
Paul Kingsbury and Steve Pile are the doyens of this subfield of human geography and this book comes on the heels of successfully organized panels at the 2014 RGS-IGB Annual International Conference which included several of this book’s contributors as well as the author of this review. As they note in the Preface, it began as an idea from their sessions at the 2011 AAG Annual Meeting and its timely publication will surely stimulate a growing interest. With the inclusion of scholars at all stages of their careers the resulting texts have successfully shown what avenues are most current across the categories that organize the papers into four sections: “Histories and Practices”, “Psychic Life and Its Spaces”, “The Technologies of Becoming a Subject”, and “Social Life and Its Discontents”. Kingsbury and Pile’s own work could fall into each of these headings as well. For example, Kingsbury’s (2007, 2008, 2011a, 2011b) previous work on drives, enjoyment, and social space, and Pile’s (1996, 2008, 2010) earlier research on subjectivity, the body, and the practice of psychoanalytic research in human geography.

Although in the Introduction they trace the genealogy of geography and psychoanalysis back to the 1930s, in many ways this field is still in its early stages. The primary emphasis on Freud throughout leaves wide open further study and interaction with others such as Lacan, Klein, Irigaray, Fanon, Kristeva, and Žižek. A handful of chapters do engage more fully with these analysts’ theories but more a comprehensive treatment will undoubtedly produce equally exciting insights–as acknowledged in the Introduction. The applicability of psychoanalytic theory in the realms of literature (Rabaté 2014), gender studies (Marcus and Mukherjee 2014), film (Marcus 2014), and visual culture (Pollock 2013) make it apparent that the flourishing of its
various permutations provide space for rigorous debates to occur. *Psychoanalytic Geographies* opens a space such that this critical engagement need not be limited to the humanities. Radical geographers will be provided with new tools and modes of inquiry that allow them to incorporate multiple media and reanalyze theories and methods such as autoethnography, as in Chapter 17 “The Uncanny in the Beauty Salon” by Elizabeth Straughan. In Chapter 13, “‘Welcome Home our Military Sisters’: Sexual Difference and Female Veterans with PTSD”, Deborah Thien even outlines the radical political potential of psychoanalytic geographies for supplying policy recommendations which impact the clinical and theoretical as she deploys Irigaray.

Psychoanalysis is shown to be compatible with other theories and methods in human geography such as feminism (Chapters 13, 17-19) and postcolonialism (Chapters 8, 15, 16). Simultaneously there is an ever-present sense of psychoanalysis’ frailty as a contributor to geographical knowledge that is actively dismantled. The editors emphasize “that psychoanalysis has been viewed with some ambivalence (even by those using psychoanalytic concepts), and oftentimes a degree of suspicion and hostility” (p.6). Hopefully the pleasurable findings of this book’s authors will be persuasive enough to convince their colleagues and themselves that the subfield can do away with lengthy justifications.

In Part I, “Histories and Practices”, clear explanations are provided for psychoanalysis’ use within geography. It clarifies that this is not an appropriation of one discipline or method by another but a necessary and fundamental collaboration encouraged by Freud himself. Liz Bondi’s chapter, “On Freud’s Geographies”, shows the explicit connections between psychoanalysis and other non-medical fields and reminds us that Freud “argued that psychoanalysis should be understood as an intrinsically multidisciplinary field” (p.57). It comes across time and again that psychoanalysis has an “inherently spatial approach” (p.90) whether it is recognized by its
practitioners and theorists or not. It is not surprising then that it should be geographers who are spatially sensitive enough to pull out this crucial facet and declare it so glaringly obvious.

In Chapter 7, “A Distributed Unconscious: The Hangover, What Happens in Vegas, and Whether It Stays There or Not”, Steve Pile challenges us to think about the unconscious as both social and spatial through his reading of the 2009 film The Hangover. He sees its setting of Las Vegas “as the location for America’s repressed unconscious” (p.138). Within the city he also lays out “a psychogeography of Las Vegas, entwining desire and fear, sex and money, lost and found” (p.142). The easily approachable topics and terminology make this and other chapters particularly well suited for use by researchers and undergraduate students. Also using film, in Chapter 14, “Periscope Down! Charting Masculine Sexuation in Submarine Films”, Jesse Proudfoot and Paul Kingsbury bring to the attention of geographers Lacan’s notion of sexuation. They find that the conventions of the submarine genre to “stage masculine sexuation” (p.248) are in line “with the idea that masculinity itself is a fantasy, a neurotic relationship to an inaccessible jouissance, and this is nowhere more in evidence than aboard a submarine” (p.247). Rather than an outgrowth of film studies, these chapters should be seen as emblematic of the liberating and radically anti-disciplinary benefits of psychoanalytic methods.

In her chapter “‘Race’, Imperializing Geographies of the Machine, and Psychoanalysis”, Heidi Nast touches on the intercourse of political-economic and social-cultural geographies of colonization vis à vis “the machine”. While such a topic calls to mind the theories of Frantz Fanon, Nast continues down the path of film studies leaving much room for the further development of psychoanalysis and mapping the inequalities of imperialism on bodies. The colonial context as a site of psychoanalytic drives motivating economic actions (or the “libidinal economy”) is continued—and Fanon appears—in Maureen Sioh’s following chapter, “A Small Narrow Space: Postcolonial Territorialization and the Libidinal Economy”. Her argument “that
one of the most far-reaching financial strategies of our time can best be understood as a
defensive mechanism that is affect-driven by historical legacies reaccentuated through the
contemporary competition of hyper-capitalism” (p.280) is provocative and a potent example of
how psychoanalytic geographies may spread and influence other branches of social science such
as behavioral economics and economic history.

Kingsbury and Pile have not left out the visual consideration of spaces that so many other
human geographers have dropped from their analyses. They do so with a series of images from
Sharon Kivland’s “The Unconscious is a City”, and Nazanin Naraghi uses the images of Iranian
artist and graphic designer Houman Mortazavi in Chapter 9, “‘Tehrangeles’, CA: The Aesthetics
of Shame”. The heavy reliance on film in a number of chapters is a reminder of (particularly
Lacanian) psychoanalysis’ strongest hold in cultural studies. The understanding provided in this
collection not only of psychoanalysis in geography but of psychoanalysis as spatial ought to stir
new work in literary theory and visual studies that mirrors *Psychoanalytic Geographies* and
accounts for geographic psychoanalyses. One direction this might take is in bringing into the
conversation urban geographers and those who can analyze, apply, and expand the physical,
visual, and psychic spaces of the urban built environment and architecture (see e.g. Angel 2000;
Holm 2010; Lefebvre 2014).

Many of the chapters are too concise to allow the reader to feel that the full depth of the
argument and innovative method and theory have been demonstrated. Hopefully, this leaves
readers more intrigued than disappointed. What is less emphasized beyond Part I are the ways
geography can teach us about psychoanalysis and that this mingling is not a one-way
relationship. One also wonders what research is being done in non-Anglophone settings and how
broad versus specialized psychoanalytic geographies really are. Nevertheless, this book has hit
the mark in achieving its stated aim “to present to readers as wide a set of options for taking
psychoanalysis forward in their own work as possible; and, second, to demonstrate the breadth, depth, and promise of cutting-edge work in psychoanalytic geographies” (p.6-7). There is much work to be done and radical geographers should avail themselves of the door opened by *Psychoanalytic Geographies*.

**References**


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