Nonrepresentational Theory/Nonrepresentational Geographies

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Glossary

Affect The pre-personal capacity for bodies to be affected (by other bodies) and, in turn, affect (other bodies). This capacity for affecting and being affected subsequently defines what a body is and can do.

Everyday Life The setting for the routine and mundane, but also improvised and transformative practices.

Immanence A concept which seeks to overcome all divisions, dualisms, and causal principles (associated with transcendence) by remaining committed to the virtual flow of life itself.

Nonrepresentational Thought A mode of thinking which seeks to immerse itself in everyday practice.

Performativity The processual and transformative nature of practice.

Practice Competences and (embodied) dispositions which precede and exceed contemplative thought and reflection.

Introduction

Geography and Representational Modes of Thought

Nonrepresentational geographies attend to both life and thought as practiced and, for this reason, 'in process' and 'open ended'. The genesis of the term nonrepresentational theory began in the early to mid-1990s through a series of books and articles written by the geographer, Nigel Thrift, although its philosophical heritage stems back much further. Thrift sought to challenge the dominant mode of representational thinking throughout human geography, in particular within cultural geography. The cultural turn, in particular, was deemed exemplary of the representational problematic in two senses. First, although it focused on everyday practices such as consumption, it tended to retreat from practice into the (cultural) politics of representation; creating deadening effects on an otherwise active world. Second, and consequently, by retaining contemplative and interpretative models of geographical thought and inquiry, much of the nonintentional, nondiscursive, and elusory nature of the everyday world was occluded from view. Contrary to this, Thrift sought to alert geographers to the embodied and performative nature of practice, much of which subsists prior to reflexive or cognitive thought. He equally sought to overcome epistemological models of geographical inquiry which maintain dualisms between theory and practice and thought and action.

Despite its title falling within the auspices of theory, nonrepresentational theory cannot be considered an epistemological approach, nor a concomitant social or cultural explanation; it equally resists solidification into a focus of enquiry which might be added to the canon of geographical thought (such as globalization or consumption, for example). At its most bold, nonrepresentational theory aims to overturn the very constitution of geographical knowledge production. Rather than creating an alternative systemic epistemological and ontological framework, however (which would reinstall the problem of representational thinking), it does this through a number of tenets which seek to engage and present (rather than represent) the undisclosed and sometimes undisclosable nature of everyday practice.

If nonrepresentational theory is to have a principle, then it is to configure geographical thought in the same way that it configures life: as a series of infinite 'ands' which add to the world rather than extract stable representations from it. It is for this reason that nonrepresentational geographies have claimed to be both ethical and political.

Philosophical Antecedents

The philosophical antecedents of nonrepresentational theory have been outlined by Thrift and are shown in **Figure 1**. It is notable that, in general, geographers have tended to focus on the continental philosophy tradition: in particular, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, through to Deleuze (including his collaborative writings with Guattari), and his influence on the work of Latour, Massumi, and Serres. While somewhat counterintuitive to the nonrepresentational style of thinking, it is possible to outline three dominant philosophical approaches which have influenced nonrepresentational geographies over the past few years. The first is broadly phenomenological (and includes philosophers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein).

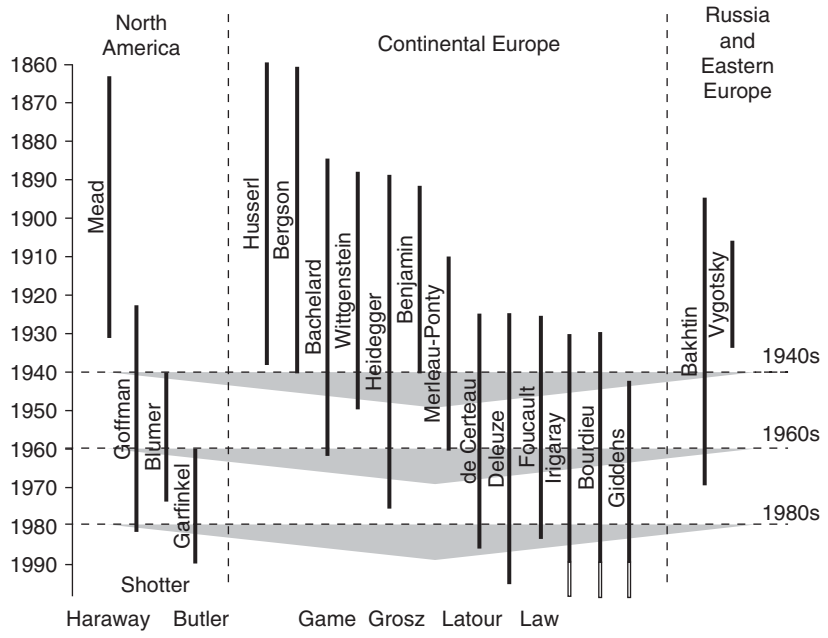

Figure 1 The life-time-lines of nonrepresentational theory. Courtesy of Prof. Doreen Massey.

Heidegger's phenomenological dwelling perspective provides a useful starting point for nonrepresentational geographies. Rather than identifying a ground for thought (in our minds, or in the world), Heidegger proposes that we are always already thrown into the world and inseparable from it. Our immersive practices of being-in-the-world are, in themselves, disclosive and we must avoid turning to subjective or objective reasoning (or representational thought) to account for them. Merleau-Ponty shifts things slightly through the notion of the 'lived body'. Here the disclosive nature of being-in-the-world is available only through the body and our bodily competences. It is then down to the later Wittgenstein to account for the nonsystematic (it cannot be known in advance) and performative (its rules are only given in action) play of embodied practice. Taken together these authors have had a profound influence on nonrepresentational ways of thinking in the social sciences generally, from Bourdieu's 'habitus', and de Certeau's 'tactics', through to John Shotter's notion of 'know how'. The second philosophical approach is neovitalist (and includes philosophers such as Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, and their reworking through the collaborations of Deleuze and Guattari). The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in particular has offered tools for those geographers who want to escape phenomenology's largely human-centered understanding of (embodied) practice and connect with the impersonal and transversal forces of the world. Like phenomenology, Deleuze and Guattari engage with a register that preexists distinctions between subjects and objects, and things and appearances, but their philosophy does not begin or end with human experience or perception. Rather, they seek to overcome all perspectivism by engaging with a dynamic plane of immanence in which there are no distinctions between what things are and what they do. Instead of affections or perceptions residing in people or objects there are prepersonal and continually differentiating affects and percepts. It is for this reason that their philosophy connects nonrepresentational geographies with recent posthumanist and more-than-human geographies. Finally, a third philosophical antecedent ebbs toward post-structuralism (bearing in mind that some of the most notorious post-structuralist thinkers – such as Lyotard, Baudrillard, and Derrida – are absent from Thrift's original diagram). Post-structuralism was arguably the theoretical flavor of the month for geography during the late 1980s and into the 1990s and, although somewhat sidelined by early nonrepresentational geographies, has been recently revisited. Two elements of this (re)engagement stand out. First, and partly as a response to the perceived antirepresentational stance of nonrepresentational theory, post-structural philosophers (such as Baudrillard) have been engaged to offer alternative or complementary critiques of presentist and representational thinking. Second, and partly through the influence of nonrepresentational theory, post-structuralist philosophers (such as Derrida) have been repositioned in geography beyond the realm of texts, signification, and representation and into that of ethics, materiality, and force relations.

As a whole, the philosophical antecedents to nonrepresentational theory offer a critique of the bifurcation between perceivers and worlds found in post-Cartesian

models of idealism (belief that access to the world is provided through forms given in our minds) and realism (belief in an objective world which we should seek to align with our perceptions); that is, ways of thinking which have persisted into current representational modes of thought.

Interlocutions

Nonrepresentational theory has emerged amidst wider theoretical shifts in the humanities and social sciences generally. Three areas are worthy of specific attention.

Actor-Network Theory

Emerging in the 1980s, actor-network theory (ANT) instigated its own critique of representational thought by focusing on the heterogeneous practices of association, enrolment, and translation, between humans and nonhumans, which together engineer worlds. More recently, ANT has introduced notions of alterity (otherness) to engage the performativity of these practices and overcome earlier somewhat flattening actor-network accounts. The use of alterity here shares some similarities with nonrepresentational understandings of virtuality. Like nonrepresentational theory, ANT prioritizes mobile practices and shares an appreciation for the complexity of the social world; it equally aims to resist becoming pigeonholed into a form of social theory. While nonrepresentational theory draws much from ANT, there are also some important differences. In particular, as part of its intent to overcome the residual idealism of representational thought, ANT instigates a methodological symmetry between humans and nonhumans. Contrariwise, although taking an interest in materiality and the more-than-human, nonrepresentational geographies have tended to emphasize the expressive practices of human body-subjects as most indicative of the flow and disruption of everyday life (a facet which has been disputed by proponents of ANT).

Performance Studies

The interdisciplinary arena of performance studies subsists at a productive interface between the performing arts, the use of performance in everyday life (from dance and multimedia technologies through to political rallies), and academic notions of performance and performativity. Nonrepresentational geographies have drawn much from the potentialities of this interface. For instance, the performing arts – in theater but also in forms of street art – provide a means for nonrepresentational geographers to witness and expand the realm of now time and conjure up its potential to create new forms of life. Here the very performativity of (scripted) artistic performance manifests the groundless uncertainty and hence potentiality of the present. Equally, through examples drawn from experimental and revolutionary theater (such as the performative social therapies of Fred Newman and Lois Holzman), nonrepresentational geographies are able to advance experimental ways of knowing that do not prescribe outcomes in advance.

The Body and Emotions

Since the 1980s the body has become a well-established locus for study in the social sciences. Authors have sought to critique a prevailing Cartesian intellectualism which creates a dualism between mind (conscious intellect) and body (matter) and subsequently prioritizes the former. Calls to attend to the body have not escaped the geographical imagination: feminist, queer, and health geographies have all sought to explain how geographical knowledge is largely disembodied, and have repositioned the body as an important site of power-knowledge in contemporary life. Further, and more recently, an 'emotional turn' in the social sciences has sought to overcome any residual Cartesianism found in rationalist ways of understanding human bodies – a facet which has given rise to an emerging subdiscipline of emotional geographies. With respect to the body, phenomenological approaches in nonrepresentational theory diverge from the construction or representation of bodies toward the very 'being' of bodies. Further, neovitalist approaches have shifted the focus from 'what is the body?' toward asking 'what can a body do?' (in its human and inhuman forms); and have done so by engaging the practices and technologies of bodily 'becomings'. These differences also permeate nonrepresentational geographies' preference for the term affect rather than emotion (although the two are sometimes used interchangeably). While neither nonrepresentational geographies nor emotional geographies seek to locate emotions in atomistic, or privatized individuals, and instead consider them as produced through relations, emotional geographies have tended to focus on personal narratives of human emotions (such as depression, fear, or love) whereas nonrepresentational geographies have positioned human and inhuman capacities for affecting and being affected as prior to any namable emotional states. This dualism between named emotions and impersonal affects is not a strict one however, and recent emotional geographies, particularly those influenced by the psychoanalytic tradition in geography, are engaging theories of practice (such as those found in the therapeutic encounter, for example) to reconfigure relations between affect and emotion.

Main Tenets

Practice

Nonrepresentational theory has also been referred to as a theory of mobile practices, and it is perhaps its attention

to practice which offers the main challenge to representational modes of thought; notably, because if practice is primary then we cannot point to a world amenable to mental representation beyond those practices constitutive of it. Practice is not a new focus for geography: attempts to map everyday practices are evident in the time geography of Torsten Hägerstrand during the mid-1970s, and an intention to engage practice – understood as a primordial structure of the lifeworld which precedes scientific enquiry – preoccupied earlier phenomenological perspectives in humanistic geography, such as that of John Pickles in the 1980s. Further, an attention to practice can be allied to the general shift in social and cultural geography during the 1990s to take everyday mundane activities seriously. One such recent example can be found in ethnomethodological approaches, which seek to engage with everyday 'talk in action'. The importance of practice has been taken, by nonrepresentational geographies, into five different directions. First, nonrepresentational geographies position non- or precognitive practices as primary (and unlike ethnomethodology pay little attention to conversation analysis). Unlike earlier phenomenological accounts, however, they are not interested in eliciting a primordial reduction but in understanding practice through its historical (following Bourdieu) and spatial (following de Certeau) specificity. Second, practice is not conceived as the property of individuals with prior intentions but as dialogical and processual. This means that practices are responsive and often entail unpredictable, or unintentional, outcomes. Third, due to their processual nature, practices as such elude explanation. On the one hand, this means that nonrepresentational geographies refuse to reduce practice to a higher-order interpretation; practice itself is much more attuned to the rhythm and flow of everyday life than any static understanding can offer. On the other hand, practice as a way of doing (or becoming) amidst the flow of everyday life will inevitably entail gaps in meaning (such that we may reflect on what we do, but we do not know what 'what we do' does). Practice is therefore closely tied to notions of perfomativity. Fourth, nonrepresentational geographies are increasingly recognizing that the expressive and experimental potential of practices, particularly body-practices, are becoming increasingly valorized in contemporary life (e.g., through yoga and numerous behavioral therapies). Finally, an attention to practice not only urges geographers to attend to everyday life in its doing (and making) but it also pushes geographers to reflect on the practice of geographical knowledge production, in particular, on the status of theory. Nonrepresentational theory as a whole displaces the term theory from its explanatory role as epistemology and pushes it toward a much more modest supplement to practice. While nonrepresentational approaches are notoriously intellectually rigorous, the use of theory is not sought to explain or represent but to provide a toolkit to engage and expand the world.

Everyday Life

Nonrepresentational geographies are concerned with the practices of everyday life: a popular term which has been adopted in three related senses. First, authors have focused on what is most commonly understood as everyday life – the mundane, oft routinized, humdrum of everyday living (such as listening to music, dancing, gardening, walking, and shopping). These activities manifest as habits which allow us to cope and go on in the world. Influenced by the likes of Bourdieu and de Certeau, nonrepresentational geographies have sought to grasp these taken-for-granted background practices as embodied dispositions. Where this work differs is that practices are not inevitably linked to symbolic orderings (such as taste in Bourdieu) nor is the potentiality of everyday life necessarily connected to tactical resistance amidst wider cultural forces (as with de Certeau). Indeed, once allied with a renewed interest in performativity, the taking place of everyday life instigates the routine and mundane but also improvization, play and, inevitably, change. This links with a second usage of everyday life in nonrepresentational geographies; one which seeks to counter the assumption that it is necessarily profane and ordinary. By thinking through the virtual realm of memory, the sacred, and, in its most concrete formations, bodily practices such as meditation or dance, nonrepresentational theory seeks to contribute to a (re)enchantment of everyday life (which runs counter to Weber's secular and routinized notion of disenchantment). Third, the spatiality of everyday life in nonrepresentational geographies is not simply personal, individual, or local. Taking cues from Lefebvre's notion of 'everydayness' through to Deleuze's 'virtualities', nonrepresentational geographies have sought to engage with the very life of everyday life; that is, a transversal force, or an excess, which constitutes the everyday rhythms of, for example, world cities.

Performance and Performativity

Attention to practice and everyday life is closely tied to notions of performance and performativity: terms which have had varied uses in geography since the 1990s. Whereas early work in geography tended to utilize notions of performance to describe the scripted routines of subjects in space, later work turned to Butler's usage of performativity to discuss the repetition of discursive scripts which precede and bring forth (gendered, sexed, and racialized) subjectivities. While nonrepresentational geographies have attended to the increasing use of performative knowledges in everyday life, methodologically

they share most with the second perspective, in particular Butler's attention to the iterability of performance. However, they tend to question her emphasis on signs and signification to account for subjectification. Subjectification for nonrepresentational theory is not tied to relations between subjects and discourse, rather it is just one possible outcome in a series of irretrievable (i.e., they cannot be contained) and indeterminate (i.e., they cannot be wholly known) events. This understanding of performativity can be linked to two further facets of nonrepresentational geographies. First, performativity is constitutive of the ongoing nature of practice. Performativity is not an act in time, rather it is the spacing which allows the next moment; it enables the unexpected and transformative but also the mundane ability to simply go on. This sense of performativity allows nonrepresentational geographies to articulate embodied practice and yet retain its inherent openness amid the flow of the world. Second, once the world is considered as productive and processual, then, for academics to become worthy of the eventful nondiscursive world, it demands a refigured academic style; one which recognizes that academic praxis itself is performative. Nonrepresentational geographies tend to position academic research as partial, not in the vein of our situatedness, but in the very encounter or call to attend to the world. To be faithful to this encounter, nonrepresentational geographies do not aim to resemble it through academic representations, but to experiment with the thinking which occurs on the interstice between thought and practice.

Embodiment and the Body

There are, broadly, three ways that understandings of embodiment and the body have been engaged with in nonrepresentational geographies. These can be conceived as: sensuous and expressive; historical and invested; and capacitous and affective. First, drawing from Heidegger's attention to the disclosive capacities of being and, especially, Merleau-Ponty's notion that the lived body is our vehicle for being-in-the-world, phenomenological approaches to nonrepresentational theory have focused on the noncognitive and expressive nature of the human body-subject. This work singles out the particular potentiality and capacity of human embodiment (as opposed to animals and other materialities) but has nevertheless sought to dismiss any residual humanism or intentionality by emphasizing that embodiment is infolded through joint body-practices with other beings and other objects. Furthermore, when combined with notions of performativity, being is bypassed in preference for the openness of becoming. Second, more historically attuned nonrepresentational geographies have sought to highlight that investment in the capacities of human bodies is part of an ongoing project of biopower which has shifted from Foucault's original formation – as the investment and management of the vital characteristics of human populations – toward the vital characteristics of life itself. Here bodies are not disciplined subjects but molecularized virtualities. Third, and sharing tenets with the second, nonrepresentational geographies have turned to the notion of affect as a way of expressing the force and capacities of (human) bodies. Although affect as a term traverses psychoanalysis, psychology, and psychiatry, the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari gives nonrepresentational geographies an understanding of the body as defined by the affects of which it is capable. Through the notion of affect, bodily dispositions such as joy, boredom, and despair are wrenched from cognitive, atomistic, or strictly emotional understandings and into ethological encounters. Bodies here are not organs or functions (as in the causal analyses of etiology) but modes of speeds and slowness, and capacities for affecting and being affected, which never reside in things as such.

Virtuality and Multiplicity (Time and Space)

Nonrepresentational geographies are concerned with everyday practices, yet they seek to avoid any recuperation of these into strictly empiricist or modernist understandings – such as those accounts that conceive the goings on of the social world through a fixed viewpoint with the intention of describing pure movement. Following earlier calls for relational understandings of time and space, nonrepresentational geographies acknowledge the coexistence of a multiplicity of time–spaces. Where they make a distinct contribution to these ideas is that they engage the effective groundlessness of this multiplicity, in particular through adopting a quasi-Deleuzian understanding of virtuality. The concept of virtuality does not entail a real world in which there are (virtual) possibilities, nor does it configure the possibilities which might manifest in a real world (in which case the real resembles the possible and does not consider the event of change). Virtualities are different from possibilities in that they are in every sense real but not always actualized. They do not settle in beings or things and can be described as the continuously differentiating relations between forces prior to any actualization. In one sense they are like a variable push or an outside that envelopes the forces which make worlds; and the combination of forces always changes. This notion of the virtual points to an intensive and formless multiplicity (through the groundless depth of virtuality) rather than simply an extensive multiplicity (through the depthless and timeless extension of relations), which is found in some network and relational accounts of space.

Implications

Nonrepresentational theory is both a methodology and a (political) practice (or, a practical poetics), inasmuch as it seeks to reconfigure both what it means to do research and to be political.

Research Methods

Nonrepresentational thinking tends toward an academic style which seeks to describe and present rather than diagnose and represent. Its ethos of generosity castes a shadow on much of the methodological toolkit available for geographical fieldwork (in particular: in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation which each accentuate contemplative and interpretive modes of thought). Still, there is no method as such for nonrepresentational research, nor has there been much sustained engagement as to how nonrepresentational theory might reconfigure the collection of fieldwork. Indeed, it is questionable how far nonrepresentational geographies can really shift the inherent perspectivism and epistemological commitment of field data collection techniques. Nevertheless, nonrepresentational geographies do seek to harness and experiment with the mainstay of qualitative research methods (notably ethnography and participant observation but also diaries and in-depth interviewing), developing approaches such as 'observant participation' and 'performative ethnography'. Further, the drive to acknowledge the research process itself as performative ranges from philosophical speculation on the particular call to witness the geographical world, through to, in its practical incarnation, an acknowledgment of the co-fabrication of the research encounter that inevitably creates something new (a facet shared with recent posthumanist and more-than-human geographies). Finally, the presentation of nonrepresentational research has adopted performative and experimental writing styles which seek to present either something of the ephemeral nature of everyday practice or the potential of performative writing itself. The use of montage (which juxtaposes different research methods that inhabit different time-spaces), for example, has been sought to address the virtual multiplicity of the nonrepresentational world.

Politics and Ethics

Nonrepresentational geographies have engaged with three senses of the political. First, they have positioned affect as central to individual and collective political dispositions, and as an important trope for contemporary forms of governing. Approaches here range from engaging the affective circulation of fear during the War on Terror, to an awareness that a therapeutic ethos has become an important tenet for governing in the West. Second, nonrepresentational geographies have advanced a politics of hope which seeks to retrieve hope from its grounding in utopianism and into the realm of the 'not yet'. Finally, nonrepresentational geographies have sought to rework what constitutes the political and what it means to be political. As this approach encompasses the previous two, it will be focused upon, here. Nonrepresentational geographies do not take the available spaces for political enunciation as given (such as that of pressure groups or policy relevant research); neither, however, do they retreat into restoring a 'true' ground for the political (e.g., the Greek *polis*). Rather, they are concerned with cultivating political spaces through an awareness of the openness of the present time. This follows from the notion that political and ethical dispositions do not proceed from the cognitive facilities of human beings but exist beyond conscious thought (we rarely, for example, consult moral codes in order to act ethically). Rather than consider this an impediment to political action, nonrepresentational theory seeks to harness its productive potential. On the one hand, through a politics of disclosure, not for authenticity, but for the creative potentials of the precognitive realm (by engaging with numerous body-practices and the performance arts, for instance). On the other hand, and in its more Deleuzian incarnation, this disclosure moves toward a politics of witnessing; a form of attunement which seeks to open up geographical and political thought to the unfolding (and sometimes wonder and enchantment) of the world. These approaches are, no doubt, risky and experimental (i.e., one cannot prescribe in advance the outcome), but not unproductive (i.e., something happens which might create new forms of life). In brief, politics and ethics are pulled away from judgment and universals, not simply as a matter of principle but because political and ethical dispositions exist on multiple (affective, emotional, anticipatory, precognitive, technological, molecular) registers which have thus far been neglected in much of political theory.

Current Imbrications and Challenges

Reception and Critique

Although in principle nonrepresentational theory seeks to avoid becoming a subdiscipline, the project initiated by Thrift has certainly fashioned a niche in the academy for likeminded geographers, or fellow travelers, who are advancing and expanding its central tenets. At present a handful of (largely UK based) geographers might be labeled as nonrepresentational, and several others (interested in post-structuralism, (post)phenomenology, and more-than-human geographies) strongly intersect with many of its themes. The key motif of nonrepresentational theory however – to overcome the 'dead' geographies of

representation – has (perhaps unsurprisingly) also been received with ambivalence, critique, and, occasionally, outright annoyance. These engagements vary but can be summarized by three main concerns: first, a neglect of the importance of representation; second, the denial of power and power geometries; finally, and drawing on the previous concerns, the forgetting of gender and/or sexual difference.

The first critique suggests that, although representation occludes much from view, many people actively (seek to) represent. Further, as the history of subaltern politics tells us, representing is a very effective political tactic. This critique has emerged in response to a perceived tendency of nonrepresentational theory to set itself up as positive alternative (i.e., what we might have) to programmatic and representational politics (i.e., what we have got) which, in itself, is a programmatic gesture. Yet, the ethos of nonrepresentational theory also asserts that there is not really a choice between representation and nonrepresentation, there are only singular presentations. Indeed, even a seemingly representative political gesture (such as the broadcasting of a presidential speech) incorporates a whole array of presubjective and inhuman affects. Still, it is partly in light of this critique that nonrepresentational geographies have recently adopted the term 'more than representational'.

Second, authors have critiqued the retreat from discourse and power toward practice and affect. They have also questioned the emphasis on expressive forms of embodiment which makes it difficult to account for what appear as relatively stable, sometimes restrictive, bodily practices (especially those that are connected to wider imperatives, such as gender roles or nation building, for example). By way of response, the geographer, Derek McCormack, has offered a kind of Deleuzian inversion of Foucault – by which the forces to affect and to be affected precede, and exceed, any stratified formations of power-knowledge. Here, the largely ineffable virtual realm can actualize into diagrams. These diagrams are not plans, nor ideas, but a spatiotemporal consistency that holds forces to affect and be affected together. Although compelling, this approach does not address the racialized, gendered, and sexualized dimensions of this affective stability, and is unlikely to satisfy those concerned with this occlusion.

Finally, feminist critiques have suggested that nonrepresentational theory has a tendency to invert the very dualisms it seeks to overcome – mind/body, representational/nonrepresentational, thought/practice – and it is somewhat ironically able to do this through a disembodied stance (preferring abstract discussions of affect over emotion, and being rather than sexed being, for example). Feminist geographies and nonrepresentational theory share some familiar territory in geography (in particular an interest in performativity, the body and, more recently, emotions and bodily biotechnologies) and it is perhaps this shared territory which has provoked most debate between the fields. While nonrepresentational theory has a certain indebtedness to feminist theory (and, if the above arguments are followed, perhaps even a debt to the feminine), and while feminist theorists (such as Colebrook, Braidotti, and Grosz) have engaged with nonrepresentational philosophers such as Deleuze, nonrepresentational theory in geography has yet to address issues of sexual difference. This is, in part, due to its desire to avoid discursive or psychical understandings of the body-subject. It also points to nonrepresentational geographies' preferred Deleuzian approach to difference 'in itself' rather than feminist geographers' engagement and deconstruction of difference 'between' (male/female, masculine/feminine, man/woman). Indeed, whether issues of sexual difference can be incorporated into the nonrepresentational ethos as it currently stands in geography, or whether nonrepresentational geographies might reconfigure feminist geographies' understandings of gendered and sexed bodies is, thus far, a largely undiscovered terrain.

Passivity and the Nonrelational

Recent engagements, which have emerged from within nonrepresentational geographies, have sought to interrupt its propensity toward the active, expressive, and/or otherwise affective nature of (embodied) experience. Paul Harrison has introduced notions of passivity and the nonrelational to counter the imperative for nonrepresentational geographies to always instill an affirmative will to connect, relate, and become. He uses the example of mental or physical pain – a nonintentional state we can only bear or endure – to conceive of a passivity which cannot be subsumed into relation, but is simultaneously its condition of (im)possibility. Whether the nonrelational will be absorbed into the grammar of nonrepresentational theory or whether it offers an alternative (post)phenomenological path followed by authors such as Agamben, Blanchot, Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe, Levinas, and Nancy, is in the process of being explored.

See also: Actor-network theory/network geographies; Affect; Becoming; Body, the; Dwelling; Emotional geographies; Performance; Performativity.

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