Chapter 8

Psychoanalytic Approaches

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> We are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations to other men. (Freud 1961: 26)
>
> The best image to sum up the unconscious is Baltimore in the early morning. (Lacan 1972: 189)

Introduction

On the 27th of August 1909, the *George Washington* ocean liner entered New York City's harbor. Aboard, Sigmund Freud reportedly turned to fellow psychoanalyst Carl Jung and said, "don't they know we're bringing them the plague?" A fortnight later, Freud delivered five lectures at Clark University and sealed the international status of psychoanalysis. How, then, could Freud, having coined the word only 15 years previously, boldly compare psychoanalysis to a plague? Given that the vocabulary of contemporary popular culture has become suffused with phrases such as the "Ego," "fetish," and "unconscious," what is still so virulent about psychoanalysis that makes geographers like Steve Pile compare psychoanalytic theory to an "unpleasant experience, just like measles" (Pile 1996: 81)? And why should cultural geographers risk infection, prompting Gillian Rose to report in *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (2001) that "despite its dangers, psychoanalytic theory is being used by some geographers as a critical tool to reinterpret and reconfigure different kinds of geographies" (Rose 2000: 654)?

Unlike the disciplines of Art Criticism or English Literature, thorough engagements with psychoanalysis in Geography have emerged only recently. Pile has argued that most geographers have assumed that psychoanalysis is obsessed with the person(al) and unable to critique cultural-political struggles (1998: 204). And yet, innovative analyses of space and culture pervade many psychoanalytical writings. In the first epigraph, for example, Freud articulates human vulnerability through the

ineluctable spatial relations between bodies, psyches, environments, and social relations. The psychoanalytic insistence on the persistence of space in, through, beyond, and between material and psychical ellipses of selves, others, and worlds leads Pile to declare that "[p]sychoanalysis is, after all, a spatial discipline" (1996: 77).

Psychoanalysis is composed of methods, *praxes*, and complex theories revised and contested between and within its various 'schools of thought.' This chapter examines the ways in which differing psychoanalytic approaches have been reinterpreted and used by cultural geographers. Now, French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan reminds us that "[s]aying it all is literally impossible: words fail" (Lacan 1990: 3). This little chapter will inevitably fail to do justice to the theoretical breadth and intricacies of psychoanalysis and the approaches. Readers are therefore advised to scrutinize the references (and their references) cited ahead.[1] I now turn briefly to consider two premises that made Freud's psychoanalytical discoveries so infectious.

Two Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis[2]

It is often claimed that Freud dealt humanity's pride a third blow. Nicolaus Copernicus discovered that the earth was not the center of the universe. Charles Darwin claimed that humans were biologically more similar to evolved apes than God's creation. Freud ushered in a new mode of science and reflexivity by refusing to equate the mind (Ego) with consciousness by 'discovering' the existence of the dynamic unconscious that could speak.

The unconscious

As an adjective the Freudian unconscious refers to psychical processes that are not subject to consciousness at a given moment. As a noun, the unconscious refers to one of the three "psychical localities" outlined in Freud's first "topographical" theory of the mind composed of the conscious, preconscious, and the unconscious. In this model, the unconscious is not opposed to consciousness but is the radical division and irreducible difference between consciousness and itself. The unconscious is an unrealized discourse from an "Other Scene" beyond space, time, negation, and contradiction. Composed of traumatic prohibitions and cruel injunctions, the unconscious comprises repressed painful "ideational representatives" – signifiers and memories usually of a sexual nature. The unconscious is not (as is commonly supposed) a hidden repository of wild emotions or improper urges. The unconscious *pulsates from within* everyday consciousness and emerges when 'things go wrong.' It speaks capriciously and stubbornly through distortions or symptoms exemplified by dreams and slips of the tongue. Freud eventually developed a "structural" theory of the psyche composed of three interrelated "agencies": the negotiating Ego that adapts to and guides reality; the censorious Super-Ego constituted by parental prohibitions and demands; and the chaotic Id associated with illicit drives.

The drive

Freud argued that human pleasure and procreation do not coincide easily. In contrast to the biological and innate attributes of "instinct," Freud argued that a

psychical montage of "drives" coordinated human sexuality. Distinct from natural functions and independent from a particular object of satisfaction, the drives are highly variable and determined by our cultural and historical backgrounds. Freud contended that sexuality was connected to the unconscious and emerged once the drive was isolated from natural functions. Freud asserted that perversity (fetishism, same sex desire, and masturbation) was the condition of sexuality *per se* and constituted infantile sexuality. According to Freud, babies lack a self-image of a unified body and a predetermined sexual object choice. Babies are "polymorphously perverse" – composed of multiple bodily erotogenic zones that exist prior to cultural naturalization. Freud radically announced that "all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious" (Freud 1975: 11).

Approaching Psychoanalytic Geography

When Freud elucidates psychoanalytic concepts he usually unravels their unique spatialities. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961: 17), for example, Freud discusses the preservation of "memory-traces" using the analogy of the "history of the Eternal City": Rome (see also Pile 1996: 241–3). *Civilization and Its Discontents* is Freud's most sustained psychoanalytic critique of Western culture's cultivation of anxiety, guilt, and enmity. Freud discusses tensions between necessary repression, social harmony, and individual aggressivity. He counterposes the biblical injunction "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" with the Latin dictum "man is a wolf to man" (1961: 65–9), and concludes the essay with somber speculations on the menacing auspices of Hitler and Fascism.

Clearly, psychoanalysis is not a kind of *psyche*analysis – restricted to the analyses of interior minds on indoor couches (see Bondi 1999). The unconscious is *outside* (Lacan 1998: 131) *qua* the symbolic and material cultures of malls, magazines, and monuments. Transference – the displacement of affect from one idea or person to another – moves in mysterious ways across these pages, down optic cables, resonating in the lives and lines of movie stars and fans, politicians and voters, taxi drivers and passengers. Even fantasies reside in airplane safety instructions that depict passengers in postcrash scenarios "like a nice collective lagoon holiday . . . under the guidance of an experienced swimming instructor" (Žižek 1999: 91).

Psychoanalysis, then, lures cultural geographers because its categories are already thoroughly spatial providing theoretical orientation to examine complex cultural practices, identities, discourses, and landscapes. Freudian and psychoanalytic space is precariously and terminally liminal, swarming amidst the porosity of borders, spectrality of objects, and the uncanniness of the familiar. Moreover, psychoanalysis enables geographers to theorize space itself by showing how spaces of cultural difference teem with recurrent forces of pain, destruction, and aggressivity borne out of psychical conflicts and deficiencies.

Reproaching Psychoanalytic Geography

Do not get carried away though! Psychoanalysis, the "universalizing, decorporealized, and culturally decontextualized account of psychosexual development" (Blum

& Nast 1996: 571) has been justifiably submitted to numerous *cultural* critiques. For many scholars, psychoanalysis enforces patriarchal reinscriptions of the 'feminine,' normative, heterosexist structures of gender, repressive understandings of power and subjectivity, and disavows its geographical and historical biases for studying predominantly Western white bourgeois nuclear families. These charges are serious but extremely valuable in making psychoanalytic approaches in geography more vigilant and responsible. The 'bad press' that psychoanalysis occasionally gets, however, is usually symptomatic of valuable critical engagements rather than an inherent inability to explicate various cultural geographies.

Similarly, in *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space, and Subjectivity* (1996), Pile cautions that psychoanalytic concepts cannot "be easily transposed into, superimposed onto, or mapped alongside, geography – regardless of the kind of geography" (1996: 81). Pile bemoans that when geographers have found it expedient to acknowledge psychoanalysis they have usually misunderstood or simply ignored its theoretical premises. Pile notes that despite a mutual interest in perception, behavior, and the mind, the subdiscipline of behavioral geography did not engage with psychoanalysis. Premised on a "black box" model of the mind and a disbelief in the dynamic unconscious, Pile argues that behavioral geography was ultimately unable to specify exactly how the mind worked in its interaction with the phenomenal environment.

Pile observes that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, most critiques of behavioral geography came from 'humanistic' and 'radical' geographers. The former (influenced by phenomenology) examined cultural symbolic meanings, and the latter (influenced by Marxism) critiqued cultural power structures. Attempting to go beyond the "conscious, observable, known world" (1996: 73), both humanistic and radical geography addressed the question of human subjectivity and agency. Pile argues, however, that nonpsychoanalytic investment in the category of "experience," the binary of "structure and agency," and an assumption that cultural meanings were transparently communicable limited their critiques.

Pile's book is a fascinating and extremely useful introduction to psychoanalysis and geography that also offers strategies to critically understand subjectivity and spatialities of the body in urban contexts. Pile triangulates Henri Lefebvre's formula of "spatial practice, representation of space, and representational space," with Freud's "unconscious, preconscious, and conscious," and Lacan's "Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic" (1996: 155). Pile also addresses the political possibilities of various approaches to a "psychoanalysis of space" (1996: 181), and it is to these various psychoanalytic approaches within geography that I now turn.

Freudian Approaches

Dream spaces

> Dreams – and cities – remain the guardians of the moderns' sleep: an elaborate play of remembering and forgetting; showing and disguising. (Pile 2000: 83–4)

In "Freud, Dreams and Imaginative Geographies," Pile sets up a "dialogue between Freud's ideas and the ways in which geography is imagined" (Pile 1998: 205). Dreams for Freud are the "royal road to the unconscious" and prove the mind is

split between consciousness and restless creativity. According to Pile, Freud did not need to revise his theory of dreams presented in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1965) because of "the way in which he thought *spatially* about the mind" (1998: 206).

Freud understands dreams as the "[disguised] fulfillment of a [suppressed or repressed] wish" and "the guardians of sleep" (Pile 1998: 209). Dreams guard sleep by staging *disguised* situations that dramatize wishes. The transcription process of "dream-work" involves "condensation, displacement, the means of representation and secondary revision" (1998: 209). Images – the "manifest content" of dreams are composed of symbols that condense a vast array of contradictory meanings – the dream's "latent thought." Pile contends that Freudian "dream space" is not a "container" but rather a connective medium of "associative paths" (1998: 211) composed of psychical "density and intensity produced by their location in the interweaving of thought, feelings, and meanings" (Pile 1998: 211). The process of "displacement" transfers or partially censors the intensity of psychical investments through relocation. Using spatial analogies and relationships, dreams displace psychical intensity by investing and overdetermining "seemingly meaningless images with apparently inexplicable feelings" (1998: 212). Pile (1998: 213) declares "there is a geography to dreams" where "locality is almost a paradigm for dreams" blending dreaming and waking life. Pile describes the personal and cultural geographies of desire, identity, meaning, and power in a dream documented by Freud as follows:

> the desire for sex which produced the dream of the policeman, the church and the landscape is located within a web of meanings which have 'anchoring points' not only in a fantasized topography of the male and female body and also in the imaginative spatiality of fucking (as a number of steps, whether peaceable or difficult), but also in the social construction of the male body as active (like a person) and the female body as passive (like a landscape) and also in the social relations of marriage, sexuality, religion, work, class, criminality and morality. (Pile 1998: 213)

Dream spaces are networks under constant erasure and revision that rework causality through "collocation, juxtaposition, fragmentation . . . recomposition, reversals . . . [and] spatial analogies" (Pile 1998: 215). Freud's "spatial thinking," specifically his theory of "dream-work" allows Pile to conceptualize imaginative geographies of interior and exterior worlds articulated in Edward Said's understanding of "Orientalism." The Orient is an imagined colonized place, produced discursively through stories and stereotypes as Europe's "collective day-dream" (Said quoted in Pile 1998: 222). Orientalism "allowed the West to dream of adventures, sexual encounters, fame and fortune – and of Empire" (1998: 222). Overinvested with meaning and echoing the process of dream-work, imaginative geographies dramatize differences of meanings by localizing and distancing the East from the West through displacement.

The Dreamcity

In "Sleepwalking in the Modern City: Walter Benjamin and Sigmund Freud in the World of Dreams," Pile (2000) contends that urban spaces are comparable to dreams (see also Robinson 1998). Pile examines Walter Benjamin's use of dream analysis in *One Way Street*, written in 1925. Benjamin aims to "induce a shock that

would wake up the [alienated] moderns" (Pile 2000: 79) from a culture that fetishizes commodities. Benjamin fans revolutionary sparks in writing about the "dreamhouses of modernity" (2000: 79) – restless urban spaces exemplified by derelict Parisian arcades. Similarly, Pile's notion of a "Dreamcity" conceals fears and desires through its "dreamcity-work" or "unconscious logics" that produce "seemingly desireless, fearless, and absurd elements" (2000: 84). Pile contends that there is "no one dream that articulates the city, nor one aspect of the city that defines its dreaming" (2000: 84). That Pile acknowledges that someone's dream may be another person's nightmare leads us to examine the possible relationship between the political and psychoanalysis.

Racist Oedipalization

> The mapping of incest onto blackness onto the end of civilization itself thus informed bodily and spatial forms of segregation that were culturally, politically, and economically upheld for unconscious and racist familiarized reasons in cities and rural areas across the country. (Nast 2000: 231)

The political and psychoanalytic scope of Heidi Nast's "Mapping the 'Unconscious': Racism and the Oedipal Family" (2000) is prefigured in the article's key words: "family," "racist-oedipal hysteria," "slavery," "unconscious," "urban renewal," and "white supremacy." Nast's paper examines eight "mappings" that include US plantation (post)slavery settings in the south and urban racial segregation in mid-twentieth-century Chicago. Examining cultural practices at various geographic scales, Nast theorizes how "embodied unconscious emotions and desires have impelled the construction of many racist landscapes" (2000: 217).

How can the unconscious be political or even racist? For Nast, an irreducible and incommensurable cultural split between a prelinguistic *imaginary* (infant–maternal relations, practice, ritual, and performance) and a linguistic *symbolic* (law of the father, language, and the spoken) that is "*unconsciously instrumental to modern forms of* exploitation" and "understood as a strategic political geographic device" (Nast 2000: 243). Nast uses "the word 'unconscious' to connote a kind of blinding of oneself to the ways in which the body and desire speaks itself" (2000: 242) through symbolic *and* imaginary spaces. "Oedipal relations" are created and managed to negotiate this traumatic split and also maintain racist "colonial-familial relations instrumental to plantation and industrial capitalism" (2000: 243). Nast's understanding of culture draws on Freud's theories of Oedipal myths that she argues work "precisely because *they are made* to carry out work – just as in any other culture, beliefs and practices repose through mythical tales and places" (2000: 243).

Freud thought culture could only exist once prohibitions deflected incestuous desires away from the family and toward the domain of the "law of the Father." Freud argues that Oedipal desire disappears when the son submits to the law of the Father and displaces maternal desire to female persons outside the maternal body and home. The idealized modern US Oedipal-cultural triad of Mother–Son–Father, Nast argues, is coded white, while the prohibitive incestuous threat – "the Repressed" – is typically "colored" black. The symbolically white mother, then, is unconsciously defined as a vulnerable object of incestuous desire from black "boys"

– carriers of unconscious desires. Accordingly, incest with the white mother was unconsciously racialized and black male exploitation in the US was libidinized. Nast argues that white fears could not be spoken because they were so psychically and culturally repressed in a "labyrinthine maze" of familial desire, political-economy and symbolic necessity. As a result, white fears could only be spoken through the idiom of violence in the reassertion of their supposedly racially superior symbolic fatherhood.

Nast demonstrates how unconscious space is an embodied, structured, libidinized, and violent *sociospatial effect* that emerged "as an embodied spatial effect unevenly across space and time in tandem with European colonialisms across the world" (2000: 215) in the racist and familialized strictures of industrial capitalism. Colonial conquests and violence were sexualized and spatially displaced or repressed by white Oedipal families into the cultural unconscious. During the post-Reconstruction period in the US, black men were lynched and castrated whenever a "mythological black man was seen as potentially touching, approaching, or raping a white woman" (Nast 1999: 217). To compound their subordination to white heteropaternal Oedipal 'law,' enslaved black men were infantilized. Through the denial of a last name and interpellations of "son" and "boy," black slaves were controlled yet feared members of a white cultural family.

Nast's argument is powerful and instructive. First, we read how the dynamic unconscious is materialized in cultural practices and meanings. Second, her psychoanalytic approach differs from Marxian analyses of "capitalist logics" in ideology by examining the "illogical rages and actions" to provide a potentially "greater explanatory force to 'race' " (2000: 217). Third, Nast's paper challenges the belief that simply modifying the causal relation between cultural landscapes and psyches can easily solve heterosexism and racism. Finally, Nast argues that potentially racist and colonial forces implicit in Freud's theorizations of Oedipal drama must be acknowledged to avoid further compliance with racism.

Uncanny landscapes and sexed cities

Robert Wilton's "The Constitution of Difference: Space and Psyche in Landscapes of Exclusion" examines how cultural relations may be "troubled by the proximity of difference" (1998: 176). Wilton uses Freud's notion of the "uncanny" that designates feelings and things that are unsettling but involve the reappearance of unusually familiar elements from unconscious concealment. Wilton chooses a psychoanalytic approach because "existing [urban] studies fail to adequately conceptualize the origins of people's behavior" (1998: 180). He provides a case study of a 25-bed AIDS hospice in a Los Angeles neighborhood where illness and death deeply disturbs local residents. The effects on the community are uncanny because the hospice symbolized vulnerability and mortality, "supposedly the very antithesis of the living body and yet something which people find disturbingly familiar" (1998: 181).

In "Sexing the City" (1998), Liz Bondi argues that feminist interpretations of urban landscapes relying on the nonpsychoanalytic distinction between gender and sex generally close off questions of sex, sexuality, and sexual practice (see also Nast 1998). Bondi contrasts this "sex-free" tendency, where heterosexuality appears as an integral part of considerations of gender identity, with gay and lesbian studies of the city that critique hegemonic forms of heterosexuality. Arguing that gender is "far more complex than implied by the categories 'women' and 'men' " (1998: 178),

Bondi's feminist approach utilizes a Freudian perspective of feminine and masculine identities that "are more like masks or fictions we create in order to sustain myths about our subjective integrity, which we need to operate within our rule-governed social milieus" (1998: 183). Bondi analyzes the cultural politics of gentrification and prostitution in neighborhoods of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Object-relations Theory

The main proponents of object-relations theory were Michael Balint, Donald W. Winnicott, and W. R. D. Fairbairn. The theory was established in England during the interwar years and became one of the most prominent post-Freudian psychoanalytic approaches. Object-relations theory includes a number of theoretical points of view, but generally deemphasizes the role of the drive by focusing on the embodied intersubjective formation of the psyche in relation to 'objects.' These objects of mediation include mothers, fathers, fantasies, toys, and parts of the body (typically breasts, fingers, and mouths) oscillating between the external environment of the "not me" and the child's internalized mental representations. Psychical boundaries are installed to separate good (sources of comfort) and bad (anxiety-provoking) objects to prevent the dissolution of the self. Objects, however, sometimes embody good and bad qualities, as is exemplified by the primary caretaker, usually codified as the mother who provides and withdraws love. Furthermore, introjection, the evaluation of the self or ego by living through and taking in objects, may be continuous and excessive so that the child 'disappears' into a dependent relation with objects. Projection is the attribution of feelings, typically love and hate, to other objects, and can be excessively hostile and impair the child's capacity for empathy (Sibley 1995: 6).

Geographies of exclusion

> The construction of community and the bounding of social groups are part of the same problem as the separation of self and other. Collective expressions of fears of others, for example, call on images which constitute bad objects for the self and thus contribute to the definition of the self. (Sibley 1995: 15)

In *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (1995), David Sibley endorses an object-relations approach to cultural analyses and notes that Melanie Klein views the "emerging sense of the border, of separateness and self, as a social and cultural process" (1995: 6). Sibley maps cultural geographies of the discrepant – composed of exclusion, rejection, purification, transgression, and distancing – "between the inner (pure) self and the outer (defiled) self" (1995: 7). According to Sibley, these geographies collapse public and private spheres, and amplify binaries between cultural 'selves' and 'others.' In this way, dominant cultural groups attempt to consolidate power by marginalizing the threats of 'others' exemplified by the elderly, disabled, women, criminals, blacks, gays, and children.

"Geographies of exclusion" mobilize cultural stereotypes of 'good selves' and 'bad others.' Sibley uses examples of photographs of gypsies labeled as "criminal types" and the European regulation of colonial and racial spaces through the moral use of the color black to codify disease and shame, and white to codify innocence and safety. Similarly, Sibley's chapter "Mapping the Pure and Defiled" demonstrates

how modern media represents cultures of vulnerability and threat. Examples include television advertisements that portray the vulnerability of a child in the "defiled environment of New York City" (1995: 63) and the wild behavior of children requiring the civilizing effects of detergent, mothers, and the home. Sibley uses the same arguments in his Part II, "The Exclusion of Geographies," to analyze the exclusion of "academics as subjects" who were considered to possess dangerous knowledge. Focusing on the urban sociological studies of W. E. B. Dubois, Sibley shows how "processes of social segregation observable in the modern city, for example, are mirrored in the segregation of producers" (1995: xvi).

Transitional spaces and potential places

> Characterizing children as *other* is a particularly thorny problem. (Aitken & Herman 1997: 63)

Stuart Aitken and Thomas Herman's "Gender, Power, and Crib Geography: Transitional Spaces and Potential Places" (1997) attempts to contribute to post-Enlightenment thought by offsetting the tendency to privilege "reason, logic, orderly development" over "frivolity, intuition, emotion, discursive practice, holistic acceptance and collective experience" (1997: 64). Aitken and Herman argue that Winnicott's (1971) concept of "transitional space" – the nonlinear, playful, intuitive, and experimental space that blurs distinctions between self and object and the space from which culture emerges – can illuminate understandings of children's identity formation without serving adults and patriarchy. They argue that Winnicott's ideas parallel Lefebvre's and diverge from the objective distancing and compartmentalizing tendencies of Freud, Lacan, and Jean Piaget, which "[fails] to place the emotional, feeling and playing child within an irreducible web of cultural meaning" (1997: 67). For Aitken and Herman, "what may be missing in geography and child development studies is attention to the ways that play, culture, racial identities and gender formations are conflated within transitional spaces" (1997: 75). "Crib Geography" poses the following questions:

> How can we, as adults, imagine the place of children? It is possible to see ourselves in our children and we can relive some of our own childhood pains and joys through them, but can we fully appreciate the nuances that comprise a child's world? (1997: 64)

These questions are examined in various Western cultural contexts that include adult controlled spaces and designed built environments that belie a dogma of supervision, protection, and behavioral training of children (see also Aitken 2001). They note that the "seemingly neutral space" (1997: 80) of crib, bedroom spaces, and institutions of childcare centers, homeless shelters, residential psychiatric wards, are cultures underpinned by unquestioned adult authority and white, middle-class values. Aitken and Herman caution against using a psychoanalytic approach to reconceptualize play and culture. They assert that Freud's "instinct theory" [*sic*] means "psychoanalytical theory is inherently depoliticizing" (1997: 71), while "Winnicott may be complicit with a patriarchal idealization of child development" (1997: 82).[3] We may now consider how geographers use a Lacanian approach to negotiate another thorny issue – gender and psychoanalysis.

Lacanian Approaches

Lacan has emerged as one of the most influential and original psychoanalytic theorists since Freud and is immensely popular in film, gender, and cultural studies. Lacan's work, however, is often debunked for its dense elliptical style or provocative statements such as "the unconscious is structured like a language," and "there is no such thing as a sexual relationship." The clinical dimension and conceptual variations in Lacan's 50 years of work (most of which has not been translated into English), however, have been overlooked by most Anglo-American scholars.

Lacan's complex concepts, such as the "phallus," "mirror stage," "*objet petit a*," and "*jouissance*" revolutionized psychoanalytic debates over theory and practice. Lacan challenges other psychoanalytic approaches (most notably object-relations theory and Ego psychology) through his "return to the meaning of Freud" and recasting of concepts such as displacement and condensation into linguistic equivalents (metaphor and metonymy). Lacan's theory of the registers is arguably the most constant reference throughout his entire work. Lacan argues that psychic life is coordinated by dynamic interconnections between the "Imaginary" (image, illusion, deception, seduction, meaning, alienation, luring, and rivalry), the "Symbolic" (language, universality, absence, death, and lack), and the "Real" (trauma, indeterminate, unknowable, anxiety, impossibility). One reason for Lacan's popularity is how his theoretical insights prefigure the predominant psychodynamics of fantasy, narcissism, and the visual in modern Western culture (see Blum & Nast 2000: 183, 200).

Shopping with Lacan

The subfield "geographies of consumption" echoes Lacanian psychoanalysis with its interest in cultures of self-actualization, images, fetishism, spectacle, and pleasure. In "Once-upon-a-Time in the Commodity World: An Unofficial Guide to Mall of America" (1999), Jon Goss argues that Mall of America's spaces of nature, collective myth, individual fantasy, and memory fulfill vital cultural and psychological functions. Goss critically aligns the Lacanian Real with the Mall's "specks of dirt," that betray its illusion of semiotic perfection and exploitative relations of production (1999: 72), and the Lacanian Symbolic to facilitate understandings of commodity fetishism that do not

> misperceive objects as reifications of social relations, or that relations between things displace relations between people, although this is true, but rather that complex relations between people and things, or better, people-things, are constitutive parts of the symbolic order. (1999: 71)

Following the psychoanalytically inflected writings of Benjamin and Lefebvre, and Slavoj Žižek's Lacanian rendering of ideology (1997), Goss approaches commodity fetishism by neither conceiving the consumer as dupe nor asking "what The Mall really is, to seek 'the real' beneath the 'plague of fantasies.'" Instead, Goss wants to "take pleasure [*jouissance*] [*sic*] in the play of reality and fantasy, while critically examining how we actually believe in this distinction" (1999: 49).

Lacan 'for' feminism

> *What if this real, this claim that there is a real space, itself depends on desire, is itself an imagined fantasy? . . . Whose desire, whose space would this be? Who would it constitute? Who would dwell in it, and how?* (Rose 1996: 62, emphasis in original)

Three French feminists, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray, appropriated psychoanalytic theoretical premises to expose the systematic repression of feminine and maternal experiences and the undue bias toward masculinity in Western thought. Lacan was openly hostile to feminism and ridiculed its political aspirations. Yet some feminists (including geographers) have found Lacan's theories useful to subvert binary conceptions of innate and fixed gender differences by emphasizing their precarious psychical-linguistic dimensions constituted by patriarchal culture.

In "As if the Mirrors had Bled: Masculine Dwelling, Masculinist Theory and Feminist Masquerade" (1996), Gillian Rose situates her writing in "'a between' between us, an around, a space, in order to initiate a dialogue" (1996: 61) with Irigaray – a practicing analyst and former student of Lacan. Irigaray's notion of the "imaginary" that conflates the symbolic, bodily, and cultural, enables Rose to question the masculinist insistence by geographers "to distinguish between real and non-real space" (1996: 62). Rose (1995) also draws on Lacan's notions of "the gaze" and "symbolic castration" to theorize the fragility inherent to masculine cultural understandings of visualized spaces of self/knowledge and the politics of representation therein.

Jenny Robinson's article "Feminism and the Spaces of Transformation" (2000) draws on the work of Kristeva, who "encourages us to read psychoanalytic narratives within a sociohistorical frame, and to question their gendered assumptions" (2000: 297). Robinson illustrates Kristeva's insistence that the Symbolic (cultural relations and practices) can be "shattered" and that "the semiotic" and "abjection" can provide a conceptual basis to show "the persistent *failure* of borders, distinctions and separations" (2000: 296).

Bondi (1997) asserts, in "In Whose Words? On Gender Identities, Knowledge and Writing Practices," that despite Lacan's antifeminism, androcentricism, and chauvinism, he offers "a strategy of unsettling patriarchal practices from a position self-consciously within that heritage" (1997: 251) that "undercuts men's as well as women's claims to authoritative speaking positions" (1997: 253–4). In "Jacques Lacan's Two-dimensional Subjectivity" (2000), Blum and Nast have deftly argued that "Lacan's analysis of human subjectivity is flawed" (2000: 200) because it privileges the visual, suppresses the material-maternal body, relies on "normative heterosexuality," restricts the world to "a closed system of mirror and phallus" (2000: 201), and reduces infantile sexual alterity "through renouncing the mother's body" (2000: 185). Nonetheless, they conclude that Lacan still presents geographers with important theoretical orientations to renegotiate heteropatriarchy and spatial oppressions (see also Blum 1998; Blum & Nast 1996). Moreover, psychoanalysis still presents geographers with important opportunities to interrogate what is meant by "culture."

Conclusion: *More* Psychoanalytic Approaches?

Hopefully, the epigraph where Lacan compares the unconscious with Baltimore appears less peculiar now. Psychoanalysis does not so much blur boundaries between inner and outer as it explicates how supposed intimate inner spaces are inhabited by supposed alien outer and vice versa. The unconscious, for example, is

thus externally materialized in everyday cultural contexts, "or to quote *The X Files* motto: 'The truth is out there' " (Žižek 1999: 89). Geographers choose psychoanalytic approaches because they show how the restrictive binaries (self versus other, material versus ideal, and subjective versus objective) that are operationalized in culture are always out of sync. Psychoanalysis enables powerful *critical explanations* at various geographic scales of seemingly irrational or normative cultures of sexism, racism, and economic exploitation configured in 'human, all too-human' geographies of fear, violence, and fantasy.

Nonetheless, more intensive psychoanalytic approaches are possible. To be sure, "[t]he size and complexity of the field make any engagement with psychoanalysis appear somewhat daunting" (Pile, quoted in Wilton 1998: 183), and sometimes "[i]t still feels like musing, all this talk of dreams" (Pile 2000: 85). The complexity of psychoanalysis and the potential radicalism of psychoanalytic approaches have for the most part been compromised. Many cultural geographers have relied heavily on secondary literatures that often assimilate versions of psychoanalysis conforming to understandings of culture *qua* the deconstructive effects of deferred (con)textual signification or constructive discursive practices, rather than the *psychospatial* vicissitudes of the unconscious, fantasy, and desire (see Callard 2003; Kingsbury 2003). Little wonder, then, that for most cultural geographers the writings of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have appeared more palatable and easier to understand than the writings of Freud or Lacan.

NOTES

1. Readers are also advised to read the *Journal of Social & Cultural Geography*, vol. 4 (2003), a theme issue on 'Psychoanalytic Geographies' published just before this book went to press.
2. Cf. Lacan 1998.
3. Aitken and Herman repeat the standard mistake of failing to distinguish between Freud's words *Trieb* (drive) and *Instinkt* (instinct). Psychoanalysis can be 'inherently' politicizing (see Nast 2000; Kingsbury 2003; Žižek 1997, 1999).

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