The SAGE Handbook of Social Geographies

Introduction: Social Geographies of Difference

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This section of the Handbook assembles seven chapters that chart the distinctiveness of social geography's commitment to difference and diversity. They cover an array of axes of difference, including gender, race, sexuality, disability, nation, age and indigeneity. The authors examine these positionalities in terms of intersectionality, commonality and sociospatial conflict. Though generally sympathetic to constructivist accounts of the subject, all in one way or another engage the materiality of identity, in some instances doing so by calling upon the more-than-representational and the post-human. Before I summarize the central arguments of the papers with an eye to their theoretical contributions, I first offer a few words of context regarding social geography's take on difference.

Unsettling Identity

A central problem in social geography is how to sort out the relations between identity, on the one hand, and space, on the other, particularly in terms of how their interplay affects the well-being of people and the prospects of the places they inhabit and move through. In an old but still valuable formulation, we might encapsulate the central moments of this problem by asking with David Smith (1974) the question of 'who gets what, where?' Geographers have worked on the empirical specificities of his question for decades, but at the same time social and spatial theory has reworked how we understand both identity and space (the 'who' and the 'where'). The so-called 'spatial turn' is well covered elsewhere (Soja, 1996; Smith et al., this volume); here I say a few words about the unsettling of identity, which is the hallmark of social science's attention to difference and diversity.

Although attention to difference has a long history in social theory, it was the theoretical upheavals of the 1970s that truly destabilized Identity – that turned our lenses away from older notions of naturalized or 'essentialized' diversity around timeless and spaceless innate characteristics, to socially constructed differences that were malleable across context, tenuously stitched together from the raw materials of discourse and practice (Dixon and Jones, 2006). This shift in thinking is more than high theory; it has also underwritten a remarkable methodological upheaval. For when identities are conceived in terms of 'essences', then difference can be said to follow straightforwardly from long-held social categories and the means to measure them (e.g., the census). Not getting difference 'right' in this instance usually requires only some fine tuning of the categorical distinctions (e.g., black, homosexual, male), but the underlying centrality of centers is maintained. In contrast, anti-essentialist approaches require interpretative, qualitative study of the fluidities of difference and ethnographic attention to the context of their fluctuations. This is one reason for the sea-change in methods in geography over the past thirty years.

While the shift from essentialism to anti-essentialism has roots in political theory and philosophy, as well as in literary theory and cultural studies, most important have been the cross-cutting contributions of feminist theorists. Early moves to theorize difference were made by socialist/Marxist and radical feminists of the 1970s, whose theories of patriarchy complicated traditional class analysis and led to debates on the intersectionality of class and gender that would dominate discussions of social ontology for years (see Walby, 1990). In geography, these issues came to a head in a widely read debate between radical and socialist feminists in the pages of *Antipode* (see Foord and Gregson, 1986; Gregson and Foord, 1987; Knopp and Lauria, 1987; McDowell, 1986).

What these theorists and their successors – the 'dual-systems' theorists – shared was a strongly materialist perspective on social relations; what they had not grappled with was the emergence of the poststructuralist subject, a category first popularized in political theory through the discursive analytic of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985). Their book, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, drew attention to the construction of categories of difference out of pure alterity: temporary stabilizations (or 'nodal points') of identification are produced in a process of exclusion that is central to category-making. As a result, no identity can ever claim the mantle of a positive center:

> The constitutive outside is a relational process by which the outside – or 'Other' – of any category is actively at work on both sides of the constructed boundary, and is thus always leaving its trace within the category. Thus, what may appear to be a self-enclosed category maintained by boundaries is found in fact to unavoidably contain the marks of inscription left by the outside from which it seemingly has been separated. As Derrida has shown through the work of deconstruction … the outside of any category is already found to be resident within, permeating the category from the *inside* through its traceable presence-in-absence within the category (Natter and Jones, 1997: 146; emphasis in original).

Roughly coinciding with Laclau's and Mouffe's destabilization of the subject was the invention of the 'feminist standpoint' (Harding, 1986; Hartsock, 1985) – a rejoinder of sorts that acknowledges the epistemological dimensions of identity (e.g., Haraway's 'situated knowledges', 1991) but retains a strong political-economic analysis. The key to the standpoint is the Marxist recognition that social positionality is not given but is produced through the material practices of human labor; and, while we may not be able to reconcile different world views, surely it is those whose experiences include oppression and exploitation who will be able to produce the clearest insights into the actual functioning of the world.

This argument was both specified and seized upon by feminists of color (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984, 1989, 1991; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1983), and indeed interest in standpoint theory coincided with the proliferation of difference *within* feminism – offering a much needed correction to its mainstream 'white liberal' bias. At the same time, increasing fragmentation of the gendered subject prompted some to question whether there was any experience broad enough to secure a common political position (Butler and Scott, 1992; also see Spivak, 1988, on 'strategic essentialism' and Harvey, 1996, on 'militant particularism'). Increasingly from the mid-1980s onward, theorists of many persuasions clashed over how best to theorize and mobilize difference, in part through their sometimes uneasy engagements at the intersection of feminism and postmodernism (Hennessy, 1993; Nicholson, 1990), and in part through more sympathetic writings that deconstructed difference (often through the 'constitutive outside') from Global South, transnational, post-colonial and queer perspectives (e.g., Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Grewal and Kaplan, 1994; Morrison, 1992; Sedgwick, 1990). A key intervention in these debates was Butler's (1990, 1993) theory of performativity. Like Laclau and Mouffe, she drew on a discursive analysis (aided also by psychoanalysis) to claim that identities do not come to us as given but are produced through interpretive grids maintained by iteration and citation, out of which subjects produce and subvert meaning. Though accused by some of idealism, for Butler the materiality of the body is not outside performativity; quite the contrary, it is central to it.

Finally, for the unconvinced – for those who continue to point to the primacy of experience in asserting identity – historian Joan Scott issued this caution:

> When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the [social scientist] who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision is structured – about language (or discourse) and history – are left aside. The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world (Scott, 1991: 777; brackets added).

Having offered an abbreviated cut through essentialist and anti-essentialist takes on identity and difference, I now want to make a few observations about this conceptual map in regard to social geography.

First, I think it is fair to say that while most geographers would seem to accept the anti-essentialist thesis, there have been some tensions. Harvey's famous foray (1989) into the matter led to reactions (Deutsche, 1991; Massey, 1991; also Harvey, 1996) that mirror to some extent the debate around postmodernism's 'death of the subject' and the felt imperative to ground political mobilization (as mentioned above). Looking back, these tensions in geography appear to have two tributaries: (a) the differences between class and gender analyses found in Marxist and feminist geography; and (b) the clash over discourse and materiality in geography, at least some of which is responsible for the cleavages between social and cultural geography. A lot of the unease seems to be waning now (see Smith et al.'s introduction to this volume), but geographers' use of anti-essentialism can still be a bit clunky. In particular, there is a tendency for us to grant nodding assent to constructivism while at the same deploying social categories as if they in themselves accounted for the phenomena being studied. When we do this, we fail to heed the lessons of the anti-essentialist critique. Put slightly differently, Joan Scott was right: we need to make difference the explandum, the dependent variable rather than the 'evidence on which explanation is built'.

Second, it should not surprise us to know that, with a few exceptions (Friedman, 1998; Kirby, 1996), most 'deconstructions' of identity undertaken outside the discipline of geography have failed to build a compelling account for space in the construction of subjectivity. Fortunately, geographers can point to a number of efforts to produce spatial 'correctives' to a-spatial difference theories. I am thinking here of Clive Barnett (2005) and Jeffrey Popke (2003) on ethics, subjectivity and hospitality; Michael Brown (2000) on Sedgwick's epistemology of the closet; Nicki Gregson and Gillian Rose (2000) on Butler's performativity; Peter Jackson and Jan Penrose (1995) on the geographies of 'race' and nation; Natter and Jones (1997) on Derrida's constitutive outside; Anna Secor (2004) on theories of citizenship; David Sibley (1995) on object relations theory; Ed Soja (1996) on Bhabha's hybridity; and Gill Valentine (2007) on intersectionality; among others. Yet, in spite of these contributions, some of our work continues to deploy a simplistic geography that is almost stage-like in its relation to identity: 'here you are in this place; there you are, a bit different, in that other place'. Geography, however, has a lot more to offer to identity theory than the idea that spatial contexts affect how we perform or even 'experience' our identities. Subjectivity is much more spatial than that: it inhales and exhales space. It has a spatial ontology *and* a spatial epistemology (Dwyer and Jones, 2000). And it never rests; subjectivity is:

> constantly circulating in sites, extending itself, offering itself up as explanation or cause for any number of different relations, recommending the way forward, canvassing for converts and new members. Subjectivity is the solipsistic

> cartographer, the drunken salesman, the restless busybody that must resolve every relation within its purview to its own context or else declare it null and void (Woodward, et al., 2008: 16).

Finally, I think it is important that social geographers embrace and help configure new theoretical developments that, at first glance, might appear to lie outside the traditional purview of identity, space and well-being. In particular, those three moments – which I used to open this chapter – are just as relevant to affect and non-representational theory (Woodward and Lea, this volume) and to the post-human (Robbins and Marks, this volume) as they are to the distinctions between essentialist and anti-essentialist accounts of the subject. In fact, I see both as a further extension of the second point above: non-representational theory and post-human geographies are part of the larger spatio-material register for producing identity; paying attention to them can extend our analyses in ways that we overlooked when writing in the 1990s. The former points us to domains beyond or before the representational, where, it can be argued, a great deal of identity-making takes place (Thrift, 2008). The second populates the social with nature, both deconstructing the human and offering insights into how we maintain its boundaries (Anderson, 2006; Whatmore, 2002). A good example of both can be found in Paul Robbins's book, *Lawn People* (2007), which provides a reading of the masculine, self-disciplining middle-class subject who is caught between the soft gaze of the neighbors and the seasonal productivity of turfgrass. He dutifully applies the chemicals, waters the ground, and mows the result, all repeated in a cycle that solidifies his positionality as a master of nature, when if anything he is a slave to it. Robbins's work suggests that the 'trace of the Other' that buttresses the identification of the Midwestern home owner is not simply the uncooperative neighbor who lets his grass go to seed, but the very stuff of the grass itself.

Chapter Summaries

Linda Peake's examination of gender, 'race' and sexuality kicks off this section. It is fitting that we begin with her paper, for these three axes of identity have been the most important ones in defining the theoretical approaches to difference within social geography. They have also been the ones in which – next to class relations in both social and economic geography – we find the greatest contributions to our understanding of the 'difference that space makes' in the sphere of the social. And, not least, these are three large areas of analysis with a significant empirical record.

In her strongly geographic accounting of these relations, Peake considers how each moved from static, empirical, and biologically grounded conceptions of difference to ones that are dynamic, discursive, and constructed. She begins with gender, and in her account of that evolution she addresses not only the transition from biology to constructivism but also the more subtle distinctions within constructivist accounts that variously engage embodiment. She then details the development of space and sexuality, paying close attention to the rise of queer studies in geography and its relationship with feminist geography. Race too is shown to have essentialist origins that are overturned through poststructuralist critiques, and these are followed by studies that chart the material and epistemological coordinates of whiteness.

Peake then goes on to consider more explicitly the intersection of gender, sexuality and race. For her, intersectionality is more than simple social simultaneity or connection: it refers to intersections that are 'bound up in spatialities … [for] social differences, however tightly or loosely bound together, always come into being through interactions in specific places'. The geographies of intersectionality include being in or out of place depending on the intersection

of specific social axes; the differentials of travel through public and private space; and the space-power that not only excludes but also creates the settings for resistance. She exemplifies this discussion of different spatial effects with an adapted excerpt from her work with Alissa Trotz on Afro-Guyanese men and women; it shows how masculinity/femininity, 'race', and sexuality intersect in the spaces of the community and home.

Finally, Peake examines the ontological status of 'the social' in response to critiques by critical social and cultural geographers whose work has taken a post-human turn in the wake of the deconstruction of the nature– society and human–animal binaries (see Smith et al.'s introduction, this volume; also Robbins and Marks, this volume). She notes that 'humans are no longer being regarded as separate from and having control over nature and machines. … their interfaces are coming under scrutiny as different and new assemblages of people, things and matter come into being, calling into question how we can "unlearn" this construct of the "human" (as always-already human) and how non-human entities also come to be'. Peake extends this argument by developing the point that gender, race, and sexuality are – of all the social categories – probably the ones best suited to complicate nature, that is, to provide deeper insights into the post-human turn in social geography. And from this vantage point she concludes by asking us to direct our social geographies of difference to 'other' ways of knowing, forms of knowledge production informed by non-Western ontologies and epistemologies.

In the next entry, Rachel Pain and Peter Hopkins take up the relationality of age in a chapter that offers an analysis of the literature on aging and a plan for moving forward. They begin on a theme they will return to throughout: the importance of looking beyond either children or the aged in a more comprehensive approach to the relationally constructed lifecourse. As they put it:

> Our argument is that – paradoxically, when the very study of children and younger people is one demarcated by age – this attention does not always encompass issues *of age*. … despite the dominant social constructivist perspective of such work, it quite rarely rejects the category it works within. Further, although there is much work about children, and a little less about younger people, geographies of people in other age groups are scarce. Studies of old age in social geography are present, but nowhere near as fashionable as work on childhood, and have a tendency to be conceptually and methodologically mundane, preoccupied with old age as a social problem rather than a problematised identity.

Interestingly, this fashionable endpoint view that favors children and the aged has parallels in other areas of social geography where the emphasis has traditionally been on the non-hegemonic 'other': women over men (and masculinity); 'raced' peoples over European whites, homosexuals over heterosexuals, and so on. In response, Pain and Hopkins develop a holistic and relational view of the geographies of age.

They first review four approaches to the geography of age: 'accepting age as a biological or chronological given; forwarding age as socially constructed; retheorising the body, and interrogating being/becoming'. Their review shows how each approach has further destabilized age as a social category: how socio-cultural differences in aging have provided evidence against the biological model; how some scholars augment discursive analyses with those centered on the physical body; and how concepts of agency and resistance have come to be associated with different age groups.

Pain and Hopkins then offer three concepts of value to producing a relational perspective on

aging: intergenerationality, intersectionality and the lifecourse. The first draws attention to the relations among individuals and groups across generations, in family situations and elsewhere, thereby adding new contextual layers to otherwise static categories such as childhood and old age. The second draws attention to how age intersects with other axes of identity, connections that, as with Peake, are not the same across different spaces or sets of experience. Finally, their lifecourse approach implies a connection across the aging process, based on the 'recognition that, rather than following fixed and predictable life stages, we live in dynamic and varied lifecourses which have, themselves, differently situated meanings'. Lifecourse analysis is about transitions, including the different identities that are taken on over time and across distinct spaces of social experience. These open up the category of age in ways consistent with other deconstructive approaches to identity in the wake of the anti-essentialist turn; Pain and Hopkins note that multiple, fracturing, and dissident age identities can be found in a diverse array of examples, including the infantilized adult, the youthful retiree, and the child sex worker. Each suggests lines of research focusing on identities that transgress traditional expectations.

Michael Dorn and Carla Keirns begin their chapter with a cautionary note about lingering residues of essentialism in disability studies: 'Definitions of disability are the product of bio-political efforts to render a legible social order. … Social geographers, while expressing their intentions to critically examine the power-laden constructions that produce such designations – usually in search of new social imaginaries – nevertheless too often adopt as given the analytic distinctions of medical, social and political authorities'. In the face of this contradiction, the authors offer an analysis of the history of disability, disability studies, and disability activism, showing their interconnected if not parallel unfolding with the histories of both health science and modern citizenship.

Their focus is the 54 million disabled-designated population in the US, but the analyses are applicable anywhere and are suggestive of the need for comparative work. Dorn and Keirns first raise the issue of citizenship and disability, a theme they will return to at various points in the narrative. Though often overlooked as an intersecting process, both citizenship and disability are formed through exclusionary processes, and in the case of immigration policy they work hand in hand.

Dorn and Keirns trace a long arc through the literatures on the social geographies of disability, mental illness, and deinstitutionalization, and while they do not question the political motives of the authors under review, they note tendencies toward objectification and victimization consistent with dependency formulations: 'As disability rights activists remind us, they would not need "accommodations" if planning for workplaces, housing, health care, schools, and other public and private spaces followed the principles of universal design, imagining a range of human variation in sight, mobility, and sensation …'. In subsequent sections, Dorn and Keirns examine: the distinctions between disability designations driven by medical and social administrative agencies; the emergence, out of the medical geographies of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, of disability as a distinct social category; and the rise of formal systems of disability care alongside the growth of modern industries, modern welfare states, and patriotic calls to care for infirm soldiers and their families.

Dorn and Keirns offer a particularly strong political message at the end of their chapter, relevant to both social geographers and activists. More so than most of the authors in this section, they are suspicious regarding the political implications of constructivist accounts:

> Contextual accounts of disability point to its 'social construction' and find parallels in the contemporary study of other identity categories. For those who subscribe to the social model, disability may be considered yet another category of otherness, akin to race, class, gender, or nationality, posing intriguing possibilities for exploring their intersection in individual and group experiences. Yet disability remains as well – more than many of these other group markers – an acceptable tool in social discourse for discrediting marginalized groups more generally. And although discussions of 'intersectionality' have become popular in critical race theory, feminist studies, queer theory and disability studies, popular conceptions of, and academic theorizing on, disability is still largely divorced from rubrics that are given center stage.

They end by critiquing celebratory accounts of new technologies for and discourses of mobility that only serve to highlight the continued inaccessibility of huge areas of social life – from housing and education to leisure and transportation.

Audrey Kobayashi's and Sarah de Leeuw's chapter on the social geographies of racialization begins with the story of the Cherokee Nation, which in 2007 expelled the descendants of former African slaves in the US South from their list of qualifying members of the indigenous tribe. Following the end of the US Civil War, the Nation signed a treaty granting citizenship to their emancipated slaves; the move was an attempt to swell the numbers of Cherokee and to thereby increase land allocations from the US government. All members of slave descent, regardless of their lineage, were designated as Cherokee Freedmen. In a controversial referendum in 2007, the Nation's members voted to expel the Freedmen. As the authors summarize the issues, 'Cherokee leaders opposed to disenfranchisement argue that citizenship in the Cherokee Nation must never rest on blood quantum traits while those in favor of disenfranchising the Freedmen argue that indigenous governments, like other governments and nations, must have the right to decide who is and who is not granted citizenship'.

For Kobayashi and de Leeuw, this story highlights the complex nature of difference in the aftermath of colonialism. Illustrating a little studied aspect of the process of 'double colonialism', the fact that both indigenous and diasporic peoples are subjects of European people's racialization processes, it sets up contrasts between the indigenous peoples whose lands were taken – and who were themselves often displaced – and those who were moved, forcefully or not, as colonialism played out in slavery, indentured labor, and transnational 'voluntary' labor. In describing these colliding social geographies, they draw from various countries, including Canada, the US, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Fiji. These and other cases have led to increased calls for justice from among the world's 370 million indigenous peoples. Their contemporary struggles are focused on halting land expropriation by white and diasporic settlers, securing access to historic resources, attaining full rights to both 'modern' and 'traditional' forms of citizenship and self-determination, and preserving language and culture in the face of a white-washed multiculturalism and an ever-expanding consumer capitalism.

And though some racialized diasporic and indigenous peoples have used global proclamations and new technologies to forge important transnational linkages, there remain significant tensions. As Kobayashi and de Leeuw point out, one's position as a raced Other in relation to a white center does not necessarily provide the basis for solidarity. Instead, 'It makes a difference whether Otherness occurs *at a distance* from the metropole within a colonial context, as shown in Said's original work; *in place* in colonial contexts, as has occurred in the subordination of most indigenous peoples; or through the creation of *diasporic*

or transnational communities of difference, as represented by most of the large non-white migrant groups today'. In concluding, Kobayashi and de Leeuw dismiss citizenship claims based on abstract territorial formulations: e.g., 'Who was here first?'. Nor are they convinced that universalist accounts, such as those based on class or 'blackness', will produce solidarities across different groups. They believe, rather, that relational thinking about identity needs to be combined with analyses of the *actual spatial conditions* in which people live. In these real territorial engagements are the seeds for understanding conflicts and working collectively toward justice.

The section then turns to a chapter by Katie Willis on 'social collisions', a term that captures what can happen when individuals and groups come together to contest – or collide over – space. Importantly, she rejects the presumption that conflict is the only outcome to expect in the face of encounters in social 'contact zones': 'rather than being inherently destructive or conflictual, the coming together of diverse individuals can sometimes have productive outcomes. In addition, interactions may be for a short period of time, or they may be an on-going process'. Underlying these contingencies are the facts that identities are not predetermined in advance of their immersion in concrete spatial settings, and that while identities and spaces co-determine one another in mutual relation, they do so in open-ended, rather than fixed, ways. Within this context, one needs to consider 'the internal heterogeneity of groups, the time or placing of the encounter, the importance of … intersectionality, and how the encounters themselves provide opportunities for reflexivity that can result in a hardening of group boundaries, or a chance for greater engagement and understanding'.

Willis begins with a review of segregation studies in geography, which she qualifies politically, theoretically, and methodologically: such studies tended to unquestioningly project difference onto an assumed white center; they failed to recognize both internal differences and the socio-historical specificities attending immigration streams (e.g., Chicago in the 1920s); and they relied on macro-level variables, as if these could provide clues to causalities rooted at the level of experience. She then goes on to consider several key moments in the study of socio-spatial interactions under the rubric of anti-essentialist theories of identity, including efforts to pay greater attention to internal differences in groups, the fits and starts associated with the concepts of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, and the insights gained from contemporary work on transnationalism.

A section on the outcomes of collisions, progressive and otherwise, follows. Willis discusses both flashpoints of conflict, such as have occurred around 'race'/ethnicity and gay pride marches, and efforts to contest social discrimination through activism – usually the occupation of public spaces. She also notes how social change can emerge in particular contexts in which differences are negotiated or made the basis for collective action.

In the final sections of her paper, Willis discusses the embodied nature of social contact, including not only bodily co-presence in space but also how 'interactions are based on embodied sensual experiences', including smell and hearing. Efforts to understand this aspect of social interaction are part of a larger move to rematerialize social geography, and at the same time they point to efforts to better understand the role of mundane and everyday encounters among different groups of people. Willis concludes her essay with five suggestions for future work: greater attention to comparative analysis through multi-site ethnography; increased work on the *interactions* between less powerful groups (e.g., 'racial' minorities) and hegemonic ones (e.g., whites), rather than a narrow focus on one or the other; additional research on the role of emotions in social collisions; new efforts to place 'hospitality' within the theoretical frame of identity and space; and greater integration of local

ethnographic studies with the geopolitical force fields that structure immigration policies and the relations between nations.

Keith Woodward and Jennifer Lea begin their chapter on affect with the film classic, *Modern Times* (1936), where a young Charlie Chaplin tries to keep up with the assembly line. With startling, arm-waving dramatic effects, the film's gears, clocks, and human labor depict an assemblage of affective relations. Drawing on Chaplin's recollection of the movie's inspiration, Woodward and Lea write: '… changing developments in capitalist production announce the birth of relations that initiate and synthesize new correspondences between bodily, psychic and social trauma. To signal the emergence of a new class of workers in this context is to announce the arrival of new kinds of bodies, the products of changing relations of exertion and stress relative to increasingly rationalized and intense production speeds'. Woodward and Lea go on to show how affective force relations add a new layer of analysis to existing political economies of capitalist production.

The chapter proceeds by providing a Spinozist account of affect, one with touchstones to a number of central concerns in social geography: '*Affect is the medium through which bodies sustain and transform each other*, and as such, *it is fundamentally social: a materialist account of bodily association*' (emphasis in original). From this, Woodward and Lea identify four domains of rethinking social geography: a shift, both theoretical and methodological, from epistemology to ontology; a de-privileging of the human 'as the reservoir of agency in the world'; attention to the complexity of social materiality; and a focus on doing and becoming rather than being.

The authors then illustrate the value of affect theory for extending social geographic studies of identity theory. They offer an immanent ethics of doing that contrasts with transcendental moralities of what should be done: 'a "body", as a conjunction of whatever bits of materiality (blocs of matter) have gathered into relations of moving, affecting, and being affected *together*, must discover what good(s) – if any – might be determined by virtue of its situation'. This active sense of ethics is the result of a moving and mutable social – what they call the 'bodymap' – which leads them to a theory of affective power. In it, power is immanent to affective relations among bodies, not through the fixities of identities or forms, but through the forces that emerge in the situation. This theory pivots on a number of body tendencies often overlooked in studies of identity: thoughts, recollections, emotions, and perceptions; habits, pre-cognitions, performances, and enactments; visceral reactions, sensorial pleasures and dissonance, pain and comfort.

Finally, Woodward and Lea come back to the workers in *Modern Times*. Joining together Marx and affect, they note that: 'The grotesque genius of capitalism lies in its appropriation of the most immediate of affective contexts, making our own capacities for initiating forceful relations – our ability to work – seem strange and unfamiliar. Channeling our affectivities into processes that contribute paradoxically to our own disempowerment, capitalism simultaneously reframes the resultant commodity as that which offers the gift of empowerment, here in the form of a supplement to practices of consumption'. This move shows that, far from being apolitical, affect theory has the potential to enhance political economic analysis, and with that, to contribute to the achievement of justice that lies at the heart of social geography.

In the concluding chapter, Paul Robbins and Brian Marks use the Deleuzean concept of assemblage to gather together lines of developing inquiry in the area of post-human geography. They begin their paper with a story about a 2000 vote over commercial hunting in the Rocky Mountain state of Montana. Part of the ballot result hinged on the state's elk

population. The animal's disdain for confinement and its susceptibility to chronic wasting disease, a highly infectious product of neural proteins called prions, helped to change the social map of property relations in Montana, creating unheard-of alliances between working-class hunters and national environmental groups. The elk and its proteins are part of the social assemblage, a 'world constituted by more-than-human actors, joined in a cat's cradle of physically grasping relationships, threaded through a fun house of representations'.

Robbins and Marks survey the developments of the post-human turn in human geography, one that relies on an attentiveness to the participation, labor, productions, and constituting powers of objects of nature – from trees, gardens, and lawns to mosquitoes, bears, and dogs. They identify the potentials and the elisions in what has been identified as a 'rematerialization' of human geography following the constructivist and discursive turn associated with poststructuralist cultural geography. The lines of connection here involve renewed attention to built environments and bits of nature, and new attention to human/non-human bodies. Less an epochal 'posting' than the recovery of an always existing ontological condition, a world of interacting objects, bodies, and actors requires the relational and geographical perspective of social geography, but in the process both 'social' and 'natural' become 'unstable modifiers'. Attuned to differences in how this area of research has developed, Robbins and Marks use the umbrella of 'assemblage geographies' to provide some direction to what has yet to fully jell in terms of theoretical coherence, methodological specificity, and narrative strategy.

Robbins and Marks go on to produce a table of assemblage theories, organized by key thinkers and their conceptual–analytic strategies: Bruno Latour's symmetrical form, focused on quasi-objects; Donna Haraway's intimate form, focused on companion species; Karl Marx's metabolic form, focused on circulation and metabolism; and Timothy Mitchell's genealogical form, focused on epistemic things. Each approach is found to have distinct explanatory principles and favored styles of narrative (paradoxical vs. reflexive vs. tragic vs. ironic). The authors draw from case studies in the current post-human literature – covering sewer lines, gardens, elm trees, and 'mad cow' disease – to illustrate emblematic features of each approach and to suggest questions they tend to leave unanswered. In combination, each approach shows how, in the authors' terms, the 'field of causality' in social geography is populated 'with new and troubling actors', as well as how 'social relations are more-than-social and more than extensions of the social into other locations'. They caution us, finally, to not accept these complications as an excuse for sloppiness in our examinations of a post-human, post-social world. More than ever, the new ontological combinations and epistemological ruptures of the post-human require us to adopt a methodology sensitive to the complexity of causality and a narrative style that clarifies rather than obfuscates those findings.

Edited by John PaulJones III

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