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Recently completed doctorates in social and cultural geography

Kathryn Besio

Spatial Stories of Researchers and Travellers in a Balti Village, Pakistan: Jangli Geographies of Gender and Transculturation

Completed at Department of Geography, University of Hawaii at Manoa, December 2001.

In this dissertation, I read and write stories of a contact zone, producing a critical geography of a village in Baltistan, northern Pakistan. My focus is on texts used by geographers, such as maps, photographs and landscape; but also on travelogues, guidebooks and spatial practices, that create geographies. Over the last 160 years, Western researchers, travellers, explorers and tourists have passed through Askole Village and Baltistan, inscribing upon and reading from that landscape relations of power and resistance. I examine this contact zone and the transcultural interactions that take place within it, with a focus on women and children, subjects whose practices are situated at some distance from the representational powers that write it. Women and children in Askole transgress and inscribe their presence in the texts of the contact zone through their everyday practices, which have an historical context in colonial and postcolonial relations.

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Susan Levy

Wheelchair Users and Housing in Dundee: The Social Construction and Spatiality of Disability
Completed at School of Geography and Geosciences, University of St Andrews, September 2001.

The thesis examines the experiences and perceptions of wheelchair users living in different types and tenures of housing in the City of Dundee, Scotland. The interrelationships between space, society and the body are examined in the empirical context of housing, ableism and the disabled body. The voices of wheelchair users are used to illustrate how the geographies of people with disabilities are delineated and constrained by socio-cultural representations of disability. Conceptually, the social model of disability frames the study; however, this framework is critiqued and interrogated through the use of the literature on postmodernism and feminist theory. The social construction of difference, social exclusion and definitions of the normal and aberrant body emerge as key concepts linking analysis of the data at the spatial scales of the neighbourhood, home and the body. Spatial metaphors of 'out of place', 'marginalized' or 'socio-spatially excluded' reflect the impressions people with disabilities have of their interactions with their

living spaces and service providers. The study suggests that greater reciprocal dialogue is required between service users and service providers to broaden the knowledge base from which disability-related housing decisions are made.

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Guillaume Boudisseau
Commercial Areas, Urban Centralities, Actor Strategies in Beirut: Two Examples: Hamra and Verdun
Completed at Tours University and UMR 6592 URBAMA, Tours, October 2001.

Hamra and Verdun are two diverse commercial areas located in West Beirut. Since 1948, Hamra has been built by new socio-economic networks (Lebanese, Armenian, Palestinian traders and oil-money from the Gulf countries) as well as branch traders from downtown Beirut. Since 1990, Verdun has flourished as a franchised stores area, with luxurious shopping malls and global economic expression, sustained by African and Gulf diaspora's money. This thesis highlights the different processes involved in the production of those two areas. Actors' decisions are influenced by several motives: economic strategies (density, diversity, proximity to competitors), integration strategies (a symbolic location as a means of integration in the city), status and visibility (a retail location to show the trader's name, brand and money). Thus, the production of commercial centrality in Beirut can be measured by the density and the diversity of socio-economic networks intersecting, overlapping and func-

tioning on different levels. Currently, my research is about the actors' strategies in the production of retail areas in Beirut and Lebanon (downtown Beirut, commercial landscape, etc.).

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Niamh Moore
The Celtic Tiger and the Welsh Dragon: Urban Redevelopment in Dublin Docklands and Cardiff Bay, 1987-2000
Completed at Department of Geography, University College Dublin, June 2001.

This thesis examines the transformation of Dublin Docklands and Cardiff Bay, linking macro-scale global processes with micro-scale patterns evident in the newly created landscapes of the two areas. It demonstrates that the interaction of politics and economics is a primary determinant in influencing the type of urban policies implemented. The thesis concludes that even in a globalized world, place still matters. Local players in the two cities have proved highly effective in mediating global political-economic forces. The study emphasizes that the level of input by the local authority has been a key determinant in the relative weight given to physical, economic and social rejuvenation objectives. Where the local authority has played a central role, social renewal has been considered a greater priority. The processes of renewal in the two cities exemplify the argument that space does not just emerge, it is socially produced.

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Felicity Callard

Forms of Agoraphobia: Accounts of Anxiety, Space, and the Urban Dweller from the 1870s to the 1990s

Completed at Department of Geography and Environmental Engineering, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, October 2001.

This thesis is a historical-geographical study of agoraphobia as it has been clinically conceptualized in the West from its emergence as a named disorder in the 1870s up to its current manifestation as Panic Disorder. I work at the intersection of urban-historical geography, the history of psychiatry, and cultural theory to provide a psychoanalytically-inflected genealogy of agoraphobia and the problems it raises for thinking the relationship between the individual and the socio-spatial world. I first focus on late nineteenth-century conceptualizations of agoraphobia to show how they stumbled insofar as they were underpinned by an account of spatiality and representation that the very phenomenon of agoraphobia put into question. I then turn to Sigmund Freud's radical recasting of agoraphobia, anxiety and the phobias. In examining a 1912 symposium featuring psychopathologists Morton Prince and James Putnam, I show how each contributed to the occlusion of the question of spatiality from discussions of agoraphobia. Finally, I consider recent reappraisals of agoraphobia by psychopharmacologist Donald Klein (who has championed Panic Disorder) and by feminist psychotherapists.

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Anna Clua

The Notion of Space in the Definition of Contexts of Media Reception. An Approach from the Critical Perspectives of Cultural Studies and Cultural Geography

Completed at Department of Journalism and Communication Sciences, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, October 2001.

In this thesis theoretical developments of cultural studies and cultural geography are taken as epistemological frameworks from which assert the inclusion of space in the definition of media reception. The spatiality of media reception is studied considering people as active social agents whose location is never reduced to their physical exposition to the media. Media contents and people's media uses (as well as their academic definition) can neither be analysed apart from time-space, nor apart from power-knowledge relations. On the other hand, media contents and people's media uses may influence time-space definition. The thesis is structured in two parts. The first one analyses the 'critical' discourses of cultural studies and cultural geography. This includes the theoretical and methodological (and often controversial) debates, as well as the interdisciplinary dialogue. The second part is a critique of the a-spatial definition of 'contexts of media reception'. That means questioning discourses (for instance, 'information society' discourse) that are becoming hegemonic within today's communication studies.

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Claire E. Pearson

Geographies of the Enterprising Self

Completed at School of Geographical Sciences,
Bristol University, Bristol, September 2001.

This thesis explores a key—but largely neglected—area of research in the geography of the cultural economy: namely, management training in ‘soft’ skills. Based on research into three management training programmes (in both the UK and USA), the thesis examines the impact of New Age practices upon the cultivation of creativity within businesses such as the National Audit Office (NAO), AT&T and IBM. With a burgeoning number of organizational cultures promoting, endorsing and practising a wide array of self-awareness training techniques, it is argued that new forms of governmentality are unfolding within business, changing the very emphasis of what it means to ‘be’ a manager. The aim of the thesis is to explore the interactions of two, seemingly quite distinct, kinds of practices and to stress the degree to which the experiential skill and meanings of New Age embodied practices might come to be mobilized and conditioned within the particularities of corporate, organizational structures. At these training sites of interactive and embodied practice, New Age teachings are used to expand the range of skills and competencies through which management is actually practised. In focusing upon three (rather different) training performances, I emphasize the ethological development of ways of understanding and the inevitable translations as these experiential, bodily practises are put to work in organizational cultures; and indeed by us, in academia.

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Divya Praful Tolia-Kelly

Iconographies of Diaspora: Refracted Landscapes and Textures of Memory of South Asian Women in London

Completed at Department of Geography, University of London, September 2001.

Diasporic journeys of South Asian women are examined in this thesis as a record of British Asian oral history and migration. Remembered landscapes and environmental memories are points of identification. These environments and textures of memory have a multi-sensory nature, refracted as icons in the visual and material cultures of the home. Home as a site of belonging becomes a space through which these women express their relationship with citizenship in Britain, and their experience of life in the colony, and their experience of rupture with their birthplace. Landscape artist Melanie Carvalho has painted seventeen canvases from their descriptions of the women’s ideal landscapes of ‘home’. These are in turn analysed as visual representations of remembered, idealized icons of intimate landscapes. This results in an examination of the multiple axes within which the diasporic group practises identification, and through which they are themselves configured. The research study uses a process of grounded theorizing by examining biographies, oral histories, and investigating visual and material cultures in the home. These are treated as triggers of identification, which operate as metonymical devices of negotiation, resistance and placing.

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