Abstract

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Space and Everyday Life in Cairo’s City of the Dead

Cairo’s City of the Dead is negotiated between binaries: death and life, sacred and profane, formal and informal, sanctioned and subversive. The present study first exposes these binaries through institutional stories and stories from the inhabitants. Then, it shows how the City of the Dead learns from daily life to blur the boundaries between spatial dualities, creating what can be labeled as “minor architecture” within the existing built space. Among these dualities are indoor/outdoor, public/private, and work/home. The study employs qualitative tactics to explore the spatial negotiations as manifested by the stories of everyday life. The study shows that the City of the Dead negotiated the distinction between spatial dualities with varying degrees.