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## Editorial

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### **Critical geopolitics: unfolding spaces for thought in geography and global politics**

This issue of *Society and Space* comprises papers presented to sessions on "Critical Geopolitics" at the American Association of Geographers meeting in Atlanta in April 1993, one presented to the June 1993 meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers, and one written specially for the issue. The motivation for organizing sessions under this heading was to enable the unfolding of space for thought on power, geography, and international relations, a domain traditionally marked by the naturalization of geography, state-centric reasoning, and the privileging of a Western, masculinized, seeing subject as the authoritative, transcendent reader, and practitioner, of international politics. With the end of the Cold War, the intensification of economic globalization, the rise of chronopolitics, and the decentering of Cartesian Man, the disappearance of a coherent geopolitics is increasingly manifest. In enunciating the possibility of a critical geopolitics, we sought to challenge the assumptions and conceptual infrastructure that have historically governed thought on geography and international relations. Critical geopolitics opens up spaces for long-overdue dialogues between geography or international relations and social theory, feminism, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, and social movement theory. Among the themes emerging from this conversation are the importance of constructing theoretically informed critiques of the spatializing practices of power; undertaking critical investigations of the power of orthodox geopolitical writing; investigating how geographical reasoning in foreign policy in-sights (enframes in a geography of images), in-cites (enmeshes in a geography of texts), and, therefore, in-sites (stabilizes, positions, locates) places in global politics, and examining how this reasoning can be challenged, subverted, and resisted. Each of these papers contributes to these tasks.

Klaus Dodds and James Sidaway provide a brief introduction to the emergent 'critical geopolitics' literature for those unfamiliar with it. They discuss the dialogue with contemporary theoretical developments, including postcolonialism, geopolitical economy, and critical development theory. They suggest the diversity of sources and reading strategies invoked by critical geopolitics. In line with contemporary themes in postmodern social and political theory, contributors to this issue are interested in one way or another in 'making strange' the taken-for-granted political constructions of space, and making explicit struggles over the politics of place.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail outlines a deconstruction-inspired theoretical subversion of geopolitics. Rather than consign the term to the dustbin, he intensifies its meaning and hyphenates it to problematize the previously naturalized social production of geographical knowledge in the practices of global politics. He identifies a larger modern problematic behind the term geopolitics concerning geographical knowledge and the development of governmentality which he terms *geo-power*. This move significantly enlarges that which can be considered *geo-politics*, which for Ó Tuathail is the politics of geographical knowledge (place-writing) and governmentality. He outlines a threefold typology for the study of this geo-politics: (1) a disciplinary geo-politics which studies the intellectual and institutional production of geographical knowledge and governmentality; (2) a practical geo-politics which studies geographical reasoning by foreign policy elites; and (3) a popular geo-politics which studies the writing of identity and danger in the various media of popular culture.

Cynthia Weber's paper is a feminist psychoanalytical reading of how US foreign policy in the 1980s invented a new geographic frame, the Caribbean Basin, as a sight of the (re)construction of the USA's own identity and self-image. The Caribbean, she argues, is a location to which the United States has turned to find itself. Reading the rhetoric of the Reagan administration symptomatically, she illustrates the fears and fantasies that administration projected onto the island of Grenada, a geographical politics of desire that resulted in a military invasion of the island in October 1983.

Where Weber's paper charts a geo-politics of hegemonic desire, Paul Routledge's paper charts a geo-politics of resistance. He focuses on the resistance to the absolute power of the Nepali monarchy as expressed in the people's movement for democracy in Kathmandu and Patan in the spring of 1990. Routledge demonstrates how the urban topography of Patan was used by democracy activists as a terrain of resistance to the writ of the monarchy and its military backers. The strategic use of backstreets for organization, combined with blackout protests and the construction of barricades, transformed Patan into a terrain of resistance to autocratic royal rule.

Andrew Charlesworth looks at the contested geopolitical symbolism of just one place, Auschwitz. Arguing that the politics of memorialisation are an important facet of the construction of political and religious identity, he explores recent attempts to 'Catholicise' Auschwitz as a site of Catholic martyrdom. Downplaying the specifically Jewish dimensions of the death camp complex, Catholic accounts of, and memorial architecture to, the significance of Auschwitz support the articulation of a resurgent geopolitical identity as both Polish and Catholic. In this sense critical geopolitics is also about very specific sites and the tasks of unravelling the political manipulation of their symbolisms.

Simon Dalby looks at the geopolitics of gender and the gendering of geopolitics. Reading Cynthia Enloe's writings on the Gulf War and international politics, he argues that geopolitics is gendered in numerous ways. The very political categories of modern sovereignty and territoriality are masculinized formulations. The exclusion of women from the militaries of many states, the construction of citizenship in militarized ways, and the exclusion of women from most of the policymaking forums of national security, reveal the operation of gendered modes of rule. Similar exclusions have operated recently in the halls of academe. Unravelling these gendered operations of power, and the related identities of participants in international politics, expands the scope for understanding how geopolitical tropes and practices are implicated in the rationalization of global power politics.

Tim Luke makes the case for a new geo-political language that is necessary to describe the transformed condition of global politics after the Cold War. The traditional geopolitics of political realism are no longer appropriate in an emergent world of third nature. The nation-state, mass society, and Cold War global geopolitics are all historical artifacts of a second nature that found realization in a territorial geography. Third nature, according to Luke, finds its expression in a geography of flows, a cyberspace, infospace, and mediascape of telemetricity. Its emergent spatiality is reshaping the fixed cartography of second nature. The global and the local are melting into a new 'glocal', the international and domestic into an 'intermestic' and 'domestational'. In short, Luke's paper is an attempt to sketch out the geo-politics after geopolitics, and envisions the need for maps of flows not fixities in the cartography of the 21st century.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby

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