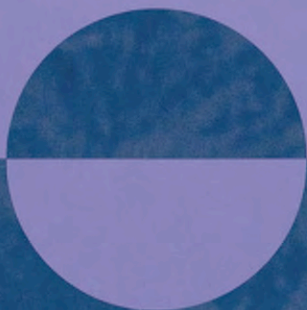


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DOREEN MASSEY

Space, Place, and Gender

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Space, Place, and Gender

Doreen Massey



University of Minnesota Press
Minneapolis

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Politics and Space/Time

'Space' is very much on the agenda these days. On the one hand, from a wide variety of sources come proclamations of the significance of the spatial in these times: 'It is space not time that hides consequences from us' (Berger); 'The difference that space makes' (Sayer); 'that new spatiality implicit in the postmodern' (Jameson); 'it is space rather than time which is the distinctively significant dimension of contemporary capitalism' (Urry); and 'All the social sciences must make room for an increasingly geographical conception of mankind' (Braudel). Even Foucault is now increasingly cited for his occasional reflections on the importance of the spatial. His 1967 Berlin lectures contain the unequivocal: 'The anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time'. In other contexts the importance of the spatial, and of associated concepts, is more metaphorical. In debates around identity the terminology of space, location, positionality and place figures prominently. Homi Bhabha, in discussions of cultural identity, argues for a notion of a 'third space'. Jameson, faced with what he sees as the global confusions of postmodern times, 'the disorientation of saturated space', calls for an exercise in 'cognitive mapping'. And Laclau, in his own very different reflections on the 'new revolution of our time', uses the terms 'temporal' and 'spatial' as the major differentiators between ways of conceptualizing systems of social relations.

In some ways, all this can only be a delight to someone who has long worked as a 'geographer'. Suddenly the concerns, the concepts (or, at least, the *terms*) which have long been at the heart of our discussion are at the centre also of wider social and political debate.

And yet, in the midst of this gratification I have found myself uneasy about the way in which, by some, these terms are used. Here I want to examine just one aspect of these anxieties about some of the current use of spatial terminology – the conceptualization (often implicit) of the term ‘space’ itself.

In part this concern about what the term ‘space’ is meant to mean arises simply from the multiplicity of definitions adopted. Many authors rely heavily on the terms space/spatial, and each assumes that their meaning is clear and uncontested. Yet in fact the meaning which different authors assume (and therefore – in the case of metaphorical usage – the import of the metaphor) varies greatly. Buried in these unacknowledged disagreements is a debate which never surfaces; and it never surfaces because everyone assumes we already know what these terms mean. Henri Lefebvre, in the opening pages of his book *The Production of Space*, commented on just this phenomenon: the fact that authors who in so many ways excel in logical rigour will fail to define a term which functions crucially in their argument: ‘Conspicuous by its absence from supposedly epistemological studies is . . . the idea . . . of space – the fact that “space” is mentioned on every page notwithstanding’.¹ At least there ought to be a debate about the meaning of this much-used term.

None the less, had this been all I would probably not have been exercised to write a paper about it. But the problem runs more deeply than this. For among the many and conflicting definitions of space which are current in the literature there are some – and very powerful ones – which deprive it of politics and of the possibility of politics: they effectively de-politicize the realm of the spatial. By no means all authors relegate space in this way. Many, drawing on terms such as centre/periphery/margin, and so on, and examining the ‘politics of location’, for instance, think of spatiality in a highly active and politically enabling manner. But for others space is the sphere of the lack of politics.

Precisely because the use of spatial terminology is so frequently unexamined this use of the term is not always immediately evident. It dawned fully on me when I read a statement by Ernesto Laclau in his *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*. ‘Politics and space,’ he writes, ‘are antinomic terms. Politics only exist insofar as the spatial eludes us’.² For someone who, as a geographer, has for years been arguing, along with many others, for a dynamic and politically progressive way of conceptualizing the spatial, this was clearly provocative!

Because my own inquiries were initially stimulated by Laclau’s book, and because unearthing the implicit definitions at work implies a detailed reading (which restricts the number of authors who can be considered) this discussion takes *New Reflections* as a starting point, and considers it

in most detail. But, as will become clear, the implicit definition used by Laclau, and which de-politicizes space, is shared by many other authors. In its simpler forms it operates, for instance, in the debate over the nature of structuralism, and is an implicit reference point in many a text. It is, moreover, in certain of its fundamental aspects shared by authors, such as Fredric Jameson, who in other ways are making arguments very different from those of Laclau.

To summarize it rather crudely, Laclau's view of space is that it is the realm of stasis. There is, in the realm of the spatial, no true temporality and thus no possibility of politics. It is on this view, and on a critique of it, that much of the initial discussion will be concentrated. But in other parts of the debate about the nature of the current era, and in particular in relation to 'postmodernity', the realm of the spatial is given entirely different associations from those ascribed to it by Laclau. Thus Jameson, who sees postmodern times as being particularly characterized by the importance of spatiality, interprets it in terms of an unnerving multiplicity: space is chaotic depthlessness.³ This is the opposite of Laclau's characterization, yet for Jameson it is – once again – a formulation which deprives the spatial of any meaningful politics.

A caveat must be entered from the start. This discussion will be addressing only one aspect of the complex realm which goes by the name of the spatial. Lefebvre, among others, insisted on the importance of considering not only what might be called 'the geometry' of space but also its lived practices and the symbolic meaning and significance of particular spaces and spatializations. Without disagreeing with that, the concentration here will none the less be on the view of space as what I shall provisionally call 'a dimension'. The argument is that different ways of conceptualizing this aspect of 'the spatial' themselves provide very different bases (or in some cases no basis at all) for the politicization of space. Clearly, anyway, the issue of the conceptualization of space is of more than technical interest; it is one of the axes along which we experience and conceptualize the world.

Space and time

An examination of the literature reveals, as might be expected, a variety of uses and meanings of the term 'space', but there is one characteristic of these meanings which is particularly strong and widespread. This is the view of space which, in one way or another, defines it as stasis, and as utterly opposed to time. Laclau, for whom the contrast between what he labels temporal and what he calls spatial is key to his whole argument,

uses a highly complex version of this definition. For him, notions of time and space are related to contrasting methods of understanding social systems. In his *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*, Laclau posits that 'any repetition that is governed by a structural law of successions is space' and 'spatiality means coexistence within a structure that establishes the positive nature of all its terms'.⁴ Here, then, any postulated causal structure which is complete and self-determining is labelled 'spatial'. This does not mean that such a 'spatial' structure cannot change – it may do – but the essential characteristic is that all the causes of any change which may take place are internal to the structure itself. On this view, in the realm of the spatial there can be no surprises (provided that we are analytically well equipped). In contrast to the closed and self-determining systems of the spatial, time (or temporality) for Laclau takes the form of dislocation, a dynamic which disrupts the predefined terms of any system of causality. The spatial, because it lacks dislocation, is devoid of the possibility of politics.

This is an importantly different distinction between time and space from that which simply contrasts change with an utter lack of movement. In Laclau's version, there can be movement and change within a so-called spatial system; what there cannot be is real dynamism in the sense of a change in the terms of 'the system' itself (which can therefore never be a simply coherent closed system). A distinction is postulated, in other words, between different types of what would normally be called time. On the one hand, there is the time internal to a closed system, where things may change yet without really changing. On the other hand, there is genuine dynamism, Grand Historical Time. In the former is included cyclical time, the times of reproduction, the way in which a peasantry represents to itself (says Laclau) the unfolding of the cycle of the seasons, the turning of the earth. To some extent, too, there is 'embedded time', the time in which our daily lives are set.⁵ These times, says Laclau, this kind of 'time' is space.

Laclau's argument here is that what we are inevitably faced with in the world are 'temporal' (by which he means dislocated) structures: dislocation is intrinsic and it is this – this essential openness – which creates the possibility of politics. Any attempt to represent the world 'spatially', including even the world of physical space, is an attempt to ignore that dislocation. Space therefore, in his terminology, is representation, is any (ideological) attempt at closure: 'Society, then, is unrepresentable: any representation – *and thus any space* – is an attempt to constitute society, not to state what it is'. Pure spatiality, in these terms, cannot exist: 'The ultimate failure of all hegemonization [in Laclau's term, spatialization], then, means that the real – including physical space – is in the ultimate instance temporal'; or again: 'the mythical nature of any space'.⁶ This does

not mean that the spatial is unimportant. This is not the point at issue, nor is it Laclau's intent. For the 'spatial' as the ideological/mythical is seen by him as itself part of the social and as constitutive of it: 'And insofar as the social is impossible without some fixation of meaning, without the discourse of closure, the ideological must be seen as constitutive of the social'.⁷ The issue here is not the relative priority of the temporal and the spatial, but their definition. For it is through this logic, and its association of ideas with temporality and spatiality, that Laclau arrives at the de-politicization of space. 'Let us begin', writes Laclau, 'by identifying three dimensions of the relationship of dislocation that are crucial to our analysis. The *first* is that dislocation is the very form of temporality. And temporality must be conceived as the exact opposite of space. The "spatialization" of an event consists of eliminating its temporality'.⁸

The second and third dimensions of the relationship of dislocation take the logic further: 'The *second* dimension is that dislocation [which, remember, is the antithesis of the spatial] is the very form of possibility' and 'The *third* dimension is that dislocation is the very form of freedom. Freedom is the absence of determination'.⁹ This leaves the realm of the spatial looking like unpromising territory for politics. It is lacking in dislocation, the very form of possibility (the form of temporality), which is also 'the very form of freedom'. Within the spatial, there is only determination, and hence no possibility of freedom or of politics.

Laclau's characterization of the spatial is, however, a relatively sophisticated version of a much more general conception of space and time (or spatiality and temporality). It is a conceptualization in which the two are opposed to each other, and in which time is the one which matters and of which History (capital H) is made. Time Marches On but space is a kind of stasis, where nothing really happens.

There are a number of ways in which, it seems to me, this manner of characterizing space and the realm of the spatial is questionable. Three of them, chosen precisely because of their contrasts, because of the distinct light they each throw on the problems of this view of space, will be examined here. The first draws on the debates which have taken place in 'radical geography' over the last two decades and more; the second examines the issue from the point of view of a concern with gender; and the third examines the view from physics.

Radical geography

In the 1970s, the discipline of geography experienced the kinds of developments described by Anderson in 'A culture in contraflow' for other

social sciences.¹⁰ The previously hegemonic positivist 'spatial science' was increasingly challenged by a new generation of Marxist geographers. The argument turned intellectually on how 'the relation between space and society' should be conceptualized. To caricature the debate, the spatial scientists had posited an autonomous sphere of the spatial in which 'spatial relations' and 'spatial processes' produced spatial distributions. The geography of industry, for instance, would be interpreted as simply the result of 'geographical location factors'. Countering this, the Marxist critique was that all these so-called spatial relations and spatial processes were actually social relations taking a particular geographical form. The geography of industry, we argued, could therefore not be explained without a prior understanding of the economy and of wider social and political processes. The aphorism of the seventies was 'space is a social construct'. That is to say – though the point was perhaps not made clearly enough at the time – space is constituted through social relations and material social practices.

But this, too, was soon to seem an inadequate characterization of the social/spatial relation. For while it is surely correct to argue that space is socially constructed, the one-sidedness of that formulation implied that geographical forms and distributions were simply outcomes, the endpoint of social explanation. Geographers would thus be the cartographers of the social sciences, mapping the outcomes of processes which could only be explained in other disciplines – sociology, economics, and so forth. What geographers mapped – the spatial form of the social – was interesting enough, but it was simply an end-product: it had no material effect. Quite apart from any demeaning disciplinary implications, this was plainly not the case. The events taking place all around us in the 1980s – the massive spatial restructuring both intra-nationally and internationally as an integral part of the social and economic changes – made it plain that, in one way or another, 'geography matters'. And so, to the aphorism of the 1970s – that space is socially constructed – was added in the 1980s the other side of the coin: that the social is spatially constructed too, and that makes a difference. In other words, and in its broadest formulation, society is necessarily constructed spatially, and that fact – the spatial organization of society – makes a difference to how it works.

But if spatial organization makes a difference to how society works and how it changes, then, far from being the realm of stasis, space and the spatial are also implicated (*contra* Laclau) in the production of history – and thus, potentially, in politics. This was not an entirely new thought; Henri Lefebvre, writing in 1974, was beginning to argue a very similar position:

The space of capitalist accumulation thus gradually came to life, and began to be fitted out. This process of animation is admirably referred to as

history, and its motor sought in all kinds of factors: dynastic interests, ideologies, the ambitions of the mighty, the formation of nation states, demographic pressures, and so on. This is the road to a ceaseless analysing of, and searching for, dates and chains of events. Inasmuch as space is the locus of all such chronologies, might it not constitute a principle of explanation at least as acceptable as any other?¹¹

This broad position – that the social and the spatial are inseparable and that the spatial form of the social has causal effectivity – is now accepted increasingly widely, especially in geography and sociology,¹² though there are still those who would disagree, and beyond certain groups even the fact of a debate over the issue seems to have remained unrecognized (Anderson, for example, does not pick it up in his survey).¹³ For those familiar with the debate, and who saw in it an essential step towards the politicization of the spatial, formulations of space as a static resultant without any effect – whether the simplistic versions or the more complex definitions such as Laclau's – seem to be very much a retrograde step.

However, in retrospect, even the debates within radical geography have still fully to take on board the implications of our own arguments for the way in which space might be conceptualized.

Issues of gender

For there are also other reservations, from completely different directions, which can be levelled against this view of space and which go beyond the debate which has so far taken place within radical geography. Some of these reservations revolve around issues of gender.

First of all, this manner of conceptualizing space and time takes the form of a dichotomous dualism. It is neither a simple statement of difference (A, B, . . .) nor a dualism constructed through an analysis of the interrelations between the objects being defined (capital: labour). It is a dichotomy specified in terms of a presence and an absence; a dualism which takes the classic form of A/not-A. As was noted earlier, one of Laclau's formulations of a definition is: 'temporality must be conceived as the exact opposite of space'.¹⁴ Now, apart from any reservations which may be raised in the particular case of space and time (and which we shall come to later), the mode of thinking which relies on irreconcilable dichotomies of this sort has in general recently come in for widespread criticism. All the strings of these kinds of opposition with which we are so accustomed to work (mind–body, nature–culture, reason–emotion, and so forth) have been argued to be at heart problematical and a hindrance to either understanding or changing the world. Much of this critique has come from feminists.¹⁵

The argument is twofold. First, and less importantly here, it is argued that this way of approaching conceptualization is, in western societies and more generally in societies where child-rearing is performed overwhelmingly by members of one sex (women), more typical of males than of females. This is an argument which generally draws on object-relations theory approaches to identity-formation. Second, however, and of more immediate significance for the argument being constructed here, it has been contended that this kind of dichotomous thinking, together with a whole range of the sets of dualisms which take this form (we shall look at some of these in more detail below) are related to the construction of the radical distinction between genders in our society, to the characteristics assigned to each of them, and to the power relations maintained between them. Thus, Nancy Jay, in an article entitled 'Gender and dichotomy' examines the social conditions and consequences of the use of logical dichotomy. She argues not only that logical dichotomy and radical gender distinctions are associated but also, more widely, that such a mode of constructing difference works to the advantage of certain (dominant) social groups, 'that almost any ideology based on A/Not-A dichotomy is effective in resisting change. Those whose understanding of society is ruled by such ideology find it very hard to conceive of the possibility of alternative forms of social order (third possibilities). Within such thinking, the only alternative to the *one* order is disorder'.¹⁶ Genevieve Lloyd, too, in a sweeping history of 'male' and 'female' in western philosophy, entitled *The Man of Reason*, argues that such dichotomous conceptualizations, and – what we shall come to later – the prioritization of one term in the dualism over the other, are not only central to much of the formulation of concepts with which western philosophy has worked but that they are dependent upon, and is instrumental in the conceptualization of, among other things, a particular form of radical distinction between female and male genders.¹⁷ Jay argues that 'Hidden, taken for granted, A/Not-A distinctions are dangerous, and because of their peculiar affinity with gender distinctions, it seems important for feminist theory to be systematic in recognizing them'.¹⁸ The argument is that the definition of 'space' and 'time' under scrutiny here is precisely of this form, and on that basis alone warrants further critical investigation.

But there is also a further point. For within this kind of conceptualization, only one of the terms (A) is defined positively. The other term (not-A) is conceived only in relation to A, and as lacking in A. A fairly thorough reading of some of the recent literature which uses the terminology of space and time, and which employs this form of conceptualization, leaves no doubt that it is time which is conceived of as in the position of 'A', and space which is 'not-A'. Over and over again, time is defined by such things

as change, movement, history, dynamism; while space, rather lamely by comparison, is simply the absence of these things. There are two aspects to this. First, this kind of definition means that it is time, and the characteristics associated with time, which are the primary constituents of both space and time; time is the nodal point, the privileged signifier. And second, this kind of definition means that space is defined by absence, by lack. This is clear in the simple (and often implicit) definitions (time equals change/movement, space equals the lack of these things), but it can also be argued to be the case with more complex definitions such as those put forward by Laclau. For although in a formal sense it is the spatial which in Laclau's formulation is complete and the temporal which marks the lack (the absence of representation, the impossibility of closure), in the whole tone of the argument it is in fact space which is associated with negativity and absence. Thus: 'temporality must be conceived as the exact opposite of space. The "spatialization" of an event consists of eliminating its temporality'.¹⁹

Now, of course, in current western culture, or in certain of its dominant theories, woman too is defined in terms of lack. Nor, as we shall see, is it entirely a matter of coincidence that space and the feminine are frequently defined in terms of dichotomies in which each of them is most commonly defined as not-A. There is a whole set of dualisms whose terms are commonly aligned with time and space. With time are aligned History, Progress, Civilization, Science, Politics and Reason, portentous things with gravitas and capital letters. With space on the other hand are aligned the other poles of these concepts: stasis, ('simple') reproduction, nostalgia, emotion, aesthetics, the body. All these dualisms, in the way that they are used, suffer from the criticisms made above of dichotomies of this form: the problem of mutual exclusivity and of the consequent impoverishment of both of their terms. Other dualisms could be added which also map on to that between time and space. Jameson, for instance, as do a whole line of authors before him, clearly relates the pairing to that between transcendence and immanence, with the former connotationally associated with the temporal and immanence with the spatial. Indeed, in this and in spite of their other differences, Jameson and Laclau are very similar. Laclau's distinction between the closed, cyclical time of simple reproduction (spatial) and dislocated, changing history (temporal), even if the latter has no inevitability in its progressive movement, is precisely that. Jameson, who bemoans what he characterizes as the tendency towards immanence and the flight from transcendence of the contemporary period, writes of 'a world peculiarly without transcendence and without perspective . . . and indeed without plot in any traditional sense, since all choices would be equidistant and on the same level'²⁰ – and this is a world where, he

believes, a sense of the temporal is being lost and the realm of the spatial is taking over.

Now, as has been pointed out many times, these dualisms which so easily map on to each other also map on to the constructed dichotomy between female and male. From Rousseau's seeing woman as a potential source of disorder, as needing to be tamed by Reason, to Freud's famous pronouncement that woman is the enemy of civilization, to the many subsequent critics and analysts of such statements of the 'obviousness' of dualisms, of their interrelation one with another, and of their connotations of male and female – such literature is now considerable.²¹ And space, in this system of interconnected dualisms, is coded female. "“Transcendence”, in its origins, is a transcendence *of* the feminine,' writes Lloyd, for instance.²² Moreover, even where the transcodings between dualisms have an element of inconsistency, this rule still applies. Thus where time is dynamism, dislocation and History, and space is stasis, space is coded female and denigrated. But where space is chaos (which you would think was quite different from stasis; more indeed like dislocation), then time is Order . . . and space is *still* coded female, only in this context interpreted as threatening.

Elizabeth Wilson, in her book *The Sphinx in the City*, analyses this latter set of connotations.²³ The whole notion of city culture, she argues, has been developed as one pertaining to men. Yet within this context women present a threat, and in two ways. First there is the fact that in the metropolis we are freer, in spite of all the also-attendant dangers, to escape the rigidity of patriarchal social controls which can be so powerful in a smaller community. Second, and following from this, 'women have fared especially badly in western visions of the metropolis because they have seemed to represent disorder. There is fear of the city as a realm of uncontrolled and chaotic sexual licence, and the rigid control of women in cities has been felt necessary to avert this danger'. 'Woman represented feeling, sexuality and even chaos, man was rationality and control'.²⁴ Among male modernist writers of the early twentieth century, she argues – and with the exception of Joyce – the dominant response to the burgeoning city was to see it as threatening, while modernist women writers (Woolf, Richardson) were more likely to exult in its energy and vitality. The male response was perhaps more ambiguous than this, but it was certainly a mixture of fascination and fear. There is an interesting parallel to be drawn here with the sense of panic in the midst of exhilaration which seems to have overtaken some writers at what they see as the ungraspable (and therefore unbearable) complexity of the post-modern age. And it is an ungraspability seen persistently in spatial terms, whether through the argument that it is the new (seen-to-be-new) time–

space compression, the new global–localism, the breaking down of borders, which is the cause of it all, or through the interpretation of the current period as somehow in its very character intrinsically more spatial than previous eras. In Jameson these two positions are brought together, and he displays the same ambivalence. He writes of ‘the horror of multiplicity’, of ‘all the web threads flung out beyond my “situation” into the unimaginable synchronicity of other people’.²⁵ It is hard to resist the idea that Jameson’s (and others’) apparently vertiginous terror (a phrase they often use themselves) in the face of the complexity of today’s world (conceived of as social but also importantly as spatial) has a lot in common with the nervousness of the male modernist, nearly a century ago, when faced with the big city.

It is important to be clear about what is being said of this relationship between space/time and gender. It is not being argued that this way of characterizing space is somehow essentially male; there is no essentialism of feminine/masculine here. Rather, the argument is that the dichotomous characterization of space and time, along with a whole range of other dualisms which have been briefly referred to, and with their connotative interrelations, may both reflect and be part of the constitution of, among other things, the masculinity and femininity of the sexist society in which we live. Nor is it being argued that space should simply be reprioritized to an equal status with, or instead of, time. The latter point is important because there have been a number of contributions to the debate recently which have argued that, especially in modernist (including Marxist) accounts, it is time which has been considered the more important. Ed Soja, particularly in his book *Postmodern Geographies*, has made an extended and persuasive case to this effect (but see the critique by Gregory).²⁶ The story told earlier of Marxism within geography – supposedly the spatial discipline – is indicative of the same tendency. In a completely different context, Terry Eagleton has written in his foreword to Kristin Ross’s *The Construction of Social Space* that ‘Ross is surely right to claim that this idea [the concept of space] has proved of far less glamorous appeal to radical theorists than the apparently more dynamic, exhilarating notions of narrative and history’.²⁷ It is interesting to speculate on the degree to which this deprioritization might itself have been part and parcel of the system of gender connotations. Ross herself writes: ‘The difficulty is also one of vocabulary, for while words like “historical” and “political” convey a dynamic of intentionality, vitality, and human motivation, “spatial”, on the other hand, connotes stasis, neutrality, and passivity’;²⁸ and in her analysis of Rimbaud’s poetry and of the nature of its relation to the Paris Commune she does her best to counter that essentially negative view of spatiality. (Jameson, of course, is arguing pretty

much the same point about the past prioritization of time, but his mission is precisely the opposite of Ross's and Soja's; it is to hang on to that prioritization.)

The point here however is not to argue for an upgrading of the status of space within the terms of the old dualism (a project which is arguably inherently difficult anyway, given the terms of that dualism), but to argue that what must be overcome is the very formulation of space/time in terms of this kind of dichotomy. The same point has frequently been made by feminists in relation to other dualisms, most particularly perhaps – because of the debate over the writings of Simone de Beauvoir – the dualism of transcendence and immanence. When de Beauvoir wrote, 'Man's design is not to repeat himself in time: it is to take control of the instant and mould the future. It is male activity that in creating values has made of existence itself a value; this activity has prevailed over the confused forces of life; it has subdued Nature and Woman',²⁹ she was making precisely that distinction between cyclicity and 'real change' which is not only central to the classic distinction between immanence and transcendence but is also part of the way in which Laclau distinguishes between what he calls the spatial and the temporal. De Beauvoir's argument was that women should grasp the transcendent. A later generation of feminists has argued that the problem is the nature of the distinction itself. The position here is both that the two dualisms (immanence/transcendence and space/time) are related and that the argument about the former dualism could and should be extended to the latter. The next line of critique, the view from physics, provides some further hints about the directions which that reformulation might take.

The view from physics

The conceptualization of space and time under examination here also runs counter to notions of space and time within the natural sciences, and most particularly in physics. Now, in principle, this may not be at all important; it is not clear that strict parallels can or should be drawn between the physical and the social sciences. And indeed there continue to be debates on this subject in the physical sciences. The point is, however, that the view of space and time outlined above already does have, as one of its roots at least, an interpretation drawn – if only implicitly – from the physical sciences. The problem is that it is an outmoded one.

The viewpoint, as used for instance by Laclau, accords with the viewpoint of classical, Newtonian, physics. In classical physics, both space and time exist in their own right, as do objects. Space is a passive arena, the

setting for objects and their interaction. Objects, in turn, exist prior to their interactions and affect one another through force-fields. The observer, similarly, is detached from the observed world. In modern physics, on the other hand, the identity of things is *constituted through* interactions. In modern physics, while velocity, acceleration, and so forth are defined, the basic ontological categories, such as space and time, are not. Even more significantly from the point of view of the argument here, in modern physics, physical reality is conceived of as a 'four-dimensional existence instead of . . . the evolution of a three-dimensional existence'.³⁰ Thus: 'According to Einstein's theory . . . space and time are not to be thought of as separate entities existing in their own right – a three-dimensional space, and a one-dimensional time. Rather, the underlying reality consists of a four-dimensional space–time'.³¹ Moreover the observer, too, is part of the observed world.

It is worth pausing for a moment to clarify a couple of points here. The first point is that the argument here is not in favour of a total collapse of the differences between something called the spatial and the temporal dimensions. Nor, indeed, would that seem to be what modern physics is arguing either. Rather, the point is that space and time are inextricably interwoven. It is not that we cannot make any distinction at all between them but that the distinction we do make needs to hold the two in tension, and to do so within an overall, and strong, concept of four-dimensionality.

The second point is that the definitions of both space and time in themselves must be constructed as the result of interrelations. This means that there is no question of defining space simply as not-time. It must have a positive definition, in its own terms, just as does time. Space must not be consigned to the position of being conceptualized in terms of absence or lack. It also means, if the positive definitions of both space and time must be interrelational, that there is no absolute dimension, space. The existence of the spatial depends on the interrelations of objects: 'In order for "space" to make an appearance there needs to be at least two fundamental particles'.³² This is, in fact, saying no more than what is commonly argued, even in the social sciences – that space is not absolute, it is relational. Perhaps the problem at this point is that the implications of this position seem not to have been taken on board.

Now, in some ways all this does seem to have some similarities with Laclau's use of the notion of the spatial, for his definition does refer to forms of social interaction. As we have seen, however, he designates them (or the concepts of them) as spatial only when they form a closed system, where there is a lack of dislocation which can produce a way out of the postulated (but impossible) closure. However, such use of the term is anyway surely metaphorical. What it represents is evidence of the connota-

tions which are being attached to the terms space and spatial. It is not directly talking of 'the spatial' itself. Thus, to take up Laclau's usage in more detail: at a number of points as we have seen he presents definitions of space in terms of possible (in fact, he would argue, impossible) causal structures – 'any repetition that is governed by a structural law of successions is space'; or, 'spatiality means coexistence within a structure that establishes the positive nature of all its terms'.³³ My question of these definitions and of other related ones, both elsewhere in this book and more widely – for instance in the debate over the supposed 'spatiality' of structuralism – is, 'says who?' Is not this appellation in fact pure assertion? Laclau agrees in rejecting the possibility of the actual existence of pure spatiality in the sense of undislocated stasis. A further question must therefore be: why postulate it? Or, more precisely, why postulate it as 'space'? As we have just seen, an answer which proposes an absolute spatial dimension will not do. An alternative answer might be that this ideal pure spatiality, which only exists as discourse/myth/ideology is in fact a (mis-judged) metaphor. In this case it is indeed defined by interrelations – this is certainly not 'absolute space', the independently existing dimension – and the interrelations are those of a closed system of social relations, a system outside of which there is nothing and in which nothing will dislocate (temporalize) its internally regulated functioning. But then my question is: why call it space? The use of the term 'spatial' here would seem to be purely metaphorical. In so far as such systems do exist – and even in so far as they are merely postulated as an ideal – they can in no sense *be* simply spatial nor exist only *in* space. In themselves they *constitute* a particular form of space–time.³⁴

Moreover, as metaphors the sense of Laclau's formulations goes against what I understand by – and shall argue below would be more helpful to understand by – space/the spatial. 'Any repetition that is governed by a structural law of successions?' – but *is* space so governed? As was argued above, radical geographers reacted strongly in the 1970s precisely against a view of 'a spatial realm', a realm, posited implicitly or explicitly by a wide range of then-dominant practitioners, from mathematicized 'regional scientists' to data-bashers armed with ferociously high regression-coefficients, in which there were spatial processes, spatial laws and purely spatial explanations. In terms of causality, what was being argued by those of us who attacked this view was that the spatial is externally determined. A formulation like the one above, because of the connotations it attaches to the words space/spatial in terms of the nature of causality, thus takes us back a good two decades. Or again, what of the second of Laclau's definitions given above? – that the spatial is the 'coexistence within a structure that establishes the positive nature of all its terms'? What then of

the paradox of simultaneity and the causal chaos of happenstance juxtaposition which are, as we shall argue below (and as Jameson sees), integral characteristics of relational space?

In this procedure, any sort of stasis (for instance a self-regulating structural coherence which cannot lead to any transformation outside its own terms) gets called space/spatial. But there is no reason for this save the prior definition of space as lacking in (this kind of) transformative dynamic *and*, equally importantly, an assumption that anything lacking in (this kind of) dynamism is spatial. Instead, therefore, of using the terms space (and time) in this metaphorical way to refer to such structures why do we not remain with definitions (such as dislocated/undislocated) which refer to the nature of the causal structures themselves? Apart from its greater clarity, this would have the considerable advantage of leaving us free to retain (or maybe to develop) a more positive concept of space.

Indeed, conceptualizing space and time more in the manner of modern physics would seem to be consistent with Laclau's general argument. His whole point about radical historicity is this: 'any effort to spatialize time ultimately fails and space itself becomes an event'. Spatiality in this sense is agreed to be impossible. "Articulation" . . . is the primary ontological level of the constitution of the real', writes Laclau.³⁵ This is a fundamentally important statement, and one with which I agree. The argument here is thus not opposed to Laclau; rather it is that exactly the same reasoning, and manner of conceptualization, which he applies to the rest of the world, should be applied to space and time as well. It is not that the interrelations between objects occur *in* space and time; it is these relationships themselves which *create/define* space and time.³⁶

It is not of course necessary for the social sciences simply to follow the natural sciences in such matters of conceptualization.³⁷ In fact, however, the views of space and time which are being examined here do, if only implicitly, tend to lean on versions of the world derived from the physical sciences; but the view they rely on is one which has been superseded theoretically. Even so, it is still the case that even in the natural sciences it is possible to use different concepts/theories for different purposes. Newtonian physics is still perfectly adequate for building a bridge. Moreover, there continue to be debates between different parts of physics. What is being argued here is that the social issues which we currently need to understand, whether they be the high-tech postmodern world or questions of cultural identity, require something that would look more like the 'modern physics' view of space. It would, moreover, precisely by introducing into the concept of space that element of dislocation/freedom/possibility, enable the politicization of space/space–time.

An alternative view of space

A first requirement of developing an alternative view of space is that we should try to get away from a notion of society as a kind of 3-D (and indeed more usually 2-D) slice which moves through time. Such a view is often, even usually, implicit rather than explicit, but it is remarkably pervasive. It shows up in the way people phrase things, in the analogies they use. Thus, just briefly to cite two of the authors who have been referred to earlier, Foucault writes: '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'³⁸ and Jameson contrasts 'historiographic deep space or perspectival temporality' with a (spatial) set of connections which 'lights up like a nodal circuit in a slot machine'.³⁹ The aim here is not to disagree in total with these formulations, but to indicate what they imply. What they both point to is, on the one hand, a contrast between temporal movement and, on the other, a notion of space as instantaneous connections between things at one moment. For Jameson, the latter type of (inadequate) history-telling has replaced the former. And if this is true then it is indeed inadequate. But while the contrast – the shift in balance – to which both authors are drawing attention is a valid one, in the end the notion of space as *only* systems of simultaneous relations, the flashing of a pin-ball machine, is inadequate. For, of course, the temporal movement is also spatial; the moving elements have spatial relations to one another. And the 'spatial' interconnections which flash across can only be constituted temporally as well. Instead of linear process counterposed to flat surface (which anyway reduces space from three to two dimensions), it is necessary to insist on the irrefutable four-dimensionality (indeed n-dimensionality) of things. Space is not static, nor time spaceless. Of course spatiality and temporality are different from each other but neither can be conceptualized as the absence of the other. The full implications of this will be elaborated below, but for the moment the point is to try to think in terms of all the dimensions of space–time. It is a lot more difficult than at first sight it might seem.

Second, we need to conceptualize space as constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local level to the most global. Earlier it was reported how, in human geography, the recognition that the spatial is socially constituted was followed by the perhaps even more powerful (in the sense of the breadth of its implications) recognition that the social is necessarily spatially constituted too. Both points (though perhaps in reverse order) need to be grasped at this moment. On the one

hand, all social (and indeed physical) phenomena/activities/relations have a spatial form and a relative spatial location. The relations which bind communities, whether they be 'local' societies or worldwide organizations; the relations within an industrial corporation; the debt relations between the South and the North; the relations which result in the current popularity in European cities of music from Mali. The spatial spread of social relations can be intimately local or expansively global, or anything in between. Their spatial extent and form also changes over time (and there is considerable debate about what is happening to the spatial form of social relations at the moment). But, whatever way it is, there is no getting away from the fact that the social is inexorably also spatial.

The proposition here is that this fact be used to define the spatial. Thus, the spatial is socially constituted. 'Space' is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global. What makes a particular view of these social relations specifically spatial is their simultaneity. It is a simultaneity, also, which has extension and configuration. But simultaneity is absolutely not stasis. Seeing space as a moment in the intersection of configured social relations (rather than as an absolute dimension) means that it cannot be seen as static. There is no choice between flow (time) and a flat surface of instantaneous relations (space). Space is not a 'flat' surface in that sense because the social relations which create it are themselves dynamic by their very nature. It is a question of a manner of thinking. It is not the 'slice through time' which should be the dominant thought but the simultaneous coexistence of social relations that cannot be conceptualized as other than dynamic. Moreover, and again as a result of the fact that it is conceptualized as created out of social relations, space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation. This aspect of space has been referred to elsewhere as a kind of 'power-geometry'.⁴⁰

Third, this in turn means that the spatial has *both* an element of order *and* an element of chaos (or maybe it is that we should question that dichotomy also). It cannot be defined on one side or the other of the mutually exclusive dichotomies discussed earlier. Space has order in two senses. First, it has order because all spatial locations of phenomena are caused; they can in principle be explained. Second, it has order because there are indeed spatial systems, in the sense of sets of social phenomena in which spatial arrangement (that is, mutual relative positioning rather than 'absolute' location) itself is part of the constitution of the system. The spatial organization of a communications network, or of a supermarket chain with its warehousing and distribution points and retail outlets would

both be examples of this, as would the activity space of a multinational company. There is an integral spatial coherence here, which constitutes the geographical distributions and the geographical form of the social relations. The spatial form was socially 'planned', in itself directly socially caused, that way. But there is also an element of 'chaos' which is intrinsic to the spatial. For although the location of each (or a set) of a number of phenomena may be directly caused (we know why X is here and Y is there) the spatial positioning of one in relation to the other (X's location in relation to Y) may not be directly caused. Such relative locations are produced out of the independent operation of separate determinations. They are in that sense 'unintended consequences'. Thus, the chaos of the spatial results from the happenstance juxtapositions, the accidental separations, the often paradoxical nature of the spatial arrangements which result from the operation of all these causalities. Both Mike Davis and Ed Soja, for instance, point to the paradoxical mixtures, the unexpected land uses side by side, within Los Angeles. Thus, the relation between social relations and spatiality may vary between that of a fairly coherent system (where social and spatial form are mutually determinant) and that where the particular spatial form is not directly socially caused at all.

This has a number of significant implications. To begin with, it takes further the debate with Ernesto Laclau. For in this conceptualization space is essentially disrupted. It is, indeed, 'dislocated' and necessarily so. The simultaneity of space as defined here in no way implies the internally coherent closed system of causality which is dubbed 'spatial' in his *Reflections*. There is no way that 'spatiality' in this sense 'means coexistence within a structure that establishes the positive nature of all its terms'.⁴¹ The spatial, in fact, precisely *cannot* be so. And this means, in turn, that the spatial too is open to politics.

But, further, neither does this view of space accord with Fredric Jameson's which, at first sight, might seem to be the opposite of Laclau's. In Jameson's view the spatial does indeed, as we have seen, have a lot to do with the chaotic. While for Laclau spatial discourses are the attempt to represent (to pin down the essentially unmapable), for Jameson the spatial is precisely unrepresentable – which is why he calls for an exercise in 'mapping' (though he acknowledges the procedure will be far more complex than cartography as we have known it so far). In this sense, Laclau and Jameson, both of whom use the terms space/spatiality with great frequency, and for both of whom the concepts perform an important function in their overall schemas, have diametrically opposed interpretations of what the terms actually mean. Yet for both of them their concepts of spatiality work against politics. While for Laclau it is the essential orderliness of the spatial (as he defines it) which means the death of

history and politics, for Jameson it is the chaos (precisely, the dislocation) of (his definition of) the spatial which apparently causes him to panic, and to call for a map.

So this difference between the two authors does not imply that, since the view of the spatial proposed here is in disagreement with that of Laclau, it concords with that of Jameson. Jameson's view is in fact equally problematical for politics, although in a different way. Jameson labels as 'space' what he sees as unrepresentable (thus the 'crisis of representation' and the 'increasing spatialization' are to him inextricably associated elements of postmodern society). In this, he perhaps unknowingly recalls an old debate within geography which goes by the name of 'the problem of geographical description'. Thus, thirty years ago H.C. Darby, an eminent figure in the geography of his day, ruminated:

A series of geographical facts is much more difficult to present than a sequence of historical facts. Events follow one another in time in an inherently dramatic fashion that makes juxtaposition in time easier to convey through the written word than juxtaposition in space. Geographical description is inevitably more difficult to achieve successfully than is historical narrative.⁴²

Such a view, however, depends on the notion that the difficulty of geographical description (as opposed to temporal story-telling) arises in part because in space you can go off in any direction and in part because in space things which are next to one another are not necessarily connected. However, not only does this reduce space to unrepresentable chaos, it is also extremely problematical in what it implies for the notion of *time*. And this would seem on occasions to be the case for Jameson too. For, while space is posed as the unrepresentable, time is thereby, at least implicitly and at those moments, *counterposed* as the comforting security of a story it is possible to tell. This of course clearly reflects a notion of the difference between time and space in which time has a coherence and logic to its telling, while space does not. It is the view of time which Jameson might, according to some of his writings, like to see restored: time/History in the form of the Grand Narrative.⁴³

However, this is also a view of temporality, as sequential coherence, which has come in for much questioning. The historical in fact can pose similar problems of representation to the geographical. *Moreover*, and ironically, it is precisely this view of history which Laclau would term spatial:

with inexorable logic it then follows that there can be no dislocation possible in this process. If everything that happens can be explained

internally to this world, nothing can be a mere event (which entails a radical temporality, as we have seen) and everything acquires an absolute intelligibility within the grandiose scheme of a pure spatiality. This is the Hegelian–Marxist moment.⁴⁴

Further still, what is crucially wrong with both these views is that they are simply opposing space and time. For both Laclau and Jameson time and space are causal closure/representability on the one hand and unrepresentability on the other. They simply differ as to which is which! What unites them, and what I argue should be questioned, is the very counterposition in this way of space and time. It is a counterposition which makes it difficult to think the social in terms of the real multiplicities of space–time. This is an argument which is being made forcefully in debates over cultural identity: ‘... ethnic identity and difference are socially produced in the here and now, not archeologically salvaged from the disappearing past’;⁴⁵ and Homi Bhabha inquires,

Can I just clarify that what to me is problematic about the understanding of the ‘fundamentalist’ position in the Rushdie case is that it is *represented* as archaic, almost medieval. It may sound very strange to us, it may sound absolutely absurd to some people, but the point is that the demands over *The Satanic Verses* are being made *now*, out of a particular political state that is functioning very much in our time ...⁴⁶

Those who focus on what they see as the terrifying simultaneity of today, would presumably find such a view of the world problematical, and would long for such ‘ethnic identities’ and ‘fundamentalisms’ to be (re)placed in the past so that one story of progression between differences, rather than an account of the production of a number of different differences at one moment in time, could be told. That this cannot be done is the real meaning of the contrast between thinking in terms of three dimensions plus one and recognizing fully the inextricability of the four dimensions together. What used to be thought of as ‘the problem of geographical description’ is actually the more general difficulty of dealing with a world which is 4-D.

But all this leads to a fourth characteristic of an alternative view of space, as part of space–time. For precisely that element of the chaotic, or dislocated, which is intrinsic to the spatial has effects on the social phenomena which constitute it. Spatial form as ‘outcome’ (the happenstance juxtapositions and so forth) has emergent powers which can have effects on subsequent events. Spatial form can alter the future course of the very histories which have produced it. In relation to Laclau what this means, ironically, is that one of the sources of the dislocation, on the

existence of which he (in my view correctly) insists, is precisely the spatial. The spatial (in my terms) is precisely one of the sources of the temporal (in his terms). In relation to Jameson the (at least partial) chaos of the spatial (which he recognizes) is precisely one of the reasons why the temporal is not, and cannot be, so tidy and monolithic a tale as he might wish. One way of thinking about all this is to say that the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics, just as the temporal is to geography. Another way is to insist on the inseparability of time and space, on their joint constitution through the interrelations between phenomena; on the necessity of thinking in terms of space–time.

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Notes

- 1 H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, Blackwell 1991), p. 3.
- 2 E. Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London, Verso, 1990), p. 68. Thanks to Ernesto Laclau for many long discussions during the writing of this article.
- 3 F. Jameson, *Postmodernism; or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London, Verso, 1991).
- 4 Laclau, *New Reflections*, pp. 41, 69.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 42. See, for instance, the discussion in M. Rustin, 'Place and time in socialist theory', *Radical Philosophy*, no. 47, 1987, pp. 30–6.
- 6 Laclau, *New Reflections*, pp. 82 (my emphasis), 42, 68.
- 7 Laclau, *New Reflections*, p. 92. And in this sense, of course, it could be said that Laclau's space is 'political' because any representation is political. But this is the case only in the sense that *different* spaces, different 'cognitive mappings', to borrow Jameson's terminology, can express different political stances. It still leaves each space – and thus the concept of space – as characterized by closure and immobility, as containing no sense of the open, creative possibilities for political action/effectivity. Space is the realm of the discourse of closure, of the fixation of meaning.
- 8 Laclau, *New Reflections*, p. 41 (my emphasis).
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43 (my emphases).
- 10 P. Anderson, 'A culture in contraflow', *New Left Review*, no. 180, pp. 41–78; and no. 182, pp. 85–137.
- 11 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 275.
- 12 See, for instance, D. Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1984); D. Gregory and J. Urry (eds), *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1985); and E. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Verso, London, 1989).

- 13 It should be noted that the argument that 'the spatial' is particularly important in the current era is a different one from the one being made here. The argument about the nature of postmodernity is an empirical one about the characteristics of these times. The argument developed within geography was an in-principle position concerning the nature of explanation, and the role of the spatial within this.
- 14 Laclau, *New Reflections*, p. 41.
- 15 See, for instance, J. Flax, 'Political philosophy and the patriarchal unconscious: a psychoanalytic perspective on epistemology and metaphysics', in S. Harding and M.B. Hintikka (eds), *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht, Reidel, 1983), pp. 245–81. And in the same volume, the Introduction by Harding and Hintikka (pp. ix–xix), and L. Lange, 'Woman is not a rational animal: on Aristotle's biology of reproduction', pp. 1–15. Also J. Flax, 'Post-modernism and gender relations in feminist theory', in L.J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (London, Routledge, 1990), pp. 39–62 and N. Harstock, 'Foucault on power: a theory for women?', in the same volume, pp. 157–75.
- 16 N. Jay, 'Gender and dichotomy', *Feminist Studies*, 7, no. 1, 1981 (Spring), pp. 38–56, here p. 54.
- 17 G. Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy* (London, Methuen, 1984).
- 18 Jay, 'Gender and dichotomy', p. 47.
- 19 Laclau, *New Reflections*, p. 41.
- 20 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 269.
- 21 See, for instance, D. Dinnerstein, *The Rocking of the Cradle and the Ruling of the World* (London, Women's Press, 1987); M. le Dœuff, *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, etc.* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1991); and Lloyd, *The Man of Reason*.
- 22 Lloyd, *The Man of Reason*, p. 101.
- 23 E. Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London, Virago, 1991).
- 24 Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City*, pp. 157, 87.
- 25 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp. 363, 362.
- 26 Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*; and D. Gregory, 'Chinatown, part three? Soja and the missing spaces of social theory', *Strategies*, no. 3, 1990.
- 27 T. Eagleton, Foreword to K. Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988), p. xii.
- 28 Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, p. 8.
- 29 S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, transl. H.M. Parshley (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972), p. 97.
- 30 R. Stannard, *Grounds for Reasonable Belief* (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1989).
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 33 Laclau, *New Reflections*, pp. 41, 69.

- 34 An alternative explanation of why such structures are labelled spatial is available. Moreover it is an explanation which relates also to the much wider question (although in fact it is rarely questioned) of why structuralist thought, or certain forms of it, has so often been dubbed spatial. This is that, since such structures are seen to be non-dynamic systems, they are argued to be non-temporal. They are static, and thus lacking in a time dimension. So, by a knee-jerk response they are called spatial. Similarly with the distinction between diachrony and synchrony. Because the former is sometimes seen as temporal, its 'opposite' is automatically characterized as spatial (although in fact not by Laclau, for whom certain forms of diachrony may also be 'spatial' – see p. 42). This, however, returns us to the critique of a conceptualization of space simply and only in terms of a lack of temporality. Atemporality is not a sufficient, or satisfactory, definition of the spatial. Things can be static without being spatial – the assumption, noted earlier, that anything lacking a transformative dynamic is spatial can not be maintained in positive terms; it is simply the (unsustainable) result of associating transformation solely with time. Moreover, while a particular synchrony (synchronic form) may have spatial characteristics, in its extension and configuration, that does not mean that it is a sufficient definition of space/spatial itself.
- 35 Laclau, *New Reflections*, pp. 84, 184.
- 36 Stannard, *Grounds for Reasonable Belief*, p. 33.
- 37 However, the social sciences deal with physical space too. All material phenomena, including social phenomena, are spatial. Any definition of space must include reference to its characteristics of extension, exclusivity, juxtaposition, and so on. Moreover, not only do the relationships between these phenomena create/define space–time but also the spacing (and timing) of phenomena enables and constrains the relationships themselves. Thus, it is necessary for social science to be at least consistent with concepts of physical space, although a social-science concept could also have additional features. The implications for the analysis of 'natural' space – of physical geography – are similar. Indeed, as Laclau argues, even physical space is temporal and therefore in his own lexicon not spatial: 'the real – including physical space – is in the ultimate instance temporal' (pp. 41–2). While I disagree with the labelling as spatial and temporal I agree with the sense of this – but why only 'in the ultimate instance'?
- 38 M. Foucault, 'Of other spaces', *Diacritics*, Spring, 1986, pp. 22–7, here p. 22.
- 39 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 374.
- 40 D. Massey, 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place', in J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson and L. Tickner (eds), *Mapping the Futures* (London, Routledge, 1993).
- 41 Laclau, *New Reflections*, p. 69.
- 42 H.C. Darby, 'The problem of geographical description', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 30, 1962, pp. 1–14; here p. 2.
- 43 I am hesitant here in interpreting Jameson because, inevitably, his position has developed over the course of his work. I am sure that he would not in fact see narrative as unproblematic. Yet the counterposition of it to his concept

of spatiality, and the way in which he formulates that concept, does lead, in those parts of his argument, to that impression being given.

44 Laclau, *New Reflections*, p. 75.

45 M.P. Smith, 'Postmodernism, urban ethnography, and the new social space of ethnic identity', forthcoming in *Theory and Society*.

46 In 'Interview with Homi Bhabha', in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), pp. 207–21, here p. 215. At this point, as at a number of others, the argument links up with the discussion by Peter Osborne in his 'Modernity is a qualitative, not a chronological, category', *New Left Review*, no. 192, pp. 65–84.