

Part II

Cases in Point

Numerous commentators have observed that the two chief geographical scales on which the defining social and political currents of the neoliberal world system manifest themselves are the transnational and the local. While the chapters of the preceding section have considered how different authors have made sense of such global core attributes of neoliberalism as wealth polarization, the erosion of the social state, and the increasingly political sway of financial institutions and other corporations through representing their impact on disparate fictionalized locales, the following three chapters consider the localized character of neoliberalism in two of its most pronounced unalloyed spatializations: first in the specific socio-historical locale of Dubai, then in the spatial type of the theme park. The spaces of both place sharply in evidence the impact of neoliberal economic relations and governance on the production of space. In Dubai we can see the sort of built environment and the kinds of spatialized human relations that emerge when free market capitalism infuses all corners of a social order without being significantly tempered by powerful countervailing cultural formations and social institutions in a society rapidly moving from the economic periphery to the semiperiphery and then perhaps center of the emergent neoliberal world system. In the theme park we can see the architecture of inveterately commodified leisure concretized as exclusionary spectacle for the global financial elite. The following chapters will consider, along these lines, how the bodies of narrative fiction consigned to these two signature neoliberal spaces conceptualize the operational dynamics of each.