting the present, our here and now. Radical transformations are taking place across the world. Human relations are atomized, fragmented, alienated, and yet, paradoxically, consolidated by disasters and calamities such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, our perceptions of the world and humanity are being rethought and reshaped every day.

The conference seeks interdisciplinary contributions that investigate human experiences of other times and other spaces which are addressed in literature, history, culture studies and linguistics. The conference puts particular emphasis on the otherness of space and time. Papers on marginal histories and marginal spaces are encouraged. Some questions arise: Is utopian thought in crisis in modern times? Is dystopia looming large after the triumph of late capitalism and collapse of communism? Did human relations turn into cold cybernetic transactions? Have physical and historical realities been turned into simulacra, into virtual or hyper-real ones? Does the physical world imitate the virtual one or is it the other way around? Is poetic imagination still valid in a world dominated by late capitalist ethos? What role is left for art today? Can we still talk about overlapping geographies? Can we still believe in common destinies?

We encourage scholarly papers on the topic of “Other Times, Other Spaces,” focusing on the following areas, but without being limited to them:

- Global (dis-)orientations and dislocations
- Imagining the future: Chronotope of dystopias, and utopias
- On pandemics, wars, and disasters
- Climate change and migration
- Cyber realities: cyber surveillance, cyber criminality, cyber love
- Thinking the posthuman: on cyborgs and robots
- Borders and Conflict zones
- Globalization and societies
- Heterotopia of Time/ Museums/ Archive
- Science fictional spaces
- Spaces, time and memory
- Eco-criticism
- Literary cartography
- Cognitive mapping
- Modern vs. postmodern strategies of Surveillance
- Media studies and the network revolution
- News today: Fake information, mis-information, dis-information and post-truth
- Remote learning/ Distance learning
- Politics and nations beyond time and space
- Nations, inter-nations, citizenship
- Alternative histories, alternative spaces

- Time vs. Duration
- Chronological time vs psychological time
- Time and history

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