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Introducing
Human Geographies

Third Edition

Edited by Paul Cloke, Philip Crang and Mark Goodwin

INTRODUCING HUMAN GEOGRAPHIES

Introducing Human Geographies is the leading guide to Human Geography for undergraduate students, explaining new thinking on essential topics and discussing exciting developments in the field.

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AND MARK GOODWIN

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Paul Cloke, Philip Crang and Mark Goodwin

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Introducing Human Geographies: a guide

Introducing Human Geographies is a 'travel guide' into the academic subject of Human Geography and the things that it studies. Now in an updated and much extended third edition, the book is designed especially for students new to university degree courses. In guiding you through the subject, *Introducing Human Geographies* maps out the big, foundational ideas that have shaped the discipline past and present (in Part 1); explores key research themes being pursued in Human Geography's various sub-disciplines (in Part 2); and identifies some of the current research foci that are shaping the horizons of the subject (in Part 3).

Engaging with research literatures through academic journals and books is an important part of degree level study. The debates going on within them are exciting, challenging us not only to think about new subjects but also to think in new ways. However, it can take some time to get to grips with that published research. It is huge and diverse. It is dynamic, so that as a new student you can feel like you are coming into conversations halfway through, trying to figure out what people are talking about, why they are interested in it, and how come they are so animated about things. Academic publications are also by and large addressed to other researchers, deploying what may feel like rather arcane vocabularies as communicational shorthand. So not only has the conversation already begun, but it can also sound like it is in a foreign language. The ethos of *Introducing Human Geographies* is to make that cutting edge of contemporary Human Geography accessible; to map out key areas of study and debate; to guide you on forays into its somewhat daunting collections of ideas and interests; and to help you, as students of the subject, to participate in its conversations.

The Human Geography you will be introduced into here feels very different to some of the popular images of the subject. It is not a dry compendium of facts about the world, its countries, capital cities, and so on. Apologies in advance if this book is of limited help in getting the geography questions right in a quiz or television game show. Of course, knowing geographical facts and information is useful and important in all kinds of ways. But it is not enough. Human Geography today casts information in the service of two larger goals. On the one hand, it seeks out the realities of people's lives, places and environments in all their complexity. Geography is a subject that lives outside the classroom, the statistical dataset or the abstract model, gaining strength from its encounters with what (somewhat comically) we academics have a tendency to call 'the world out there'. On the other hand, Human Geographers are also acutely aware that this worldly reality is not easy to discern. The nature of the world is not laid out before our eyes, waiting for us to venture out blinking from the dark lecture theatre or library so that we can see it. 'Reality' only emerges through the carefully considered ways of thinking and investigating that we sometimes call 'theory'. As the contributions to this book show, Human Geography is characterized by a refusal to oppose 'reality' and 'theory', worldly

engagement and contemplative, creative thought. Both are needed if we are to describe, explain, understand, question and maybe even improve the world's human geographies.

As you may have noticed (when putting your back out trying to pick it up . . .), this third edition of *Introducing Human Geographies* is a large book. It has a lot in it. Its contents are diverse. In this general introduction we therefore want to do three things. First, we focus on what unites this variety by addressing head on the question 'What is Human Geography?'. Second, we expand on the kinds of approaches and styles of thought that characterize Human Geography today across its range of substantive fields. Finally, we briefly map out the layout of the book itself, both in terms of structure and presentational style, offering some advice on how you might navigate around it.

What is Human Geography?

A common exercise for an initial Human Geography tutorial or seminar is a request to mine a week's news coverage and to come back with an example of something that seems to you to be 'human geography'. Have a go at doing this now. Think about the last week's news. Draw up a shortlist of two or three stories that strike you as the kinds of things that Human Geographers would study or that you think are 'human geography'. Then reflect on how you decided on these and what you thought was 'geographical' about them. What does your selection tell you about what human geography means to you?

The word 'geography' can be traced back to ancient Greece over 2,200 years ago. Specifically, it was Eratosthenes of Kyrene (ca. 288–205 BC), Librarian at Alexandria, who wrote the first scholarly treatise that established Geography as an intellectual field, the three-volume *Geographika* (Roller, 2010). In Greek, Geography means 'earth (*geo*) writing (*graphy*)'. Writing the earth was what Geographers did two millennia ago, and it still describes what Geographers do today. In all kinds of ways, it is a wonderful definition of the subject. It speaks to Geography as a fundamental intellectual endeavour concerned with understanding the world in which we live and upon which our lives depend. It expresses how Geography is all around us, a part of our everyday lives. It suggests that Geography is not confined to academic study but includes a host of more popular forms of knowledge through which we come to understand and describe our world. But it also raises questions, in particular about breadth and coherence. To return to that exercise of reviewing the week's news for examples of Human Geography, if what we were looking for were cases of 'earth writing' then an awful lot of stuff could fit that brief in some way. Most of the news is about things happening on the earth.

How do we deal with that breadth, with that seeming absence of specialization in Geography? We would suggest there are three sorts of responses: to recognize the underpinning intellectual commitments built into the very notion of geography; to embrace the diverse topics and events to which these relate; and to recognize the ways in which different areas of Geography are defined and organized. Let us take these in turn.

First, then, we need to think a little more directly about the 'geo' in geo-graphy, about what we mean by the *earth* in earth writing. This word is not just a general designation of everything around us but signals two interconnected cores to Human Geography's interests (Cosgrove, 1994): what we might call an 'earthiness' and a 'worldliness'; or, to use

more current academic vocabulary, the relations between society and nature and between society and space (see Figure I). In terms of 'earthiness', the 'geo' in geography signifies 'the living planet Earth', the biophysical environments composed of land, sea, air, plants and animals that we live in and with. These are central concerns for Geographers. The relations between human beings and the 'nature' we are also part of have been a consistent preoccupation of Human Geography. There is a second meaning to 'geo' as well, though, that is equally central, one we use when we talk about 'the whole Earth' or 'the world'. Here, to write the earth means to explore its extents, to describe its areas, places and people, and to consider how and why these may have distinctive qualities. Human Geographers have long been fascinated with how various parts of the Earth's surface differ, with the relations between different areas, and with ways of knowing this (such as mapping and exploring). Geography endeavours to know the world and its varied features, both near to home and far away. The 'geo' in Geography designates this commitment to world knowledge.

The precise forms such concerns with 'earth' and 'world' have taken in Geography have varied over time of course, but both are central to the project of Human Geography today. Thus, Human Geographers lead debates over what are now often called the relations between society and nature, on environmental understandings and values, on the causes and responses to environmental change. They do so at a variety of scales, from global concerns with climate change to local debates over particular environments and landscapes. Human Geographers are also concerned with how human lives, and our relations to nature, vary across the surface of the Earth. Everything happens somewhere and Human Geographers argue that this matters. A variety of central geographical notions reflect this: space, place, region, location, territory, distance, scale, for example, all try to express something about the 'where-ness' of things in the world. In contemporary parlance, Human Geographers emphasize the relations between society and space or what can be called **spatiality**. They argue both that human life is shaped by 'where it happens' and that 'where it happens' is socially shaped. The world and its differences are not innate; they are made. Human Geographers study that making.

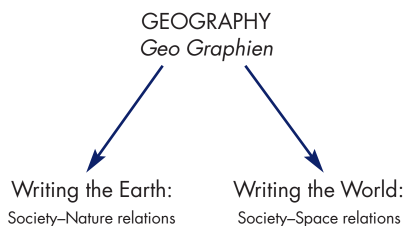


Figure I Human Geography: writing the earth and writing the world

Our argument, then, is that Human Geography today still lives up to the original meaning of its name, revolving around both 'writing the earth' (in contemporary academic parlance the relations between society and nature) and 'writing the world' (the relations between society and space). However, and this is the second point we want to develop, these core concerns are developed through a vast range of substantive topics. In this book you will find subject matters that range from the meanings of development and modernity to how we relate to plants when gardening, from the international financial system to tourism, from the post-9/11 'war on terror' to urban gentrification, from global climate change to shopping. And, for very good reasons, you'll also find a chapter largely devoted to a discussion of oven-ready chickens. It is quite common to have mixed feelings about

Figure II Which of these photographs of work look more like it should be in a Human Geography textbook to you? Why? Credit: (left) Jose Luis Palez, Inc./Corbis; (right) Brownie Harris/Corbis

this range. Many people choose to study Geography because of it, appreciating the wider understanding of human life such breadth seems to offer in comparison to many academic disciplines. In contrast, some react against it, worrying that Geographers seem to be 'jacks of all trades' and 'masters of none', complaining that Human Geography today seems to study things that 'aren't really Geography'.

In our view, the diversity of Human Geography is a strength not a weakness, for at least two reasons. First, it reflects how Geography existed well before, and exists well beyond, the kinds of specialization promoted by academic institutions over the last century or so (Bonnett, 2008). Geography is notable for how it challenges the divisions that have come to characterize academic organizations, spanning as it does the natural sciences, the social sciences and the arts and humanities. The world doesn't present itself to us in those categories and Geography resists being confined within them. As an academic discipline Geography has a healthy scepticism towards the disciplining of knowledge. Its diversity embodies that. Second, we would also encourage you to embrace the diversity of Human Geography in the spirit of being open to what might matter in the world. It is important that our thinking, and our academic disciplines, are not defined by inertia, pursuing topics simply because those are the subjects that we have traditionally pursued. Convention is not a good way to define and delimit what counts as Human Geography. You may find some of the subjects discussed in *Introducing Human Geographies* more familiar to you – for example, economic globalization – some less so – the idea of 'emotional geographies', perhaps – but all of them represent how Human Geography today is pursuing its tasks of 'writing the earth and the world'. Knowing the traditions of Human Geography is enormously valuable, but one of the crucial lessons we learn from that history is that what counts as Human Geography has always been subject both to change and to contestation (see Livingstone (1992) for an excellent, sustained analysis of this). For instance, shaped by the social worlds in which it was being produced, for much of its history Human Geography largely ignored over half the world's human beings. It reduced human to man. Even well into the latter half of the twentieth century,

Economic Geographers largely ignored the domestic work done by women at home; Development Geographers paid too little attention to the gendered nature of both development problems and practice; issues and understandings that were seen as feminine were routinely trivialized and cast as less worthy of academic attention. Human Geography was **masculinist** (Women and Geography Study Group, 1997; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Countering this involved introducing into Geography many novel topics and ideas. The issue for us, then, is not whether a topic is familiar as Geography but whether attending to it is part of 'writing the earth' in ways that have value.

Let's go back to the example of the oven-ready chicken that we mentioned earlier. We are assuming that if you told friends or family you were studying the Human Geography of chickens they might raise a quizzical eyebrow. But in fact, as Michael Watts explains in Chapter 27, the lives and deaths of chickens speak profoundly to how human societies today relate both to our living Earth and to the spatial organization of the world. An oven-ready chicken such as that pictured in Figure III embodies very particular ways for human beings to relate to nature, based on logics and practices of domestication, industrialized production, purposive modification and commodity consumption that reach well beyond this one member of the animal kingdom. The oven-ready chicken is also an embodiment of forms of spatiality that are very common in the world today. Different people and places are all connected together through the economic systems of the chicken world – the consumers eating it, the farmers raising it, the large companies controlling its production and its distribution, the scientists genetically modifying it – but at the same time these connections are forgotten or hidden through a distancing of places of chicken production and consumption – even avid meat eaters would be unlikely to want to see video footage of broiler production and death as they tuck into their roast bird. An oven-ready chicken presents us with the geography of the modern world on our plates. It is Geography.

Figure III Human Geography? Credit: British Chicken Information Service

Generally, then, *Introducing Human Geographies* presents a diverse and dynamic subject, and poses questions for you about what might count as valuable forms of geographical knowledge. There is, however, also a third response to the diversity inherent in Geography's intellectual remit: to organize it into various 'sub-disciplines' and research specialisms. The very idea of Human Geography already manifests this response, reflecting the widespread division between Physical Geography (placed in the natural sciences) and Human Geography (located in the social sciences and humanities). Contemporary research literatures and curricula take the process of dividing and specializing much further, organizing

Human Geography itself into the kind of sub-disciplines we present in Part 2 of this book (biogeographies, cartographies, cultural geographies, development geographies, historical geographies, political geographies and so on). These each possess their own research literatures (via their specialist journals) and, indeed, their own introductory textbooks. Quite often these sub-disciplinary designations form the basis of how Human Geography is taught within universities. Sub-disciplines are helpful in a number of ways. They map out the diversity of Geography into recognizable areas of work. They promote the development of expertise. They focus Geographers' engagements with other academic disciplines (Political Geographers engaging with Political Science and International Relations, Historical Geographers with History, and so on). But they can also be problematic. If one gets too hung up on sub-disciplines one can lose the anti-disciplinary holism that is one of the strengths of the subject. The much discussed 'divide' between Physical and Human Geography is a case in point. Furthermore, sub-disciplinary labels bear the imprint of university bureaucracy and job titling; we academics are very used to them but outside of universities they don't much help people relate to the Geography that we do. So, the useful foci provided by the various sub-divisions of Geography need to be accompanied by an ongoing commitment to seeing the distinctively geographical contribution that they make to understanding our worlds. At its best, Human Geography has a strong intellectual coherence, but applies it with an invigorating catholicism.

SUMMARY

- Geography means 'earth writing'. As a subject with that aim, Geography is notable for its wide-ranging concerns and interests.
- The first meaning of the 'geo' in Geography is 'the Earth'. The first of Human Geography's main intellectual contributions is to understand the relations between human beings and the natural world of which we are a part.
- The second meaning of the 'geo' in Geography is 'the world'. The second of Human Geography's main intellectual contributions is to understand the world both near and far. More abstractly, this means recognizing how all facets of human societies – the economic, the environmental, the political and so forth – are bound up with questions of 'spatiality'.
- These fundamental concerns of Human Geography are pursued across diverse and changing subject matters. We would encourage you to be open to that diversity and change; resist restricting your Human Geography to topics and approaches with which you are already familiar.

Approaching Human Geography today

Up to this point we have been outlining what Human Geography is about, emphasizing its foci on both 'the earth' (society–nature relations) and 'the world' (society–space relations). Now we turn to how Human Geographers approach these issues and the kinds of knowledge that they try to create. Our interest is not in well-defined schools of thought or even intellectual paradigms but in the looser sensibilities that shape how Human Geography is done today.

At the outset, it is important to note that the approaches of Human Geography have changed over time and differ from place to place. Human Geography in the 1920s or 1960s was different to Human Geography today. The approaches to Human Geography in Germany, Brazil or China are not identical to those in Britain. Even individual university departments can have distinctive research cultures. In fact the situation is more complex still; as you may find in your courses, at any one time and in any one place there are likely to be different kinds of Human Geography being done. There is not a single agreed view on what kinds of knowledge Human Geography should produce. *Introducing Human Geographies* contains some of that variety; it does not present a single version of the subject. But it does reflect and support some recurrent emphases that, in our view, characterize much of Human Geography today. We see these as commitments to five kinds of knowledge: *description*, *experience*, *interpretation*, *explanation* and *critique* (see Table I). Not all of these are equally endorsed by all Human Geographers, indeed they are often argued over; but they are commitments you will find frequently evidenced both in this book and in the course of your studies. Let us elaborate on each in turn.

First, then, Human Geography looks to describe the world. Sometimes dismissed with the epithet 'mere', in fact *description* has a very special value. Geographical description is not synonymous with dry compendia of information about a region or place. It involves attending to the world unusually carefully. The nature of that attention can vary. It might mean, for example, fashioning and mapping forms of statistical data (perhaps via a Geographical Information System (GIS)) that allow us to describe things that we can't fully see with our own eyes – spatial differences in wealth or access to services perhaps. It might involve tracing out the often hidden networks of connections linking people and places, as when Human Geographers 'follow' the things that people routinely consume (our food or clothes, for example) to see how they came to be, where they come from, and what kinds of trade govern their movements (e.g. Cook, 2004). Or it might mean being peculiarly observant in person. Think, for example, about how we normally move around the world, head often down, taking our surroundings somewhat for granted. Now contrast that to a more geographical engagement with place, perhaps a public square, where we look to document the details of the built environment, its history, the people who are present and absent, the kinds of action going on. Here, to describe a place geographically is to bear witness to its material textures and the forms of life that unfold through it. Our argument, then, is that Human Geography is an attentive discipline. It describes in order to reveal what we might otherwise overlook and to bring into focus what we might otherwise only vaguely perceive. It crafts ways of presenting the fruits of this attention, using forms of description that range from maps to statistics, prose, photography and film/video-making.

Second, Human Geography also commits to understand the world through *experience*. In

part we see this in the discipline's commitment to fieldwork. Geography places a value on trying to understand issues not just from afar but through actually being there, in a place, amongst the action, conversing with people, getting a feel for things. The status of this kind of first-hand field knowledge is philosophically complex, but Human Geography tends to view understanding gained only from more 'remote' sorts of sensing with some suspicion. It is not a subject that is comfortable with being confined to the lab or library. Important here too are the people-centred approaches trumpeted initially under the label **humanistic geography** (for exemplary collections, see Ley and Samuels (1978) and Meinig (1979); for a more recent revisiting of such humanistic work see Holloway and Hubbard (2000)). Humanistic Geography emphasizes engaging with people's real lives, their values and beliefs, their daily preoccupations, their hopes and dreams, their loves and hates, what they think about things,

Type of knowledge	Approach	Illustrative examples
Description	Paying close attention to, and finding ways to represent, geographies that we normally struggle to perceive.	Statistical descriptions, GIS visualizations and maps; tracings of spatial networks and associations; detailed evocations of particular places.
Experience	Understanding geographies as part of human experience.	The emphasis placed on the experiential knowledge generated by fieldwork; humanistic concerns with understanding other people's diverse experiences of the world.
Interpretation	Recognizing and engaging with the meanings of the world's geographies.	Work focusing on geographical representations and on the discourses of which they are a part. Often associated with the so-called 'cultural turn'.
Explanation	Explaining why the world's geographies exhibit the forms and processes that they do.	Geographical explanations range from spatial science's search for spatial laws to (more commonly today) socio-spatial analyses of causal processes.
Critique	Rigorously evaluating and judging the world's geographies, as well as one's own and others' understandings of them.	Critique can be understood as a broad stance to geographical knowledge. It has also come to be associated with bodies of work that explicitly designate themselves as forms of 'critical geography'.

Table I Approaches to Human Geography today: a schema

the ways they feel about and sense their surroundings. Human Geographers are thus not only interested in experiencing places for themselves; they want to understand other people's geographical experiences and thoughts in all their variety.

A commitment to interpreting the meaningful nature of the world is apparent here too. Geographies are not just brute realities; it is fundamentally human to invest the world with meaning. We don't only sense the world, we make sense of it. Human Geography is concerned with *interpretation* insofar as it recognizes the importance of the meanings of things. Think, for example, about the interest Geography has in 'the Earth' and society–nature relations. The things we call 'natural', indeed the very notion of the 'natural', are deeply imbued with meanings. Reflect for a few seconds on geographical notions like 'wilderness' or 'rainforest' or 'the tropics'. These words are not narrowly factual; they come with a host of (often complex and even conflicting) meanings and connotations. The same is true of how we describe the world's different spaces. Consider what geographical designations such as 'urban', 'suburban' and 'rural' might mean to you and others; or the continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, Antarctica . . .); or a seemingly simple geographical label like 'The West' or 'The Western World'. All these terms are, to use a colloquialism, 'heavily loaded'. Human Geography's approaches here are informed by wider bodies of thought in the humanities on interpretation and meaning (with great names like 'hermeneutics', 'semiotics' and 'iconography'). They are also often identified with what has been called 'the cultural turn' taken within the discipline since the 1990s (Barnes and Duncan, 1992). Prominent is a focus on **representation**, with research teasing out the meanings given to geographies in forms both obviously imaginative (literature, the arts, film and television drama and so on) and less obviously so (maps, documentaries, news reports, policy documents, etc.). Interpreting these representations is important because they are not just an imaginative gloss that we humans add to our worlds, a subjective filter that obscures objective reality. Representations shape how we see things, think about them and act with and upon them. They partly make our worlds. They are part of reality. In academic terminology, by interpreting what things mean we engage with the **discourses** that produce the world as we know it. As an interpretive endeavour, Human Geography both looks to understand those discourses and to present other ways of ways of seeing, describing and acting upon our geographies.

So far we have outlined that when Human Geographers undertake their 'earth writing' (geo-graphy) they look to describe, experience and interpret. A fourth commitment has flickered in and out of these discussions: to *explanation*. Human Geography is not only concerned with what the geographies of the world are, but also with how they came to be. The nature of geographical explanation has varied over time and is subject to much debate. Divergent views are underpinned by different understandings of both the world 'out there' and the sorts of knowledge required to grasp it. For some, Human Geography should be a **spatial science**, formulating and testing theories of spatial organization, interaction and distribution in order to establish universal spatial laws about why geographical objects are located where they are and how they relate to each other. Emerging in the 1960s, spatial science distinguished itself from earlier regional geographies, criticizing them for being overly descriptive and lacking the explanatory power of scientific analysis. However, other approaches in Human Geography resist the equation of explanation with spatial science.

They are wary of its kind of 'social physics'. Historical Geographers, for instance, emphasize how forms of historical narrative can have explanatory power. To put it crudely, a historical approach explains the world today by understanding past events and processes. More generally, most Human Geography is wary of explaining things via reference only to spatial factors (what is called 'spatial reductionism'), emphasizing instead the two-way relations between 'space and society'. Aspects of society – the modern nation-state, for example, or the capitalist economy – are seen both to shape the nature of space and themselves to have spatial dimensions. Thus, there are no universal spatial laws that can explain our geographies; any explanation must recognize the socially produced nature of spatiality. There is also a concern about seeking universal laws as explanations; instead, a range of theories – most visibly represented by an approach known as 'critical realism' (Sayer, 2000) – have sought to understand causality in relation both to more abstract powers and more concrete, contingent, contextual factors. As you have probably gathered by now, it is hard to do justice to these sorts of complex debates in a brief introduction (sorry!). But, in essence, our view is that Human Geography today widely exhibits a commitment to explain the geographical phenomena it studies, but generally undertakes that explanation through nuanced accounts that weave together underlying tendencies/forces with more contextually specific factors.

Fifth, and finally, contemporary Human Geography is concerned with *critique*. It is easy to misunderstand this word. In everyday speech, when we say someone is being critical what we often mean is that they are being negative or finding fault. But that is not what we have in mind here. True critical thought is as much about seeing strengths as weaknesses. Critique, then, means exercising judgement. For Human Geography, a commitment to critique means that the subject not only describes, experiences, interprets and explains but also rigorously evaluates the world's geographies. A general consequence of this commitment is that the 'rightness' of our answers to geographical questions is not given. There is room for debate and argument. Critique is not just a matter of expressing one's opinion, but its reasoned judgement involves values, beliefs and perspectives. For all of us, as students of Human Geography, there are not often agreed correct answers that we simply have to remember. Doing Human Geography involves developing rigorous analyses of issues, evaluating both information and arguments, and thereby figuring out not only what the answers are but also what the most important questions might be. This means not taking things for granted, questioning the assumptions held by others and, crucially, ourselves. Critical thought – and this is a tricky balance – combines a determined, questioning scepticism with a profound openness to unfamiliar ideas and voices. It seeks to evaluate present and past conditions and to disclose future possibilities and alternatives.

More narrowly, these general critical attitudes have shaped distinctive bodies of philosophy, theory and practice that take them forward. Within Human Geography, 'critical geography' has emerged as a designation that folds in earlier appeals to radicality – as seen in the foundation in the 1970s of the 'radical journal of geography', *Antipode* – and the 'dissident geographies' of **feminist**, **Marxist** and **post-colonial** writers (Blunt and Wills, 2000). The words of *ACME*, an open access online journal of 'critical geography', give a sense of this; for this journal, 'analyses that are critical are understood to be part of the praxis of social and political change aimed at challenging,

dismantling and transforming prevalent relations, systems and structures of exploitation, oppression, imperialism, neoliberalism, national aggression and environmental destruction' (ACME, 2012). A range of work discussed in this third edition of *Introducing Human Geographies* would fit that definition in some part, but critical thinking in the more general sense is not necessarily signed up to particular political colours. It spans, too, both cerebral philosophical thought and the kinds of work more directly invested in practical change. Critique, then, can be taken as a more general stance, committed to questioning, reasoned judgement, and a hopeful search for possible better futures. That stance can be usefully adopted within your own studies and writing of Human Geography.

Above, we have outlined various commitments that shape Human Geography today – to description, experience, interpretation, explanation and critique. Whilst keyed into wider debates over forms of knowledge and the interests they pursue, these five categories are, inevitably, something of a heuristic device. They are not exhaustive. They are also not mutually exclusive; many kinds of geographical description might also see themselves as interpreting and/or explaining and vice versa, for example. But, with those caveats, we believe that this schema conveys some of the principal rationales for why Human Geography undertakes its 'earth writing' and a sense of what you can achieve by studying it.

SUMMARY

- Human Geography undertakes its 'earth writing' for a number of reasons. It is helpful to reflect on these reasons as you develop your own geographical imagination.
- We have suggested five undertakings that shape Human Geography today. We termed these: description, experience, interpretation, explanation and critique.
- This is not an exhaustive list of all the rationales that underpin Human Geography but one, some or all of these commitments shape a great deal of the scholarship that you will be introduced to in this book.

Introducing Human Geographies: finding your way around

We have used the metaphor of a travel guide to describe this book. Guidebooks are not designed to be read from front to back in one go. They set scenes, provide contexts, and then as a reader we dip into them, dependent on our interests and our travel schedules. This new edition of *Introducing Human Geographies* is the same. It is designed to accompany and guide you as you find your way around Human Geography. Exactly how you read it, which parts you spend most time in and so on, will depend on your own intellectual itinerary and your programme of studies. The format we have created for the book, with a large number of comparatively short chapters organized into

parts and sections, supports that kind of tailored reading 'on the go'.

Nonetheless, it may be helpful to explain the book's structure. The fifty-nine main chapters are organized into three parts – Foundations, Themes and Horizons. The nine chapters in Foundations (Part 1) give you the latest thinking on some of the 'big questions' that have long shaped the thinking of Human Geographers. An introduction to Part 1 says more about the individual chapters, but let us a say a little here about their remit. In setting out our foundations we have eschewed two common approaches: on the one hand, a narrative or episodic history of the subject; and on the other, abstract summaries of key theoretical approaches or '-isms'. (Often these are offered in combination; a chronology of different theoretical schools, dated on the basis of when they became influential within Human Geography.) There are excellent books that adopt variants of such approaches (for example Cresswell (2013), Livingstone (1992) and Nayak and Jeffrey (2011)) that we would encourage you to read, but for our purposes here we wanted to avoid a division of theoretical foundations from the geographies we live with every day. The foundations presented here therefore weave together conceptual ideas with examples and illustrations. Each chapter is framed around a binary relationship that frames both the topics Human Geography focuses on (its 'geo-') and how it thinks about them (the nature of its '-graphy'). Binaries are often central to how we think; critically engaging with them provides a powerful window on key elements of geographical thought (see also Cloke and Johnston (2005)). The chapters in Part 1 may not match with particular, substantive lectures in a taught course, and don't always exist as easily locatable debates in the discipline's journals. They crop up everywhere because in many ways they deal with some of the most important questions to think about as a new Human Geography student. They give you a sense of why Human Geographers pursue more specific studies in the way they do and introduce you to ideas and ways of thinking that you will be able to use across a range of substantive topics.

Those substantive areas of the subject are turned to directly in the second and largest part of the book, Themes. It has thirty-nine chapters, divided into eleven sections addressing major thematic 'sub-disciplines' of Human Geography in alphabetical order: biogeographies, cartographies, cultural geographies, development geographies, economic geographies, environmental geographies, historical geographies, political geographies, population geographies, social geographies, and urban and rural geographies. Each of these sections has its own brief editorial introduction, setting out both the sub-disciplinary field and how the following chapters engage with it. This part of the book provides you with thought-provoking arguments on the key issues currently being debated within sub-disciplines, as well as giving you a feel for the distinctive kind of Human Geography undertaken within each.

As we noted above, thematic sub-disciplines are one of the major ways in which teaching curricula are organized and research activity structured, to the extent that geographers are often labelled according to these specialisms (as economic geographers, political geographers, and so on). However, the world we live in is (unsurprisingly) resistant to these neat classifications. Economy and politics and culture and environment (and so on) all interweave with each other. You can't go out and find something that is purely 'economic' (or purely political, cultural or environmental).

In fact, a lot of the most innovative work in Human Geography goes on in the border zones between these sub-disciplinary territories. For these reasons, the final part of the book, Horizons, comprises eleven chapters organized around four contemporary research themes that do not fit neatly in any one sub-discipline. The four foci – non-representational geographies, mobilities, securities and publics – each have their own brief editorial introduction, contextualizing the chapters that follow. Each highlights current agendas in the discipline that are influencing debates in a number of its sub-disciplines.

Stylistically, while every chapter has its own authorial signature all the contributions combine discussions of challenging ideas and issues with accessible presentation. Unfamiliar academic terminology is kept to a minimum, but where central to an argument and not explained fully at the time it is marked in bold type and defined in the Glossary at the back of the book. Chapters include periodic summaries of key points, enabling you to pull out the central lines of argument. Potential discussion points are given at the end of chapters, offering options for group debates or individual essay plan development. Generally, *Introducing Human Geographies* aims to make you think and to challenge you intellectually, but to do that through being lively and engaging. Scholarly knowledge doesn't have to be dry and self-obsessed. Chapters are deliberately short and punchy, but there is guidance for how to develop and deepen your knowledge via suggested further readings included at the end of chapters and the section introductions.

The mention of further readings marks an appropriate place for us to stop introducing. Like any guidebook, the intention of *Introducing Human Geographies* is to take you around the subject so you can experience it for yourself. We rarely read guidebooks without travelling; the book is a companion on a journey not a destination in and of itself. Likewise, you shouldn't read this book without moving on from it to experience more directly the areas of research and debate it guides you towards. If it helps to mix metaphors, think of this book as an introduction agency, setting you up for a relationship with Human Geography. Studying a subject means getting to know it, figuring out what you like about it and what you don't, and maybe even falling in love with some of what it does. It also means 'asking it out'. Let Human Geography get to know you; introduce it to your life, your enthusiasms; liberate it from the library, lecture or textbook. Take some of the geographical ideas in this book to your favourite haunts and see what they make of each other. In other words, see what happens when not only are you introduced to Human Geography but Human Geography is introduced to you. Use this book as a guide both to reading Human Geography and to doing it yourself by thinking geographically. Join in the age-old endeavour of 'earth writing'.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Look at a newspaper from the last week. Identify three stories that seem to you to address Human Geography topics. Explain your choices and why you think they are 'geographical'.
2. What makes Human Geography a distinctive subject?

3. 'Human Geography is a down-to-earth subject, concerned with facts not theories.' Discuss this assertion.
4. Outline your understanding of Human Geography's commitment to one of the following: description, experience, interpretation, explanation, critique.

FURTHER READING

There are a number of other texts that fulfill different functions to this book, but offer valuable complementary overviews and resources that help introduce Human Geography. These include:

Bonnett, A. (2008) *What is Geography?* London: Sage.

In this book Alastair Bonnett develops his personal response to the question 'what is geography?'. His answer is thoughtful and thought-provoking, casting geography not as just another academic subject but as 'one of humanity's big ideas'. The book covers the two central foci identified in this chapter (what we called 'writing the earth and the world'); geographical interests in cities and mobilities; the doing of geography in forms of exploration, mapping, connection and engagement; and the institutionalization of geography within and beyond universities.

Cloke, P., Cook, I., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Painter, J. and Philo, C. (2004) *Practising Human Geography*. London: Sage.

This book focuses on how research in Human Geography is done, covering both the production of geographical materials or 'data' and the production of varying kinds of geographical 'interpretations' of these data. This, and other books on geographical research methods, provide invaluable links between the kinds of materials introduced in this volume and the opportunities that exist for you to undertake your own geographical investigations in project work and independent dissertations.

Gregory, D., Johnston, R.J., Pratt, G., Watts, M.J. and Whatmore, S. (eds.) (2009) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th edn). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

This dictionary has concise but comprehensive definitions and explanations relevant to almost every aspect of Human Geography. As a reference tool it is invaluable and has no better. Human Geography can be hard to engage with because of the density of its specialist terms. This is a book you will be able to use throughout your time studying Human Geography as you look to master that specialist vocabulary.

Kneale, P. (2011) *Study Skills for Geography, Earth and Environmental Science Students* (3rd edn). London: Hodder Education.

A guide to the study skills that Geography students need and use at university level. A very useful book.

Livingstone, D. (1992) *The Geographical Tradition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

A scholarly rendition of the history of Human Geography, a topic we pay comparatively little attention to in this book. Livingstone concentrates on the longer-term history of the subject rather than on its recent developments. Throughout, one gets fascinating insights into how the concerns of Human Geographers have run in parallel with wider social currents.

PART ONE

FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Sometimes the start of Human Geography textbooks, and indeed courses, can be very daunting. This is because of the perception by some of the authors of the books and courses concerned that it is necessary to throw in a load of theoretical stuff at the beginning, before getting on with the more interesting stuff. While it may indeed be preferable that certain theoretical foundations are laid before dealing with systematic issues, the net result is likely to be that the reader/course-attender can either be bored to tears or bemused by the abstract nature of those foundations. Well, here's the bad news – we have also decided to begin this book with some theoretical dimensions. But, here's the good news – we utterly reject the false division between abstract theory and the substantive issues of everyday life. Indeed, we believe that our everyday lives are simply teeming with the kinds of issues and questions that are often pigeon-holed as theory. Much of the excitement and value in Human Geography lies in addressing these issues and questions by thinking through aspects of our own lives and of the world(s) in which we live.

As an illustration to get you thinking about Human Geography in terms of everyday life, here is a very short account of a typical journey to work for one of us – Paul Cloke. Neither the story nor the journey is in any way special; that is the point of narrating it. It could be any part of your everyday experience, whoever you are or wherever you live. What it does show is that different sets of Human Geography relationships crop up all over the place, and certainly not just in the abstract treatments of theory in books and lectures. So, imagine if you can a small hillside village in Devon, some 15 miles from the city of Exeter.

The alarm clock does its disturbing work and off we go. There's just the two of us now as our daughter lives in Horfield, Bristol and our son in Dalston, London. So we still get plenty of opportunities for city-time with them, but our home is distinctly rural. Throw open the curtains and there opening out before us is a familiar scene, described in a recent chapter on rural landscape:

Figure IV Bishopsteignton, south Devon. Source: Bishopsteignton Village Website

> My gaze is drawn past landmark trees, across the tidal estuary of the River Teign, and up again to the valley side beyond. Rolling topography and ancient field enclosures – frequently re-patterned, re-coloured and re-lit with diurnal and seasonal change – are intersected by narrow lanes and straggly footpaths. The ebb and flow of the river continuously refresh the scene, imposing alternative senses of time on what can seem timelessly pastoral. A picture postcard? Yes, but so much more. This is where we walk our border collie, Ringo, where I ride my bike for exercise, where I am periodically enchanted by the affective capacity of bluebell woods, of the colour and texture of birch and rowan, of the persistence and beauty of goldfinch, blue tit and woodpecker, yet can remain relatively unaffected by the scenic presence of the view, or by the potential for hands-on

proximity with nature in the performance of gardening.

(Cloke, 2012: forthcoming)

Alongside its beautiful natural setting, though, rural life can be a place of tension and struggle. I struggle with political and religious conservatism; I struggle with social monoculturalism; I struggle with the vehemence of local opposition to new housing developments, especially from those who occupy the previous rounds of development. As I start the day, I reflect that this place that I call home is gazed on, lived in, performed and experienced in myriad different ways. The assemblage of human and non-human actors displayed out of that window is as diverse in its meaningful representation as it is it in its everyday life practices.

Away from the window, our home displays (consciously and unconsciously) all kinds of other geographies of connection. Paintings and photos provide constant reminders of other places that are precious to us – New Zealand, Khayelitsha in South Africa, Kenya – and there are other intentional reminders of ethical connections close to our heart, of fair trade, anti-slavery and anti-homelessness campaigns. And yes, glory of glories, the latest charitable craze from Cord and Tearfund of toilet twinning. Our toilet is proudly twinned with a latrine in Uganda, with a framed photo to mark the occasion. Charity must be regular . . . but there are uneasy relationships between private ethics and their public display. Of course we don't recognize other less progressive moral connections that will be evident to others in the exploitative relations entombed within our consumer goods, food miles, commuting and unsustainable lifestyles. No matter, to the background sound of music which can variously be drawn from Australia, Iceland and the USA as well as Britain, and with the foreground conversation of international news on the radio, we speed through breakfast. Food from all around the world, brought to us by multinational corporations via supermarkets. The global and the local come together at every turn.

Time marches on, so I begin my commute into Exeter. At first, my journey traverses farmland through tiny lanes, passing the local golf course; however early my commute, there is always earlier activity there. Then through Halden Forest to Telegraph Hill and on into the city. Halden represents a place of idyllic recreation and natural habitat for many, but its traverse is characterized by the modernism of a crowded dual-carriageway. In the winter its local microclimate renders it susceptible to heavy snowfall and ice which have in the past trapped unwary drivers for several hours. In many ways, then, natural, mechanical and human risk and hazard lie shallow beneath the surface of this kind of commuter journey. As I reach its outskirts, the city remains somewhat detached from the vantage point of the driver's seat, partly because of a necessary focus on traffic management and partly because the radio tends to fill in much of the 'thinking space' of the journey with national and international issues. Situated on the River Exe, Exeter snarls up at key bridging points during the rush hour, so along with many others I weave my way through the social geographies of housing estates and suburban lifescapes to avoid traffic on the way to the University. In so doing I bypass the centre of the city with its designer pubs and clubs, with Irishness here, and Walkabout there, interspersed with what are by now unremarkable Indian and Chinese restaurants. Designer-label beer and wine from all over the world is spilt here over designer T-shirts from all over the world. Where I used to work, in Bristol, the University was located in the heart of the city, and I would often encounter the heady contrast of financial

centres and homelessness, side by side on my journey in. Exeter, however, is a campus university on the edge of the city, and these disturbing downtown hybridities are temporarily avoided by geography. Finally, it is up to Geography, passing through the multinational, but somehow overwhelmingly middle-class, throng of students on campus. Once inside my office, the first move is to fetch a cup of (fairly traded) coffee, switch on the PC and check my e-mails, hardly noticing the rows of shelves loaded with the production of particular knowledges about governments, policies, plans and politics, and how the lives of real people in real places intersect with so much in the geographical world.

There is so much else that I could (and perhaps should) have mentioned, but this much suffices to invite parallels with many of the themes covered in this opening section of the book. Philip Crang, in Chapter 1, discusses the relations between the global and the local, and the sights, sounds, histories and commodities of the global crop up time and again in the local story of my journey to work. Local places get their distinctive character from their past and present connections to the rest of the world, and therefore we need a global sense of the local. Conversely, global flows of information, ideas, money, people and things are routed into local geographies. We therefore also need a local sense of the global. Crang's core message is that ideas about global and local are not one-dimensional inputs to our Human geographical understanding. Rather local and global are interrelated and each helps to shape the other.

The same can be said for relations between society and space. In travelling from home through villages, suburbs and estates, my narratives are jam-packed with references to how and where different social groups live, work and take their leisure. In Chapter 2, Jo Little shows how spatial patterns can reflect social structures, and how spatial processes can be used as an index of social relations. My journey seems to traverse particular social areas, but she warns that social categories cannot be taken for granted. Such categories are constructed socially, politically, culturally, and are mediated by the organization of space; in other words, society and space are co-constructed. Moreover, we can no longer rely on two-dimensional maps of society and space. Beyond the obvious, there is complexity, ambiguity and multi-dimensional identity. Whether in rural communities, spaces of the night-time economy, or in the hopeful thirdspaces of liminality and change, society and space both shape each other, and are shaped by each other.

Just as local–global and society–space have seemed like binary terms but have been investigated by Human Geographers in terms of their co-dependence, so the relationship between human and non-human has also come under scrutiny. As Hayden Lorimer writes in Chapter 3, geographers have taken a strong interest in how humans understand and value the lives of other living creatures, not only in terms of issues around food and clothing, but also focusing on the companionship of pets (such as Ringo the border collie) and the lifeworlds of 'wild' animals (such as the deer that run free in Halden Forest). In so doing we have moved away from geographies that focus only on humans, and instead have emphasized the relations between humans and non-human beings, materials and ideas. One significant outcome of this shift has been an interest in the appropriate ethical responses that arise from these inter-relationships.

Part of the intellectual climate that has allowed Human Geographers to begin to deconstruct some of these key binary terms has arrived on the coat-tails of postmodernity.

Mark Goodwin's account in Chapter 4 of the shift from 'modern' to 'postmodern' charts the way in which wider society has moved away from the austere and geometrically planned patterns of life and thought under modernity into a more postmodern emphasis on diversity, plurality and playfulness. Tracing the outcomes of this shift in terms of architecture, cultural style and philosophical approach, Goodwin outlines a transformation in Human Geography by which many researchers have begun to reject any kind of search for universal truth, and instead have recognized that all knowledge is socially produced. As with other such categories of knowledge however, the boundaries between modern and postmodern are contested, and elements of each are visible in contemporary cultural and physical landscapes.

In Chapter 5, Paul Cloke explores the importance of 'self' and 'other' in these contestations over socially produced knowledge. Being reflexive about the self is a vital part of understanding how our knowledge of Human Geographies is situated. Our experience, politics, spirituality, identities, and so on, can add to our stories about the world, and denying their importance in search of 'objectivity' could well be dishonest. My journey to work will not be the same as yours, even if it follows much the same route. However, there is also a danger that we only see the world in terms of ourselves and those who are the same as us, thus creating categories of 'otherness' according to the essential characteristics of our selves. What escapes us are other 'others' – those whom we cannot categorize or pigeonhole; those who surprise us and cannot be accommodated in our organization of knowledge.

Gender is a fundamentally important dimension of how Human Geography can present understandings of how knowledge about the world (for example the domestic world of the household and the employment world of the academic workplace) is constructed. Geraldine Pratt and Molly Kraft, in Chapter 6, discuss how differences between masculine and feminine ways of bodily comportment lead to variations in self-perception and cognitive ability (especially spatial awareness). So the capacity to explore and know our environment can be conditioned, for example, by gendered (as well as racialized) geographies of fear and safety that characterize some local places. They argue that much of women's experience has long been ignored by Human Geographers, with the result that different types of masculinities have been formative in the production of geographical knowledge. It is therefore crucial that we seek to situate knowledge (see Chapter 5) so as both to acknowledge the validity of a range of perspectives, and to develop a commitment to communicate across different perspectives and types of knowledge. In the context of this chapter situating knowledge is important not least because gender itself is interwoven with other social identities that render it unstable over time and space.

From Chapter 7 onwards, this introductory section dealing with *Foundations* turns specifically to address the diversity in the ways in which Human Geography is studied and approached. In Chapter 7, David Gilbert notes the potentially confusing range of 'hard' and 'soft' approaches, ranging from scientific objectivity to having an opinion that counts. For example, my journey to work could have been portrayed in terms of time–space data and cartography rather than as a loose personal narrative. Alongside the continuing energetic focus on geographical information systems (GIS – see Chapter 14), Human Geography has over recent years mostly emphasized a *critical* social scientific approach to the subject,

seeking to deal with issues of agency, meaningfulness, power and positionality. In parallel, however, there has also been a collaboration with the humanities – especially history, philosophy and literature – to investigate the importance of the creative imagination to places using analysis both of written texts (novels, travel writing and the like) and visual images (film, television, photography). Initially the focus here was on how these texts represented different places and people, but more recently Human Geographers have looked to the arts for inspiration about how we sense and move within the world in a more non-representational register (see Chapter 50).

The distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' approaches to Human Geography is often influential in how we develop conceptual frameworks, undertake research and interpret the findings. It is common to encounter significant divisions between quantitative and qualitative approaches – an expression of Human Geography identity according to methodological choice rather than substantive focus or theoretical viewpoint. Rob Kitchin in Chapter 8 explains that these methodological divisions of Human Geography identity are misleading; rather, it should be theory, philosophy and ideology that shape choices about methods. While quantitative research can produce explanation and prediction, and qualitative research can produce meaning and understanding, these methodological approaches should not be regarded as dualistic. Quantitative approaches fit the assumptions of some philosophies and qualitative approaches suit others. However, mixed methods including both quantification and qualification are often useful and even advisable.

A key part of the conceptual thinking through that Human Geographers have to engage in relates to how the truth of the world is variously represented in different circumstances. In Chapter 9, Mike Crang suggests that the relationship between representation and reality is more complex than a binary between truthful or deceptive depictions of places and people. Different people and organizations will understand different places and circumstances differently – living in a Devon village provokes many different portrayals, not all of which reflect idyllic rural life. It follows that all kinds of representations will contribute to ideas about and understandings of the world, and will help to shape the world rather than simply depict it. Human Geographers need to understand the selective angles from which representations are presented, not least because these representations are often subject to the power and control of the global political economy, which increasingly seems to trade on sign-values rather than 'truth'.

The nine chapters in this part of the book on 'Foundations', then, represent the very stuff of lively, interpretative, relevant and accessible Human Geographies. They help us to think through some of the recurring questions and issues involved in understanding the interconnections of people and places, and they help us to place ourselves in the picture as well. Far from being the 'boring theoretical stuff', they offer some keys with which to unlock thoughtful and nuanced accounts of the Human Geographies of everyday life. Enjoy!

CHAPTER 1
LOCAL–GLOBAL

Philip Crang

Introduction

My reasons for becoming a geographer were not particularly well considered or original, indeed they were pretty lame in some ways. Yet they still ring true to me today. I enjoyed Geography as a subject, and decided to do it for a degree at university, because through Geography I got to hear about, see pictures of, and maybe even go to a lot of different places. Geographers travel – both literally through an emphasis on fieldwork and various sorts of exploration, and more virtually in the form of slide shows and reportage. Why did I think that was a good thing? I valued the pleasures of getting to know particular, distinctive places, both familiar and unfamiliar. I enjoyed spending time in a place, getting a feel for it, finding out about it. A lot of my most powerful memories and attachments were with places of various sorts, from the house I grew up in, to the fields and moors I explored as a young runner, to the 'milk bar' where my grandmother took me for ice cream treats. But I also thought it was important to learn about areas of the world and people of which I would otherwise be largely ignorant. I was both moved and discomfited by how much of the world only came onto my TV screen when disasters struck, people died, and emergency problems needed responses. I knew my own life was parochial in the extreme, and while I enjoyed its confines, I also wanted to get beyond them.

Those feelings I had as a seventeen year old still animate my interest in Geography. I know much more about the subject now, but I still think my views then located something very close to its heart. They home in on a triumvirate of ideas that have long fostered Human Geography's understanding of itself as a distinctive intellectual endeavour. First, in the emphasis on the distinctive characters of particular places, they highlight the idea of the *local*. Second, bound up with a desire to broaden horizons and foster a greater 'world awareness' is the idea of the *global*. And third, central to this interest in both the local and global is an emphasis on *difference* (between places and people). This chapter examines the relations between these three ideas: the local, the global and difference. It will, I hope, give a sense of how productive they have been, and can still be, for geographers. However, it also argues for critical reflection. Notions of the local, the global and difference are not as simple and obvious as they might at first seem. It is important to think carefully about each of these ideas, and perhaps even more so about how they relate to each other. If we fail to do that, then we run the risk of unwittingly

reproducing conventional arguments about our world's geographies, closing off other possible ways of thinking and acting. We may end up learning rather less about places, their particularities and their differences than we should as thoughtful 'travellers'.

The chapter starts by briefly outlining how and why ideas of the local and the global have been so important to Human Geography. I then set out three takes on local–global relations. I call these *mosaic*, *system* and *network*.

Local matters, global visions

Human Geography has long combined attention to local matters with some sort of global vision. To start with the local, it, and associated notions such as place and region, have long had a particular centrality in geographical imaginations. Many academic geographers have spent whole careers trying to document, understand and explain the individual 'personality' of an area (Dunbar, 1974; Gilbert, 1960). So, why is the local deemed so important to Human Geography's research and teaching? In his thoughtful book *The Betweeness of Place*, Nick Entrikin (1991) argued that geographers have been interested in the local for three interrelated reasons. First, they have emphasized the actually existing variations in economy, society and culture between places; or what Entrikin terms the 'empirical significance of place'. Despite the homogenizing ambitions attributed to the likes of McDonald's, everywhere is not the same. Landscapes vary. Life chances are materially affected by the lottery of location. Whether you happen to be born in Lagos or London or Los Angeles, or indeed in Compton or Beverly Hills, has an impact on the kind, and even length, of life you can expect. And location is not just something we encounter and deal with. It is part of us. Where we are is part of who we are. Most obviously, this is the case through the spatial partitioning of the world into nationalities, imaginative constructions that are part of our identities, so powerful as to get people to kill and die in their name (see Chapter 37). So, places and the differences between them can be seen to exist and have real effects.

But the local also matters in a second way. Spatial variations do not only exist. They are valued, or seen as a good thing, not least by Human Geographers. There is, then, what Entrikin calls a 'normative significance to place'. Sometimes this is expressed as a celebration of difference: whether out of a suspicion of the power of global, homogenizing forces ('the media', 'American multinationals', and so on); or out of a pleasure gleaned from experiencing variety and the unexpected. Sometimes the local is cherished for its communal forms of social organization, for embodying an ideal of small and democratic organizations (for a critical and suggestive review see Young, 1990). And sometimes this social idealization goes hand in hand with an environmental utopia of self-supporting, environmentally sustainable livelihoods (Schumacher, 1973), or at least an appeal to the local as a way of living more lightly on the planet, as when calls are made to reduce 'food miles' by 're-localizing' supply networks and supporting local producers. But whether culturally, socially or environmentally framed, in all such arguments the local does not just matter. It matters because it is in some way 'good'.

The third importance attached to the local within Human Geography, according to Entrikin, involves a concern with the impact of the local on the kinds of understanding or knowledges that geographers themselves produce; what he calls the '**epistemological**

Figure 1.1 Four global visions. (a) The conversion of the spherical globe into a flat map is achieved here through a Mercator projection. Developed in the seventeenth century, the Mercator world map is ideal for exploration as a constant bearing appears as a straight line, but this is achieved by distorting sizes, which makes tropical regions look far smaller than they actually are. (b) The Peters projection, by contrast, is an equal area projection that distorts shape rather than size. First published in 1973, this projection was designed within development discourse to ensure the 'South' was given its proper global importance © Professor Arno Peters, Oxford Cartographers/Getty Images. (c) 'Spaceship earth' is an icon of contemporary environmentalism, portraying a living whole without apparent national boundaries or other political divisions. (d) The shrinking earth of 'globalization' and telecommunicational hype. Credit: (a) Royal Geographical Society, UK/www.bridgeman.co.uk; (b) © Oxford Cartographers and Huber Verlag; (c) NASA; (d) Courtesy of DHL

significance of place'. In part this involves a scepticism towards general theories that claim equal applicability everywhere. It also means a sensitivity to where knowledges come from (to their 'situatedness'). Geographers don't only know about localities, they produce local knowledges.

At the same time as having this local fixation, Human Geography is also determinedly global in its scope. Even as it values them, it also tries to break out of purely local knowledges through appeals to global awareness. Geographical interest in the global has been developed through a number of different emphases. Let me draw out four. Figure 1.1 displays a picture of the world that represents each.

First, we can identify a geographical concern with *exploration*, driven by a desire to 'know the world'. Exploration was central to geography's

early history – such that geography's development as a science, from the sixteenth century onwards, went hand in glove with European explorations to the farthest corners of the earth (Driver, 2001; Livingstone, 1992; Stoddart, 1986). Today, exploration continues to excite popular cultures of geography, whether in forms of travel that offer experiences 'off the beaten track' (for more, see Chapter 53) or the mass-circulation *National Geographic*'s promotional claim to give American readers a 'window to the world of exotic peoples and places' (cited in Lutz and Collins, 1993: xi). Second, there is an emphasis on *development*, with its hope of 'improving the world'. Here, a world vision matters not only in order to rectify ignorance of the world's diversity, but also to explain and act against global inequalities between North and South. Third, there is global *environmentalism*, with its concern for 'saving the world' against planetary threats such as global warming or ozone depletion. Here, thinking globally is essential not only to recognize the scale of these problems but also to understand the true environmental impacts of our local actions (so, when I set the thermostat on my central heating I need to be aware of the impact of my domestic energy use on CO_2 emissions). Finally, there is a concern with global *compression* or the 'shrinking of the world' (see Harvey, 1989: 240–307). The emphasis here is on the increasingly dense interconnections between people and places on other sides of the world from each other, whether through telecommunications, global flows of money or migrations and other forms of travel. '**Globalization**' has become the most prevalent term to describe such compression (for a very good overview, see Murray, 2006). In a globalized world our local lives are led on a global scale. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, the television programmes we watch, the cars we drive or bicycles we ride, all these materials of our mundane, everyday lives come to us through enormously complex and globally extensive production and retail systems.

There are, then, many good reasons why Human Geography should not myopically focus on the local but also attend to the global: because global scale processes impact on, and result from, our local places and lives; because thinking globally allows us to compare, and even more usefully connect, our own lives and places to those of others; and because the global stands for important, 'big' issues and processes that we cannot afford to ignore.

My argument, then, is that Human Geography is characterized by a concern with *both* the local *and* the global. At times, these can be understood as competing scales of interest: as when calls are made for geographers to escape local trivia and address the really important global issues; or, conversely, when global accounts are criticized for not paying due attention to local differences. But, the local and the global can also be seen as two sides of the same coin. Travellers set out across the world to find new 'locals' to encounter and report back on. Environmentalists and multinational corporations both sloganize about 'thinking globally and acting locally'. So, how we understand and construct the global shapes our understanding of the local, and vice versa.

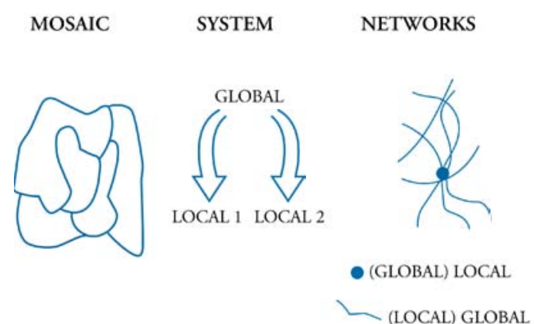


Figure 1.2 Figures of the local–global: mosaic, system and network

For the remainder of this chapter I want to turn more directly to these relations between the local and the global. They can, I want to suggest, be thought of in a number of different ways. To illustrate, I will review three schematic accounts of local–global relations: the world as *mosaic*, the world as *system*, and the world as *network* (see Figure 1.2).

SUMMARY

- Human Geography has fashioned itself as a distinctive intellectual endeavour through emphasizing its interest in *local* places and specificities, and showing how these matter empirically, normatively and epistemologically.
- Human Geography has also fashioned itself as a discipline through stressing various *global* concerns, for example with exploration, development, global environmental change and globalization.
- While the local and the global can be seen as alternative and competing scales of concern, we need to recognize that they are always constructed in relationship to each other.

Mosaic

One very popular way of thinking about Human Geographies is in terms of a mosaic. Here, the world is conceived as a collection of local peoples and places, each one being a piece in a broader global pattern. This way of seeing the world can be drawn out at a number of different scales, from neighbourhoods right up to whole continents. It is perhaps most obvious at the level of the nation-state. The whole idea of nationalities depends upon constructing distinctive pieces of an international mosaic; establishing borders and territories; and distinguishing between this country and that country, our people and those foreigners. Political maps of the world present this mosaic cartographically, national pieces set next to each other and the 'open' spaces of the sea. Mosaics are made too at the smaller scales of the city, in mappings of a patchwork of local areas, each characterized by different economies, residents and built environments. Think, for example, about how estate agents and others seeking value in the property market such as retail location analysts or gentrifiers, map out cities into areas, neighbourhoods and streets with supposedly distinctively different characters. (For more on the use of GIS, location decision making, and this sort of mapping, see Chapter 14.)

Move up to the supranational scale, and again mosaics are a common way of thinking about the world's geography. The global is divided up through reference to the compass points: South and North, East and West become designations of geopolitical and cultural entities when we refer to some people as, for example, being 'westerners'. (A classic account of this way of imagining the world is given in Edward Said's book *Orientalism*, which is about how 'the West' or Occident has defined itself through opposition to 'the East' or Orient. Said, 1995 [originally 1978].) At other times the mosaic pieces are defined in terms of

latitude, as when the 'tropics' designate a part of the world with supposedly identifiable characteristics of 'tropicality' (Driver and Martins, 2005; Thompson, 2006). Or it may be distinctive continental economic, political, cultural units that are identified and contrasted in what Lewis and Wigen (1997) call a 'mythical metageography': Asia and Asians framed as different to Europe and Europeans, North America and North Americans as different to Africa and Africans, and so on.

These kinds of designations are commonplace, from geopolitical thought to popular culture. In many ways, the notion of the geographic mosaic has been so influential (see Gregory, 1994: 34–46) that it can be hard for us to see it as anything other than common sense, a description of an obvious reality. Tourism, the world's largest industry, feeds off and actively constructs such an understanding, as it showcases a world of different destinations that the holidaymaker can visit (see Chapter 53 for a fuller discussion). But the mosaic is only one possible way of framing local–global geographies and it is a very particular framing, with its own preoccupations and blind spots.

Three features are especially important. First, the mosaic puts an emphasis on boundaries and borders. Geographical difference is seen in terms of distinct areas that can have lines drawn around them. Second, these areas are understood in terms of their unique characters, personalities or traditions. That is, each piece of the mosaic is seen as having distinctive 'contents', whether that be its people, culture, economic activities and/or landscape, which cohere into some sort of unified geographical identity. Third, this means that any intrusions

Figure 1.3 Are global products a threat to local differences? Credit: Anders Ryman/Corbis

into a distinctive area tend to be seen as a threat to its unique character. For an example one could think of worries about how the global predominance of American popular culture, from fast food to TV programmes, is destroying local cultures and producing one Americanized global monoculture, where everybody, wherever they are, eats Big Macs, drinks Coca-Cola and watches American soaps (see Peet, 1989). Or one could think about claims that human migrations pose problems for the cultural integrity of receiving areas, overwhelming or in some way undermining indigenous culture unless immigrants are properly assimilated (see Chapter 41 for more on migration).

All these features of the mosaic model can be questioned evidentially. First, the world's differences do not fit into the frame of a geographical mosaic, no matter how many scales it is imagined at. The contents of any one area are never uniformly the same. To claim they are is to produce what statisticians call an 'ecological fallacy', applying the general, average qualities of an area to all its inhabitants. Second, one reason why difference refuses to be contained within the pieces of a mosaic is that the world does not stay still. If we think about the continental 'metageography' of people, then we know that Europeans haven't stayed in Europe, Africans haven't stayed in Africa, and so on (these population movements are sometimes called 'diasporas'; see Chapter 45). We know that our economies too are interlinked, with fluid forms of capital able to migrate around the world (see Chapter 28 on economic globalization). We cannot simply draw boundaries around local or national or continental economies. The world is not a fixed array of pieces; much of it is mobile, on the move.

Third, in analyzing the impacts of such mobilities, we cannot assume that the opening up of local places to global forces necessarily results in the destruction of difference. Instead, global forms are often 'indigenized' or 'localized' in different ways in different places. While living and researching in Trinidad the anthropologist Danny Miller was struck by the fact that he had to stop his research for an hour a day while everyone watched the daytime US soap *The Young and the Restless* (Miller, 1992). This might seem an obvious sign of homogenizing Americanization. In fact, Miller argues, 'paradoxically an imported soap opera has become a key instrument for forging a highly specific sense of Trinidadian culture' (1992: 165). In the extensive chat about this soap, what viewers identified was not an alien American world, to be aspired to or despised, but themes that resonated with deep existing structures of Trinidadian experience. In particular, viewers liked the way it dramatized what they called 'bacchanal', or the confusion and emergence of hidden truths through scandals, something also central to other Trinidadian cultural forms such as Carnival. So, this globally distributed American soap was not destructive of Trinidadian difference; as part of a dynamic local culture it helped to produce a distinctive Trinidadian sensibility. Elsewhere, Miller makes similar arguments about both older global imports – analysing how Coke became a 'black sweet drink from Trinidad' and part of the national drink of rum 'n' black – and newer global forms – reporting on Trinidadian uses of Facebook (Miller, 1998; 2011). To use a popular local expression, Miller suggests that all of these global products are not alien invaders but 'True True Trini', functioning as authentic forms of local cultural differentiation.

The problems with the figure of the mosaic are not only factual – they also stem from its political impulses and ramifications. To be fair, there are many positive elements to the notion of the geographical mosaic. Often underlying it

is a desire both to recognize and respect differences; to appreciate, in both senses of the word, that everyone is not the same as you are, and that everywhere is not the same as here. But it is not enough just to appreciate difference. We have to think about how the idea of difference is being constructed and used. In the case of the mosaic, all too often either the impulse or the effect is defensive and exclusionary. Difference is locked into a geography of territories and borders. It is framed in terms of insiders and outsiders. The mosaic also depends on stereotyping. It understands and recognizes differences by simplifying them and their location. This way of seeing the world is not so much a description of it as a powerful way of claiming and attributing difference in spatial terms. It projects differences on to distant people and places in order to create some sense of unity 'at home'; 'they' and 'there' are different to 'us' and 'here'. It can legitimate claims for a place to belong to some and not to others. It entangles geography with a politics of 'purification', in which sameness should be here and difference should be there. 'Ethnic cleansing' would be an example of practices that have followed the mosaic and its logic of each different thing in its own different place to the most brutal conclusions.

The idea of a world made up of different geographical areas is commonplace and is likely, initially, to be seen as both obvious and non-contentious. However, while not without its merits – in particular its recognition of difference – the mosaic is but one way of thinking about local–global relations, and it can be deeply problematic because of *how* it recognizes difference. We need to think, then, about whether Human Geography can combine the local and the global in other ways too.

SUMMARY

- A very common way of imagining local–global relations is to envision a world of many different local places and peoples, each being a piece in a wider Human Geographic global mosaic.
- This constructs the local as a bounded area, made distinctive through the character of life and land within it. It also tends to construct global-scale processes as destructive to that local diversity.
- There are factual problems with this way of framing local–global relations. For example, local differences are not inevitably destroyed by global level processes; in fact they are often produced through them.
- There are also political dangers attached to it, in particular an impulse towards defensiveness and the exclusion of non-locals.
- The mosaic is only one way of imagining local–global relations, so rather than seeing it as a simple portrait of geographical reality the reasons for, and effects of, its use need to be analysed.

System

An alternative way of thinking about local–global relations is to see local differences as produced by a global system. That is, the differences between places are not seen as a consequence of their internal qualities but as a result of their location within the wider world. The mosaic of geographical difference is not innate but made systemically. We need to understand the processes and powers that make it. I have been intimating at this kind of argument already. We might, for example, argue that the very idea of a geographical mosaic is a framework that makes difference, forming the world through particular templates. However, perhaps the best examples of this argument come from within development studies and through attempts to understand the extreme differences that characterize our world.

One way of thinking about the differences and inequalities in wealth and life chances between different parts of the world would be to identify internal characteristics that explain them. So, we could say (and many do) that Europe and North America are so comparatively wealthy because of the economic innovation they have shown since the time of the Industrial Revolution or due to longer-term advantages conferred by temperate climates and the early adoption of agriculture. And then we might argue that the Philippines, say, are comparatively so poor because of their lack of natural resources, an inhospitable climate or some perceived deficiencies in their culture (e.g. endemic corruption or laziness). What this kind of explanation ignores, though, is the fact that Europe and the Philippines are not just separate places, they are places with long histories of interconnection through world political, economic and cultural systems. It is possible, then, that Europe and the Philippines are so different because of these relationships with each other rather than because of their internal qualities. To put it bluntly, maybe we need to think less about Europe and the Philippines separately, and rather more about whether Europe is rich precisely because the Philippines are poor. That is a very simplistic assertion but it has its virtues. It sensitizes us to the idea that there is a set of global relations between local places. In emphasizing how global relations actively produce differences between places it reorients our efforts away from just documenting diversity (Europe and the USA are like this, the Philippines are like that) and towards understanding the processes of that *differentiation*.

Central to such efforts of understanding how and why differences are produced at the global scale has been work focused on the **world-system**. Here the world is treated as a single economic and social entity. At the heart of its operations is the capitalist world economy. This is how Jim Blaut puts it, in arguing against the idea of a special European character that has led to its relative economic success:

> Capitalism arose as a world-scale process: as a world system. Capitalism became concentrated in Europe because colonialism gave Europeans the power both to develop their own society and to prevent development from occurring elsewhere. It is this dynamic of development and underdevelopment which mainly explains the modern world.
>
> (1993: 206)

A more concrete example may help to show the importance, and limits, of this systemic view of local–global relations. That example is the world coconut market as portrayed by James Boyce (1992).

Boyce notes two main things about the global coconut trade in the period 1960–85: first, 'the

Figure 1.4 Why do the Philippines produce coconuts? Credit: Getty Images

Philippines is king' with over 50 per cent of world exports; second, the Filipino producers of coconuts do not seem to be doing very well out of this dominant market position. Understanding either of these facts requires a global systemic focus. The prevalence of coconut production in the Philippines would have to be traced back to Spanish colonization (for example, a 1642 edict for all 'indios' to plant coconut trees to supply caulk and rigging for the colonizers' galleons), to demand in the nineteenth century from European and North American soap and margarine manufacturers, and to US colonial control and post-colonial patronage in the twentieth century (which led to preferential tariff rates for Filipino coconut products in the US market until 1974). It reflects, then, an emergent international system in which the Philippines was positioned, by external powers, as a supplier of an agricultural commodity, while those powers used that commodity for their own purposes (for their ships or their manufacturing industries). Low rewards for this agricultural production reflect declining global terms of trade, such that each barrel of coconut oil exported in 1985 would buy only half the imports it would have in 1962. The explanation for this decline is complex, but principally stems from the success of manufacturers of potential substitutes in the developed world – both ground nut oil producers and petro-chemical companies – at getting subsidies and protection from their governments, thereby depressing world prices for all traded fats and oils. That is, it is the political and economic power of developed-world producers and governments which means that the Filipino coconut industry gets an ever

worse deal for its efforts. The world trading system not only differentiates through an international division of industries (you grow coconuts, we have petro-chemicals), it discriminates in relation to the value of these activities.

However, as well as stressing the global relations that have stimulated Filipino coconut production and worsened its terms of trade, Boyce's study also suggests some limits to purely global explanations. In particular, he stresses how the local trading relationships within the Philippines meant that while the majority of small growers reaped little reward, vast fortunes were made by a few powerful individuals. Under the guise of concern for small producers, the Marcos regime reorganized the industry to concentrate power in the hands of a single entity that controlled raw material purchases from farmers and marketing at home and overseas. This concentration was in turn used to reward a few close political associates, such as 'coconut king' Eduardo Cojuangco and the Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, who siphoned off much of the dwindling national earnings from the coconut trade. Thus, existing inequalities in economic and political power within the Philippines allowed actions that made these inequalities greater still. Declining global terms of trade were experienced particularly severely and responded to in particularly unproductive ways, because of the distinctive (if not unique) political system in the Philippines. Local processes, as well as global processes, played their part in the impoverishment of coconut producers. Any attempt to rectify that impoverishment would have to deal with local and global trading relations and the political–economic structures of each.

The example of the Philippines and coconut trade illustrates how the differences between places cannot simply be understood through comparison. Differences are made through relations between places, as well as within them. In this section, I have used the notion of the 'system' to capture this emphasis on global interrelations, local agencies and their production of geographical differences. That kind of argument is well developed in accounts of the global differences associated with development and underdevelopment, but can be applied more generally too.

SUMMARY

- Differences between places are not just the result of their 'internal' characteristics. They are produced by systems of global relations between places.
- Human Geography should therefore do more than document diversity. It should investigate the *processes of differentiation* through which diversity and inequality are produced.
- These processes of differentiation operate at both global and local scales.

Networks

So far we have seen two differing ways to think about the relations between the global and local. In the model of the mosaic, the global is portrayed as a collection of smaller locals. In the model of the system, the global is portrayed as a set of relations through which local differences are produced, and the emphasis is less on collection and comparison than on connection. In this final section I want to take the idea of connection further. I want to suggest that we can see both the local and the global as made up of sets of connections and disconnections that we can call 'networks'. In consequence, we may need to view the local and the global not as different scales (small and large) but as two ways of approaching these networks, in which the local is global and the global is local.

Let's start by looking at the local (and its global character). In highly influential arguments, the British Geographer Doreen Massey coined the phrase 'a global sense of place' to reference how the distinctiveness of a particular place is not threatened by connections to the wider world but actually comes from them (Massey, 1991, 1994). Whether thinking about a metropolitan urban neighbourhood or a seemingly isolated rural village, Massey argued that localities gain their different, specific characters through distinctive historical and contemporary links to other places (see Case Study box). This also produces a more 'progressive' politics of place, in which the appreciation of local differences does not slip into a reactionary, defensive parochialism. Massey has since developed this argument within her book *For Space* (2005), a wider theorization of how Human Geography approaches core concepts such as space and place. Places for her are less 'things' (such as pieces in a geographical mosaic, to use my phrasing from this chapter) than they are 'ever-shifting constellations of trajectories' (Massey, 2005: 151). Places are less containers of different and distinctive contents than they are 'open and internally multiple'; less fixed, more of an 'event', a 'coming together of the previously unrelated' (Massey, 2005: 141, 138).

If we think of the world in terms of networks, then we see local places as gaining their different characters through their distinctive patterns of associations with other places. In turn, we begin to see how the global is less some neat, all-embracing system with a single logic, than a mass of globally extensive yet locally routed practices and technologies of connection. Not only do we need to globalize the local, but we also need to localize the global, understanding the global as something other than a single entity or system.

Writing in the context of debates over globalization, Arjun Appadurai (1990) provides a classic early intimation of such an approach. He argues that we can imagine the global as comprised of a range of interacting but distinctive '-scapes' or morphologies of flow and movement. 'Finanscapes' comprise global networks and flows of money (often in electronic and virtual forms, routed through the casino economies of major international financial centres in New York, Hong Kong, Tokyo and London). 'Ethnoscapes' are forged by global networks and flows of people (migrants, tourists, business travellers, even geographers), each with their own rather different patterns of movement. 'Mediascapes' are made up of communication technologies and product distributions. And so on. Many flows, many networks, often interconnected but possessing their own distinct geographies. So, for example, money moves across national borders with ease at the same time as the richest nations look to reinforce their disciplining of the movements of people cast as 'economic migrants'. Appadurai argues for breaking down

CASE STUDY

Doreen Massey on the global–local geographies of Kilburn, London and a Cambridgeshire village

Take a walk down Kilburn High Road, my local shopping centre. It is a pretty ordinary place, north-west of the centre of London. Under the railway bridge the newspaper stand sells papers from every county of what my neighbours, many of whom come from there, still often call the Irish Free State . . . Thread your way through the often stationary traffic . . . and there's a shop which as long as I can remember has displayed saris in the window . . . On the door a notice announces a forthcoming concert at Wembley Arena: Anand Miland presents Rekha, live, with Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Jahi Chawla and Raveena Tandon . . . This is just the beginnings of a sketch from immediate impressions but a proper analysis could be done, of the links between Kilburn and the world . . . It is (or ought to be) impossible even to begin thinking about Kilburn High Road without bringing into play half the world and a considerable amount of British imperialist history.

(Massey 1991: 28)

Think of the [seemingly isolated] Cambridgeshire village. Quite apart from its more recent history, integrated into a rich agricultural trade, it stands in an area which in its ancient past has been invaded by Celts and Belgae, which was part of a Roman Empire which stretched from Hadrian's Wall to Carthage . . . The village church itself links this quiet place into a religion which had its birth in the Middle East, and arrived here via Rome.

(Massey 1995: 64)

the idea of the global into these different kinds of flows, and for seeing how those flows then come together (and sometimes clash) as the trajectories producing different places.

At least two influential broader approaches relate to such concerns for localizing the global and globalizing the local. The first has been called the 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller and Urry, 2006). In opposition to the static mapping of the world implied by the notion of a geographical mosaic, this approach emphasizes how the world is made through the interrelated mobilities of people, things and ideas. At its heart are explorations of the dialectics between fixity and fluidity. (Chapters 52–54 give much more information on this approach and examples of how it has been applied within Human Geography.) The second approach is most commonly called **Actor-Network Theory** (or ANT for short). As John Law puts it, ANT 'treat[s] everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located' (Law, 2009: 141). Despite its name, ANT is less an explanatory theory than it is 'a toolkit for telling interesting stories about, and interfering in, those relations' and how they manage to 'assemble or don't' (Law, 2009: 141–2). ANT has been widely influential within Human Geography, but for our purposes here it is most important for how it emphasizes both 'localizing the global' and 'redistributing the local', to quote one of its

principal advocates, Bruno Latour (2005: 173, 193). Contesting the idea that the global is a larger system within which local events must be contextualized, ANT proposes a much 'flatter' way of seeing the world, in which 'movements and displacements come first, places and shapes second' (Latour, 2005: 204). Rather than focusing on something like global capitalism, ANT advocates studying particular sites, such as Wall Street dealing rooms, tracing out how they become 'global' through the density and reach of the connections that they have to other sites. Like Massey, advocates of ANT also contest ideas of places being self-contained and bounded, instead looking to document how 'what is acting at the same moment in any one place is coming from many other places, many distant materials, many faraway actors' (Latour, 2005: 200). Both the local and the global are imagined as having 'networky shapes' comprising 'the intersections of many trails' (Latour, 2005: 204).

ANT has its own distinctive lexicon for describing these networky shapes and how they operate which, to be frank, can be slightly off-putting for the uninitiated. So, to illustrate the network approach I want to take a more accessible example: Ian Cook's work on the networked geographies of tropical fruits (2000; 2004). You are perhaps most likely to encounter the bananas and papaya he writes about on a supermarket aisle or in a fruit bowl in your house. Cook's interest is in part in the connections these fruit enact, linking as they do farm workers and farmers in the tropics (his own research focuses on the Caribbean), supermarket and fruit company technicians, managers and marketing people, and 'first world' consumers. When you eat a banana you become directly connected into a host of networks, obviously including those related to the production and retailing of the banana itself but also spreading out in multiple directions (the production of fertilizer for Caribbean farmers, the ships and planes that cross the Atlantic, the banking systems that allow payments to be made, the plastics in which the fruit are packaged, and so on). For Cook, these fruit represent geographies that cannot be contained in mosaic-like distinctions of here and there: both because of their individual travels from Caribbean farms to British or American mouths, and through their much longer implication in processes of botanical, economic and cultural exchange and their wider status as 'fruits of empire' (Walvin, 1996).

Figure 1.5 Not just a fruit bowl but networks of connections to many other places and actors. Credit: iStockphotos

But Cook is also interested in the disconnections these fruit networks enact. These fruit change status and meaning as they 'travel': changing from plants to be tended for a wage, to 'exotic' fruit, to domestic treats. Cognitive and emotional distances are made between the people and places that have these fruit in common. The Caribbean farm worker knows the papaya or banana eater only as 'the consumer' who dictates market pressures of demand. The banana or papaya eater knows the farm worker only as an invisible producer or as a vague stereotype, whether that be the smiling Caribbean labourer or the oppressed third world worker.

'Following' tropical fruit is just one way to access a world comprising multi-directional, multi-fibred networks, the geographies of which are not mappable on to neat territories or overarching systems. Faced with such networks, the task of Human Geography becomes not to produce knowledge of either the Caribbean or the UK, nor just to explain their differences through understanding global systems, but to explore the networks of connection and disconnection that bring these places and their differences into being.

SUMMARY

- Local places get their distinctive characters from their past and present links to the rest of the world. In consequence, we need a 'global sense of the local'.
- Global networks – with their flows of information, ideas, money, people and things – have locally routed geographies. In consequence, we need 'localized senses of the global'.
- Wider literatures on 'mobilities' and 'Actor-Network Theory' have informed recent attempts to map out 'networky' geographies that both 'localize the global' and 'redistribute the local'.

Conclusion

Human Geography is rightly interested in both the local – the specific place, with its distinctive qualities – and the global: the wider world, with its bigger picture. A crucial question that has always faced Human Geography is how to conceptualize the relations between these two. Three general arguments have informed the discussion here. First, that appeals to ideas of diversity – a global collection of many locals – may be problematic: factually, politically and conceptually. Second, that rather than diversity the conceptual keystone of geographical work in this area should be 'differentiation' – that is, an investigation of the ongoing productions of differences between peoples and places. Third, it is debatable whether these processes of differentiation accord to singular global logics (such as 'developed countries make other countries underdeveloped as part of their own development'). Rather, they may operate through the multiple networks that constitute both the local and the global. Tracing out these networks offers a particularly fruitful way of theorizing and studying local–global geographies.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Why might you, as a Human Geographer, be interested in 'the local' and 'the global'?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of seeing the world as made up of a mosaic of diverse places and peoples?

3. Why are some places, like the USA, so rich and other places, like the Philippines, so poor?
4. What does it mean to say the local and the global have 'networky shapes'?
5. Debate the relative merits of the 'mosaic', 'system' and 'network' models.

FURTHER READING

Blaut, J.M. (1993) The myth of the European miracle & after 1492. In: *The Colonizer's Model of the World*. New York: The Guilford Press, 50–151 and 179–213.

It is worth attempting a read of this for its powerful restatement of a world-systemic approach. It is particularly strong on debunking the idea that European 'development' stems from qualities internal to Europe itself.

Connell, J. and Gibson, C. (2003) *Sound Tracks. Popular Music, Identity and Place*. London: Routledge.

This is a book that surveys the geographies of popular music, exploring how they combine economic, cultural and political dynamics. I suggest it here because its approach is explicitly framed around seeing the geographies of music as *simultaneously* global and local, so it provides a great case study if you want to get a sense of how those dual emphases of Human Geography can be combined in practice. Chapter 1, called 'Into the music', sets out the book's approach in terms of a dialectic between fixity and fluidity.

Massey, D. (1994 [orig. 1991]) A global sense of place. In: *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 146–56.

Massey, D. (2005) The elusiveness of place. In: *For Space*. London: Sage, 130–42.

Doreen Massey is perhaps Human Geography's leading writer on issues of the local and the global. 'A global sense of place' is a classic essay. There are lots of ideas in it about globalizing the local and localizing the global and it is very accessible. The other extract suggested here is from Massey's later book *For Space*, and it provides a more explicitly conceptual elaboration of the thinking that underlies the notion of a global sense of place. They make a good pairing for getting into Massey's ideas.

Murray, W.E. (2006) *Geographies of Globalization*. Abingdon: Routledge.

An excellent textbook that both considers the implications of globalization for the practice of Human Geography and surveys the discipline's contributions to globalization debates.

CHAPTER 2
SOCIETY–SPACE

Jo Little

Introduction

At the heart of Human Geography lie questions about the relationship between social characteristics and places. How do the differences between groups and individuals within society map on to, reflect and reinforce spatial categories? Do the qualities of different places affect how society uses, enjoys and even accesses those places? And perhaps more challengingly – why do some social characteristics seem to have a much stronger relationship with place than others? Geographers have recognized the relevance of these questions across a range of scales from the global to the local and paying attention to them has shaped not only the content of what we study as Human Geographers but also the methodologies through which we conduct our research. While we may have long agreed that Human Geography is about this central relationship between space and place, *how* we have chosen to study it has been the subject of much more variation and debate.

In this chapter I will chart the development of Human Geographers' thinking on the relationship between society and space within the discipline, identifying three main 'phases' in the progression from spatial determination to the co-construction of people and place. The chapter will then go on to explore a series of examples in which we see clearly how space and society are inter-dependent and how the ways in which we think about and organize space are fundamental to the experiences of those who occupy, access and are excluded from certain spaces. The examples selected are not unique or even unusual. They speak of everyday situations and lives and are drawn from mainstream geographical topics, underlining the centrality of the relationship between society and space to the whole of Human Geography.

Three phases in the development of geographers' work on society and space

The three phases that will be discussed are spatial order and the mapping of social characteristics; society, space and power; and the **co-construction of society and space**.

Spatial order and the mapping of social characteristics

While both geographers and sociologists have questioned the ways in which space has

influenced social processes since the latter part of the nineteenth century, more sustained attempts to conceptualize the interaction between society and space are traditionally seen as emerging in the 1960s in the form of urban ecology. A concern with measuring and predicting the spatial ordering of human behaviour dominated Human Geography in what became known as the quantitative revolution. Much has been written of the influence of this phase in the development of geography and of the emphasis placed on the identification of scientific laws to explain the spatial organization of human behaviour (see Johnston, 1991). Here it is important to appreciate the ways in which this scientific approach resulted in the classification of social characteristics and a belief that understanding socio-spatial relations emerged through the systematic and often very detailed mapping of key population variables.

Social geography was dominated by the idea of social segregation, showing, through the mapping of characteristics such as race, income, housing occupation and how different social groups were clustered in, for example, different residential areas (see Peach, 1975). This was a form of social area analysis which thrived on the development of computer mapping techniques and on the growing availability of forms of population data such as census and labour market statistics. This kind of geography became increasingly criticized, however, for being more concerned with the organization of social patterns than with their explanation and for a view of space that assumed neat, fixed and objective social ordering. In addition, it became clear that social area analysis only really included certain social characteristics (those easily mapped and traditionally seen as important), neglecting many that were less easy to study (e.g. sexuality).

Society, space and power

The key criticism levelled at social area analysis – that it failed to take account of power relations within society and of the ways in which such power relations underpinned the organization of space – became a central concern of Human Geography from the 1980s. Geographers turned to radical approaches, most notably Marxist approaches, to show how space was a product of social forces and to explain the processes whereby identity and difference was reflected in patterns of spatial inequality. This development in the conceptualization of socio-spatial relations was particularly significant in research on economic restructuring in the UK and the USA in the 1980s. It provided a new understanding of the spatial distribution of wealth and jobs across regions, countries and even globally, and of the social outcomes of the uneven development of resources. It also showed, as Massey (1994) asserted, the relevance of geography to political debate about inequality. Later, concerns grew about the assumed dominance of class within radical approaches to the study of society and space. Feminist geographers, in particular, argued that they were failing to recognize the differing experience of men and women and were thus blind to the gendered nature of the relationship between society and space (Bowlby *et al.,* 1989; McDowell, 1983). Such concerns gave rise to a number of geographical studies of the varying employment experiences of men and women within regions, communities and households (McDowell and Massey, 1984). Work showed how women were often disadvantaged within the labour market and, because of different roles and responsibilities, not able to make the same employment choices as men. Geographers argued, as a result of such work, that the spatial division of labour resulting from economic restructuring reflected not only class but other social characteristics

such as gender and race and should be understood as an often complex interplay of social patterns.

As a result of such studies, recognition of the different ways in which social characteristics played out over space led to a richer and more nuanced geography. It was still a geography, however, in which places were seen to *reflect* the social characteristics of those who occupied them. Geographers had got much better at showing the subtleties and shifts in the relationship between people and places; they had demonstrated how different theoretical positions gave visibility to particular groups and highlighted different kinds of inequalities, yet space, even across these varying perspectives, remained effectively a container for social difference. While progress had certainly been made in moving away from a kind of spatial determinism in which spatial difference *caused* social inequality, there was still, at this time, little recognition of the interaction between the spatial and the social.

The co-construction of society and space

Developments in geography in the 1990s saw major shifts in the ways in which the relationship between society and space was understood. Engagement with postmodernism and the associated 'cultural turn' in geography were highly significant in challenging the conceptualization of both people and place in two key respects. The first was the new sensitivity to the variations between human beings in relation to characteristics such as gender, race, class, age, (dis)ability, etc., and to the differing experiences people have of space – what is termed '**spatial differentiation**'. The recognition of difference questioned the 'taken for granted' nature of social groupings and of peoples' varying experiences of broad social categories such as gender and age. Central to this recognition was an acceptance of categories as socially constructed and not fixed, and consequently open to contestation, resistance and negotiation. At this time a major area of social geographical research focusing on identity became firmly established, notably in respect to the marginalization of certain groups and individuals from particular spaces and places (this issue is developed further in Chapter 42).

The second area of work that emerged from the development of geographical thinking during the 1990s related to space and to its conceptualization as constructed. It became increasingly asserted that

> just as social identities [were] no longer regarded as fixed categories but . . . understood as multiple, contested and fluid, so too space [was] no longer understood as having particular fixed characteristics.
>
> (Valentine, 2001: 4)

Critically, space started to be understood not as a simple backdrop against which difference and inequality played out, but an active part of the construction of society and of the experiences of people within those places. Space, it was argued, could not be factored out (or in) to the operation of social relations and practices – it was a central part of how those relations were produced and reproduced. Geographers thus began to talk of society and space as mutually constituted and apparent in ways that were never fixed but always in the process of becoming.

These three phases in geographers' study of the relationship between society and space are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Key phases in the conceptualization of socio-spatial relations	The scope and direction of research	Research content	Criticisms
Spatial order and the mapping of social characteristics	Social geography was dominated by the idea of social segregation, showing, through the mapping of characteristics such as race, income and housing occupation, how different social groups were clustered in, for example, different residential areas	Computer mapping techniques aided by the growing availability of forms of population data such as census and labour market statistics (see Johnston, 1991; Peach, 1975)	More concerned with the organization of social patterns than with their explanation. Belief that space was passive and assumed neat, fixed and objective social ordering
Society, space and power relations	Radical approaches, most notably Marxist, to show how space was a product of social forces and to explain the processes whereby identity and difference was reflected in patterns of spatial inequality	Research on economic restructuring and uneven development, often at the regional scale (see Massey, 1994)	Assumed dominance of class within radical approaches; failed to recognize gendered and racial characteristics (Bowlby *et al.*, 1989; McDowell and Massey, 1984)
The co-construction of society and space	A sensitivity to difference and hybrid identities and to the multiple, fluid and contested nature of both social characteristics and space	Poststructural and postmodern approaches and a focus on performance (see Panelli, 2004)	Mitigates against the recognition of broader patterns of disadvantage and may be difficult to mobilize politically

Table 2.1 Phases in the study of the relationship between society and space

SUMMARY

- Conventional approaches in the geographical study of the relationship between society and space were characterized by an initial concern to map the ways in which places were socially differentiated. Such mapping exercises were seen as useful to policy makers but provided only a very narrow view of people's experience of space and place.
- Geographers argued that understandings of society and space needed to take into account the inequalities and power relations reflected in social patterns and, in particular, the uneven development of the economy and unequal access to wealth.
- There was a recognition following the cultural turn in geography and the influence of postmodernism on the role of space in the construction of social difference. Geographers became interested in what was termed the co-construction of society and space.

Will we now discuss in more detail, and through the use of examples, how the relationship between society and space has come to be understood by geographers as *co-constructed*. That is, how space evolves to reflect and to shape the identities of those who use it and how the imagining of space in particular ways can act to exclude some and protect others.

Place and the social construction of space

Tim Cresswell (1996) used the notion of in place/out of place to explore how space becomes imbued with certain social and cultural values and assumptions. These values and assumptions drive ideas about which identities and behaviours we might deem to be appropriate and comfortable (in place) in those spaces and which we might see as inappropriate (out of place). These ideas may shift over time – they may, as we shall see later, be contested, but they are often powerful and hard to resist. They help to show how social and cultural characteristics are translated from society more broadly to the day-to-day experiences of particular people in particular places. The idea that space is an active agent in the ways in which social relations evolve and play out is now fundamental to geographical study. Not only does 'space matter' but indeed space is *part of* the very organization and operation of society. We can turn to research from almost every area of Human Geography to illustrate the relevance of the construction of space itself to our experience of place and performance of identity.

The rural community

The rural community provides a rich illustration of the ways in which our imagining and understanding of the spaces of the rural plays through the characteristics and organization of rural society and the day-to-day ways in which people live their lives. Geographers researching rural communities and lifestyles have recognized the power of taken-for-granted assumptions about rurality. In recent years, they have argued that any attempt to understand the nature of rural society must acknowledge and incorporate a set of timeless qualities associated with the countryside –

qualities such as the strength of the community, the slower pace of life and the closeness to nature. All of these 'rural imaginaries' will, it is asserted, underpin and inform the nature of both individual identity and the more general operation of the rural community.

The idea that rural social spaces are characterized by a more authentic and active sense of community is one such imaginary that has held an important place in academic writing and popular culture (Cloke, 2003). A uniquely rural way of 'doing' community is seen as so key to the formation and reproduction of rural society that it needs to be written into understandings of rural places and to the histories, attitudes and experiences of rural people. Constructions of rural community, as witnessed in many geographical studies (see Bell, M., 1994; Halfacree and Rivera, 2012) have proved a very strong 'pull factor' in people's decisions to migrate to rural areas in the UK and other Western countries and consequently highly relevant to the process of counter-urbanization (see Figure 2.1). Such strong expectations of community can prove a powerful force in mediating behaviour and identities of those living in rural areas – they may be more inclined to participate in community events to provide help and assistance to fellow villagers – and by doing so to fit in with the expectations of village life.

In my research on rural women in south-west England in the 1990s, I talked to many women who valued the 'sense of community' that existed in the village (Little and Austin, 1996). This community spirit, they believed, was not something they had experienced in previous (urban) places of residence. It ensured people 'looked out for one another' and that the elderly and vulnerable, in particular, were

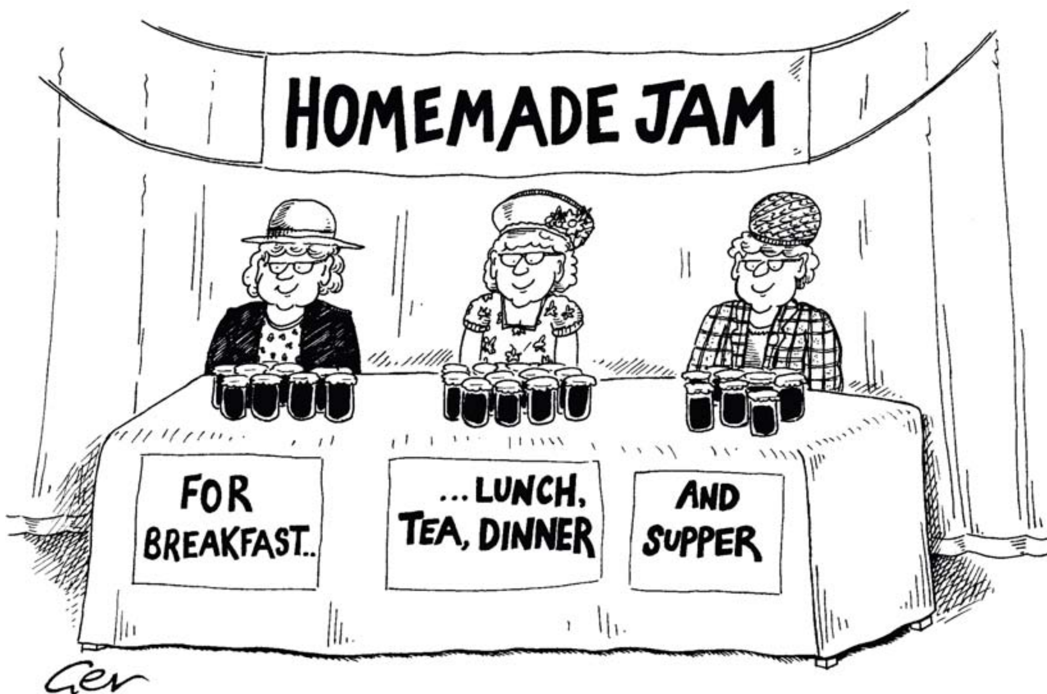


Figure 2.1 A traditional view of 'rural life'. Credit: www.CartoonStock.com

Figure 2.2 Black and ethnic minority people are sometimes regarded as 'out of place' in rural and coastal spaces, even as visitors. Credit: Peter Lomas/Rex Features

not neglected. This is an example of the co-construction of society and space – the space of the rural community was socially constructed in line with past understandings and associated contemporary behaviour to be a place of friendship and cooperation. This, in itself, helped to shape behaviour and encourage villagers in caring and acts of mutual support. The women's identities as rural people, it seemed, had responded to the ways in which they felt village space to be constructed.

In a more negative reading of the notion of the rural community, other studies have drawn attention to those who do not fit (see Figure 2.2). They illustrate how the social construction of rurality in the UK in particular, is a very 'white' construction, appealing often to traditional ideas of Englishness (see Neal and Agyman, 2006). This construction sees black and ethnic minority rural residents (or would-be residents) and visitors as 'out of place' within such communities. This construction of rural community can support racist behaviour, as has been shown through studies of the experiences of black people and the attitudes of white residents (see Hubbard, 2004; Jay, 1992).

The night time economy

The urban **night time economy** provides us with another example of the relationship between space and society, which again shows the co-construction of place and identity as well as its fluid and contested nature. Geographers have been interested in the development of the entertainment industry, as an element of the night time economy, from a number of different angles and have looked at its role in regenerating flagging city centres and providing jobs where previous economies have

declined (Bell, D., 2007; Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). They have also been concerned with the associated social changes to the city and how we use and feel about these spaces. This has, inevitably, included contemporary concerns about the behaviour of those using urban entertainment spaces and, in particular, how city centres have become constructed as exclusionary spaces, dominated by a very strong drinking culture (particularly in the UK) and in which only certain groups and identities are comfortable (Royal Geographical Society, 2012; Jayne *et al.,* 2006).

Displays of aggressive and drunken behaviour have been identified in both academic and popular reports as responsible for transforming the atmosphere of the city centre at night and making it, for some, a place of fear. The following passage from the *Observer* newspaper describes how the concentration of 'drinking spaces' has led to violence in a particular part of the centre of the Welsh city Cardiff.

> In the shadow of Cardiff's castle, dozens of bars and clubs have gained the Welsh capital its reputation as a party city. They line the roads through the city centre to St Mary Street, a pedestrianised zone lined with pubs of all types and chains. As an ambulance flashes by, three men are arguing loudly about where to go next. The level of aggression rises until one stomps off swearing loudly at the other two, who throw something at his back which smashes into the gutter.
> (McVeigh, *Observer*, 25 March 2012)

The expansion of vertical drinking spaces (as they have become known) in Cardiff and many other cities means that, for part of the day, these spaces are effectively 'no go areas' for anyone but those participating in the night time entertainment. Moreover, the normalization of aggressive and drunken behaviour is seen to reinforce the drinking culture. While clearly space does not cause violence, the enduring presence of aggression and the exclusion of other users of the space helps to cement the relationship between city centre space and drinking.

Some studies of this relationship between city centres and aggressive and alcohol-fuelled behaviour have argued that it has reinforced both spaces and associated identities as masculine (Figure 2.3).

The laddish culture generated in the drinking spaces (see Hubbard, 2009) – an element of which is the increasing presence of entertainment venues that objectify women (such as lap dancing and pole dancing clubs) – creates an atmosphere in which some women feel out of place, excluded and even fearful.

While the particular problem of today's city centre drinking spaces is relatively recent, the wider issue surrounding the ways in which some environments are experienced as dangerous or scary is not new. Over many years geographers have noted how public space is frequently viewed as dangerous or unwelcoming by women. Charting that research illustrates the different approaches that were introduced at the start of the chapter. So, during the 1980s the study of women's fear in public spaces was widely seen as a failure of planning and of the design of buildings and spaces – dangerous spaces were believed to be the outcome of a development process that ignored the particular needs of women and created bleak and functional public spaces (Little, 1994). Later, geographers argued that such ideas were overly environmentally determinist and through the adoption of more radical approaches sought to explain fear within public space in relation to broader understandings of women's feelings of vulnerability within patriarchal or male-dominated societies. More recently, however, with the interest in spaces as socially constructed, fear has been seen as the outcome

Figure 2.3 Evening drinking in city centres may often appear aggressive. Credit: Paul Panayiotou/Alamy

of socio-spatial relations and the performance of identity in place. This emphasis on the interdependence of identity and place has helped in understanding the more nuanced and complex relationship between the aggressive spaces of the night time economy and the performance of gender – particularly the different and very fluid circumstances under which both men and women experience such spaces as dangerous and threatening (Pain, 1997; Kern, 2005; Wesely and Gaarder, 2004).

Thirdspace

Throughout this chapter, examples from across Human Geography have been used to explore the interaction between society and space. They have shown how different ways of approaching the relationship between people and place can inform the understanding of this interaction and how geography has moved from simply mapping social characteristics in space to seeing space as bound up in how those characteristics are distributed and performed. We have seen that identities may become excluded from spaces to which they do not belong and also how space itself can take on particular qualities through the presence or absence of different identities. What is very important to stress about these socio-spatial interactions is their variability and fluidity. They are not fixed but made and re-made and while some relationships between society and space may be acknowledged, like the rural community, to be a product of historic associations, they are still constantly being negotiated and performed.

It is this negotiation that needs particular emphasis in this final section of the chapter.

While dominant constructions of space may be powerful, as the examples have shown, they may also be contested. Indeed, writing in the mid-1990s, Ed Soja (1996: 2) urged scholars to 'think differently' about the construction and lived experience of space. He argued that both practical and theoretical understandings of space and spatiality were in danger of being muddled by 'the baggage of tradition [and] by older definitions that no longer fit changing contexts'. Soja's concerns about the conceptualization of socio-spatial relations found momentum in a developing critique of geographers' thinking about space, and in particular, their use of dualisms such as inside/outside, home/work, belonging/excluded, white/black, public/private, etc. Such dualisms, it was argued, suggest the world can be understood as clear-cut, oppositional categories and that, used by geographers, these categories appeared to map onto space in straightforward and stable ways.

Challenges to the use of these dichotomies came in particular from post-colonial and feminist research in geography. Such research questioned the construction of knowledge, arguing the need to contest and destabilize the privileging of what were seen as western, masculine forms of knowledge, and to develop alternative approaches which recognized the varying and hybrid nature of identity and experience. Research demonstrated that traditional forms of identity were increasingly being reshaped in response to social, cultural and political change and that any attempt to understand people's lives needed to appreciate the complex and sometimes contradictory reworking of identity. Critically, the reworking of identity was seen to produce an alternative *spatiality*, 'a **thirdspace**' as Soja puts it, in which there was an opportunity to think and act politically and a responsibility to creatively re-think and re-theorize spatiality in conjunction with multiple forms of identity.

Soja (1996: 6) briefly states what thirdspace provides that takes us beyond other conceptualizations of space as follows:

> Thirdspace can be described as a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a Firstspace perspective that is focused on the 'real' material world and a Secondspace perspective that interprets this reality through 'imagined' representations of spatiality.
>
> (Soja, 1996: 6)

In exploring the potential of thirdspace, Soja (1996) draws extensively on the work of bell hooks, the American academic and activist, and on her writing about the home and community as a space of nurture and resistance as well as oppression. hooks, Soja (1996: 13) suggests, is able to illustrate the 'radical openness' of thirdspace to the creation of alternative spatial imaginaries by those who wish to 'reclaim' spaces of oppression and make them into something else. Writing as a black, feminist activist, hooks (1990) talks in her book *Yearning* of the marginalization of African-American subjectivities and their place on the periphery of American political and intellectual life. According to hooks, this marginality can be used to provide a space, simultaneously material and symbolic, from which to challenge the dominant power of the mainstream and give voice to the ideas, beliefs and experiences of the silent 'other'.

The important thing for our discussion here is the notion of thirdspace as the spatialized expression of oppression and political action. It takes the experience of marginality and turns it into a space of resistance. Soja notes how the use of marginality in this sense as a form of resistance evokes the work of French philosopher Lefebvre, and transforms marginality into centrality. hooks, in her 'purposeful peripheralness' thus acquires a 'strategic positioning that disorders, disrupts

and transgresses the center-periphery relationship itself' (Soja, 1996: 84).

For hooks, her activism and desire to counter the oppressive nature of the Black experience in the USA is a 'politics of location' which calls:

> those of us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision . . . For many of us, that moment requires pushing against oppressive boundaries set by race, sex and class domination . . . For me this space of radical openness is a margin – a profound edge.
> (hooks, 1990: 149, quoted in Soja, 1996: 85).

As part of the displacing of oppositional categories, thirdspace also challenges the division between academic theorizing and political action and does so through the use of multiple scales of analysis – from the global to the local and in between.

Thirdspace is a very useful way of highlighting the spatialization of resistance and of the breaking down of oppositional categories in geographical analysis. There are many examples we can draw on where space and place give expression to what may be seen as a challenge to conventional dualisms, enabling us to look beyond existing categories. Thirdspace recognizes not only the complex nature of identity but also the often contradictory ways subjectivities play out in space and time. It also allows us to think of the changing use of space and the ways in which space and identity may be co-constructed as temporary or transitory sites of resistance – for example, in a political march or rally or a protest camp.

Figure 2.4 Black women and spaces of resistance. Credit: Getty Images

In their edited book, *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (1994) introduce a collection of studies which illuminate the multiple and complex position of women in relation to the politics and processes of colonialization. The studies provide a very clear illustration of what might be termed thirdspace in contesting many of the dominant assumptions about not only the lives of the indigenous women but also the spaces of colonization. Blunt and Rose argue the need to deconstruct the binary opposition between colonizer and colonized and in re-thinking the varying subject positions of women and the fixity of constructions of otherness. The chapters in the book show the complicated relationship between gender, race and class and how the subject positions of women in post-colonial settings have been formed by the interaction of patriarchal and colonial discourses of difference. They call for a 're-mapping of colonization' to help understand the multiple subjectivities of the colonized and the colonial women together with the spaces in which they interact.

Blunt and Rose's book shows how thirdspace can contribute to the understanding of the relationship between space and subjectivity in the context of the gendered politics of post-colonialism. Many other examples have also made use of the concept in articulating a resistance to accepted binary subject positions and to the spatial politics of oppression. Take, for example, the occupation of certain spaces by gay, lesbian and bisexual people in gay pride marches (see Figure 2.5). Such marches reflect a desire to question and subvert the

Figure 2.5 Gay Pride march in New York. Credit: Getty Images

taken-for-granted heterosexual nature of public space. The march temporarily changes the relationship between society and space, creating 'gay space' – a thirdspace where behaviour and hybrid identities deemed unacceptable at other times are dominant. Returning to the issue of women's fear raised earlier, another example of thirdspace can be seen in the attempts by women to 'reclaim the night' by refusing to be fearful, and contesting the dominant assumptions of masculinity and violence that surround public space at night (Koskela, 1997). Space and place are sexualized in that they reflect an acceptance of or hostility towards particular spatial norms and identities – what is known as the sexualization of space.

SUMMARY

- In the past, Human Geography conceptualized space as a backdrop for social relations and was concerned with first, the mapping of spatial inequalities and, second, the articulation of the broad power relations through which those inequalities developed.
- Through time geographers have become more aware of the constructed nature of both identity and space, and have recognized that socio-spatial relations are negotiated, created and reinforced through everyday performance.
- It is clear that the co-construction of identity and space means that some identities are accepted, where others may be seen as out of place. Notions of belonging, community and exclusion are all central to the understanding of the relationship between society and space.
- The exclusion of some identities means that different, hybrid identities may emerge to destabilize and contest the dominant patterns of belonging in space and ensure the relationship of society with space is never fixed but always ongoing and in the process of being renegotiated.

Conclusion

The study of the relationship between society and space by geographers has developed over time through the different phases outlined in the chapter. This development has been presented, perhaps rather misleadingly in the chapter, as a rather neat sequence – primarily to assist understanding. In reality, however, it has not been a case of one approach replacing another but rather there has been a shift over time from geographical studies that sought to map spatial characteristics and the differentiation of social and economic characteristics to studies that represented social constructions of space and, finally, studies that challenged dominant socio-spatial constructions and focused on space as a form of resistance. Some would suggest that such a development has allowed geographers to think of space in a different way. We have moved from thinking of space as simply containing or reflecting social difference to being a part of how that difference is constructed, performed and contested. Space has moved from being passive to more active in the production of

social change and in the experience of place. Understanding space as part of the process of reproducing and resisting social change allows us to think in much more hopeful and positive ways about the strategic role of space in resisting oppression and celebrating diversity and opportunity.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Why did geographers become dissatisfied with the mapping of spatial patterns and how did they seek to address the limitations of such approaches?
2. How have different approaches to understanding social spatial relations been reflected in understandings of spaces as frightening or 'scary'?
3. What is meant by the term thirdspace and why might we associate this concept with feelings of hope ?

FURTHER READING

Bell, M.M. (2004) *Childerley: Nature and Morality in a Country Village*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This is a book about a rural community, and provides a detailed examination of how constructions of rural space are formulated and contested by those living and visiting the countryside. It is helpful in illustrating the idea of the co-construction of space and society as discussed in the chapter.

Cresswell, T. (2004) *Place: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

As Tim Cresswell writes in his book, Place is a form of space – it is space 'invested with meaning'. The book thus takes the ideas surrounding the relationship between society and space as discussed in this chapter and applies them to the notion of 'place'.

Holloway, L. and Hubbard, P. (2001) *People and Place: The Extraordinary Geographies of Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: Prentice Hall.

A series of very accessible chapters that talk about both the way geographers have understood space and also how different identities have experienced everyday space at the local level.

Johnston, L. and Longhurst, R. (2010) *Space, Place and Sex*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield.

This book explores different spaces of sexual identity, the assumptions and challenges that surround the relationship between sex and space.

Soja, E. (1996) *Thirdspace*. Oxford: Blackwell.

A challenging book but one which provides a critical discussion of the concept of thirdspace as first used by geographers. It situates geographers' use of thirdspace within intellectual and empirical discussions.

CHAPTER 3
HUMAN–NON-HUMAN

Hayden Lorimer

Introduction: all the stuff that we stuff in our mouths

As sure as eggs are eggs, you'll have eaten a meal in the last few hours. Right? Thought so. And which one was it? Breakfast, lunch or dinner? If you can stomach it, then pause for a minute and just remember what you chewed up and swallowed. Whether it was a smorgasbord or a simple snack, review all that matter journeying through your system, the stuff processing its way down, channelled through digestive tract and gut into bowel, washed over and worked on by gastric juices. And while you go about the work of mental regurgitation, you might place your hands over the swell of your stomach – go on now, all the way around – listening out for the embarrassingly loud noises that your organs have a habit of making as they go about doing the necessaries. Mine just gurgled while I wrote these words. Makes you think, doesn't it? The experience gets odder still if, only momentarily, you re-cast universal human actions – like eating – as being, well, a little bit out of the ordinary (Bennett, 2007). There's no room for the squeamish here. Keep the metabolic experiment going by revisiting in more detail, *exactly*, what was on that plate. What did you scoop from inside the foil casing or plastic wrap? If the waste bin is nearby, be brave, flip it open and pick out the discarded food packaging. Take a close look at the ingredients listed. How much does the information provided *really* tell you about source, sort or standard? What geographies does it disclose? Or discretely pull a veil over? Elspeth Probyn (2011) offers a few quick pointers for the more inquisitive geographer-eater:

> The global food crisis has brought a renewed public and academic attention to questions of what we eat, where it comes from, how much it costs, and whether it is sustainable . . .
>
> Coinciding, in ways that are more than coincidental, with a growing awareness and at times panic about global warming and climate change, people are becoming attuned to how what we always deemed as edible (corn, soya) are being turned into non-edible things like bio-fuels. And, as one of the most virulent forms of globalization, there is a seemingly endless circulation of food scares about things we had thought were edible – chickens that carry flu, cows that turn mad, eggs that are bad.
>
> (Probyn, 2011: 33)

Half a century ago, Claude Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, put all that in a

nutshell, declaring that 'food is good to think with' (1969).

Now take a deep breath and back we go to the belly of the beast. You might well have eaten some choice cuts (or, some not-so-select bits) from part of another animal's body. Perhaps you enjoyed the differing tastes of more than one kind of flesh (quite possibly without even knowing it). Prior to that, you may have sliced or diced the meat – there's just a slim chance you even gutted or filleted a carcass, or plucked it clean – as part of the preparations for cooking. Or, maybe you didn't eat a scrap of flesh, fowl or fish. If so, then this could just be a fairly arbitrary occurrence, explained by your failure to get the shopping done yesterday or the fact that the fridge or cupboard is looking a bit bare right now. Perhaps your religious beliefs or your family upbringing mean that you consider some meat types as unfit for human consumption (and, by contrast, others as palatable because they come from animals slaughtered in proper observance of recognized custom). Or, it could be that the absence of products derived from animals' bodies in your diet is because you've actually made a moral choice, at some stage earlier in your life, to consciously limit the range of foodstuffs that you consume. Like it or not, that decision places you in a minority and confers a badge of identity (vegetarian, pescetarian or vegan). Depending on which of these terms fits best, then what you just ate may have contained a mycoprotein meat substitute product (such as Quorn). Possibly this is because you find you still have to suppress strong carnivorous urges for a certain taste, tang and texture. For many among us, the first bite taken from a bacon roll is hard to beat, whatever the time of day. And even having commited to a meat-free lifestyle, it's not always possible to be entirely sure. Unless you have been an extra-specially careful consumer, there might be rendered animal tissue in the beauty products you apply to your body or face, or in those sweets you sometimes treat yourself to between meals, or the shoes that protect the soles of your feet. And what about me? Seeing as I've been doing all the quizzing so far, it's reasonable to expect an answer. I'm one of those fish-eating sort-of-vegetarians. By some sorts of judgement, that stance makes me a contradiction in terms.

So, you might reasonably ask, what's the purpose of all this prying into personal habits and mealtime preferences? The answer is simple enough, and it is central to the material conditions of our existence here on Earth. Attitudes to meat (and an extraordinary range of animal by-products) tell us a great deal about how we humans understand and value the lives of other living creatures, or 'non-human animals', to adopt a semi-technical term. When we're not processing bits of them on the inside, we're wearing bits of their bodies on the outside. It's a scale of intimacy and sort of immediacy that's all too easily, and comfortably, forgotten. For much of modern life, and for many millions of the world's population, it's just seemed better that way. The attitudes we hold about the lives and the deaths of millions of non-human animals, specifically reared to be eaten, are for most of the time, kept in a mental 'black-box', along with a range of beliefs, judgements, imaginings, tastes, morals and ethics that inform our sense of place as humans amid a greater planetary ecology of relations (Foer, 2009; Baggini, 2005). There are powerful ideas bundled up in there and emotions that can pack a punch. And, when it comes to the central concern of this chapter, the edibility of non-human animals might be tellingly illustrative, but that doesn't even cover the half of it.

Non-human relations and non-human agency

As geographers today are coming to realize, it is important to trace the different forms of relation and connection that exist between the human and what is referred to increasingly as 'the non-human'. Such a project has the potential to radically alter the way that you configure the everyday world around you, in ways reaching far beyond the bounds of our introductory exercise about personal patterns of consumption, and that demand new mind-maps to navigate by. Rethinking relations has real kinds of analytical and material consequence, redrawing what we understand as the very constitution, and the basic boundaries, of a world of 'humans', 'non-humans' and a great medley of other 'things' that make up the material culture of everyday life. If these words already begin to read like a significant challenge to generally accepted values – by decentring our separate condition as human beings – then that is no accident. The direction of travel in current geographical thought is away from the cherished idea of sovereign species (or what I'll later on refer to as 'human exceptionalism' and 'ontological separatism') and towards one of a world populated by post-human entities, like 'hybrids', 'cyborgs' and 'monsters' (Whatmore, 2002; Davies, 2003). Why is that? Well, in truth, these days it's not easy to say where the human ends and the non-human begins. As scientific visionaries plan possible futures for radically different kinds of life on Earth, with new biotech redesigns based on genetic sequencing, and contemplate grand plans for the geo-engineering of earth and atmospheric systems, our long-standing appreciation of organisms and physical phenomena as things with an individual existence, identifiably separate and sealed, is being buffeted about. The future is no longer the heady stuff of science fiction (as it undoubtedly was for your parents' generation). A tumbledown world is widely predicted and projected, rather than a perfect one. Elements of it have even arrived early. And what's still to come does not promise to be a simple matter.

The trends in post-human geographical thought that this chapter explores are ones placing in question generally accepted orthodoxies about **ontology**, that is to say the very nature and reality of existence. According to post-human principles, rather than bodies or matter being conceived in terms of fixed, essential states, their properties are instead to be understood as vital and always in flux. To acknowledge this restlessness and vitality is also to accept that non-human entities have real and significant **agency**. Whether we like it or not, other living things and artificially intelligent systems have the potential to act up, to bite back, to spread virally or with volatility, to undermine the great certainties of human will, to evade or corrupt original designs, or simply to move beyond our full control.

Such observations about ontology and agency might be rooted in questions of existential philosophy, but their implications are deeply political. Depending on your view, they hold significant promise or pose real threats. They re-make us as 'human becomings', rather than human beings. They open up new horizons, where genomic data (like DNA profiles) and ID biometrics might be the sort of evidence used to tell us why we are the way we are. They also topple – or just gently nudge – us from an elevated and exceptional position, based on an age-old assumption about the all-powerful dominion that humans hold over nature. These are really big considerations to take on. Should some reassurance be necessary as we delve deeper into the world of human and non-human relations, it might prove helpful if I elaborate on a new typology of non-humans and hybrid entities. We can

Figure 3.1 An illustrated page from a bestiary: an ancient kind of book containing descriptions in text and image of all sorts of animals, real and imaginary, monstrous and fabulous. Creatures were not described in scientific terms, but rather in humorous or imaginative ways, sometimes with moral judgements cast on aspects of non-human behaviour. Credit: British Library

figure this as something akin to a contemporary version of the medieval bestiary (see Figure 3.1) or compendium of living creatures and fabled beings.

For a start, this will mean reconfiguring some standard disciplinary labels and accepted classificatory terms – those first enshrined in school classrooms and still in common usage in university lecture theatres. So, what happens if we expand the domain of our given subject area, contemporary Human Geography, so that it becomes a 'more-than-human geography' (Braun, 2005)? That would be a version of the subject with its parameters stretched to better accommodate the great tangle of spatial and temporal relations we humans have with other kinds of living organism, materials, objects and a host of other 'things' besides, taking place in a vast array of settings. What would the 'more-than . . .' version of Human Geography include? Just to begin, numbered here would be the entire animal kingdom, all fauna inclusive of birds, fish and insects. Every kind of flora too: plants and trees, mosses and algal blooms, fruit and vegetables. But then what of living things that are less easily mapped upon, or tracked across a landscape, operating at a micro or molecular scale, perhaps internal to bodies? They need accounting for too. So the geography unfolding is one also inclusive of the bacteria and the bacillus, the germ and the genetically modified life form. After all, in the twenty-first century, the pervasive presence of biotechnology has begun to normalize to a degree where public attitudes seem increasingly tolerant (or unquestioning) about the most fundamental kinds of change. Biotech innovations range from crops of Canola, engineered to be tolerant of herbicides and pesticides, to 'Enviropig™' (see Figure 3.2), an enhanced line of livestock with a capability to digest plant phosphorous more efficiently and less toxically.

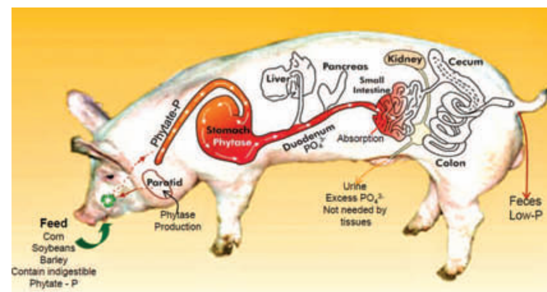


Figure 3.2 Enviropig™ is a genetically enhanced strain of swine, derived from the Yorkshire pig. Biotechnological intervention has altered the creature's digestive process so that the manure produced from cereal grain consumption has lower phosphorous content. The manure can then be spread on farmland with less environmental risk of phosphorous leaching into freshwater ponds, streams and rivers, leading to reductions in water quality or fish populations. Credit: © 2012 University of Guelph – All Rights Reserved

And there's more space required yet. The category of the 'more-than-human' must also encompass non-human beings that, while not being fully sentient or necessarily organic in origin, are nonetheless active and dynamic forms that significantly shape the conditions of contemporary living. **Non-human agency** flourishes, in everything from the yeasts that rise in bread to fruit crops that fall from trees, in the tides generating supplies of renewable energy to the pulses that transmit electrical power to industrial destinations and domestic households (Bennett, 2010). The more-than-human realm must also take in genetic data and chemical compounds, the classic experimental apparatus of pipettes and petri dishes, through to laser-guided neuroscience. Witness the fact that some geographers now research in the company of scientists who are operating on the frontiers of experimental biomedical science where trans-species mutants proliferate (Davis, in press), or developing programmes for animal conservation through species 'back-breeding' (Lorimer and Driesson, in press). Still more capacity is necessary for entities from this 'more-than . . .' world. It must take in the host of machines, mechanical and digital (from robot milking machines for dairy cows to unmanned military drones). It must encompass software environments (from android apps to iClouds and online social networks) now so very deeply programmed into the fabrics and rhythms of life as to sometimes seem inseparable from the very core of existence. As I sit here typing, the smart device nestled snug in my pocket gently vibrated, as if to verify the modern maxim that 'you're never alone with a phone'.

In certain instances, transplanted or implanted biomedical technologies operate internal to bodies (maintaining stabilities in heart-rate or mood), or they can work as sensory fixes and anatomical add-ons, augmenting the capacities and competencies of naturally evolved human form. To illustrate one such socio-technical advance, consider the case of Oscar Pistorius, South African track athlete, gold-medallist paralympian and first ever paralympic athlete to qualify for the Olympic Games (see Figure 3.3). A double amputee, dubbed 'The Bladerunner' and 'the fastest man on no legs', Pistorius runs using Cheetah Flex-Foot carbon fibre transtibial artificial limbs, fitted below

Figure 3.3 Oscar Pistorius is an athlete with a difference, who poses interesting questions for the worlds of sport, law and ethics. Hi-tech prosthetics, fitted to his kneecaps, enable him to compete at the highest levels of international track competition with able-bodied athletes. In 2012, his personal best for running 400m stands at 45.07 seconds. Credit: Getty Images

the kneecap. In the process, he troubles internationally accepted rules, set to ensure that competition takes place on a 'level playing field'. Sporting arbitrators and authorities are anxious that the pioneering design of his prosthetics could actually place Pistorius at a freakish advantage when running against able-bodied athletes. Perhaps the Bladerunner is blazing a trail for other 'cyborg-athletes' who yet might perform superhuman feats, rewrite the record books and win the human race. Hybrid anatomical designs are not always so glamorous or so quick to grab headlines. It is now standard practice for dentists to offer a patient the option of a cow bone implant as part of a surgical procedure for fusing a replacement denture to a remaining tooth root. Whether cosmetic, commercial or biomedical, this is only one in an increasingly diverse range of treatments and interventions available that depend on trans-species fusions to rebuild, regenerate and replace parts of bodies.

A point could be reached where, quite properly, questions need to be asked about the possible extent of this experiment in relational thinking. What is to be left out from the category of non-human beings? Is it a case of everything *and* the kitchen sink? Where do these complex material assemblages of related stuff stop? Is it actually possible to differentiate between sorts of being? Surely, of necessity, there must be some spatial and temporal limits established, otherwise wouldn't everything end up being connected to everything else? Where and how to place spatial limits around the interactions of human and non-human is an important consideration for geographers, and some of the more conceptually driven thinking that can enable this to happen is introduced in the next section.

SUMMARY

- 'More-than-human geographies' is a label that invites a full disciplinary rethink about the hybrid forms that life seems increasingly to take, and about how multivariate entities are related to one another.
- The agency of non-human animals, objects and entities is a phenomenon being treated seriously by geographers, based on a growing recognition that we humans are not in sole control of social situations.
- Thinking about how environments and situations happen in relational terms can be enlightening, but simultaneously it is worth wondering about the spatial and social reach of these relations.

Into the mangle of post-humanism

In recent years, a variety of big ideas has been utilized by geographers who are thinking about diverse assemblies of human and non-human entities. Arguably, it is along the threshold of human–non-human existence that some of geography's most inventive thinking is happening. Some of this originality draws on the discipline's own intellectual heritage, though it also reflects a lively traffic in ideas with other subject areas, like anthropology, sociology and philosophy. To begin with,

encountering these exchanges can be a fairly daunting business, partly because it means becoming reasonably literate in unfamiliar sorts of language. This section will begin that task by mapping out three key conceptual influences and highlighting some of the new geographies that are being produced as a result.

The emergence of 'new animal geographies' (Emel and Wolch, 1998; Philo and Wilbert, 2000) is a good place to turn to first. This field of study reminded many geographers of the need for a far greater understanding of the spacing of the lives of non-human animals in Human Geographies, and encouraged a subtler appreciation of the placing of the lives of humans in animal geographies. The subjects of these relations range all the way from wolves (Brownlow, 2000) to foxes (Woods, 2000), pet dogs (Howell, 2000) to feral cats (Griffiths *et al.,* 2000). Sometimes concerned with animals as symbolic representations and sometimes as substantial lively things, this work ensured that – whatever the nature of the relation encountered – matters of social power and moral–ethical concern were kept to the fore. Such studies of inter-species relations have since extended to include other kinds of non-human agencies and biotechnical assemblages. The 'hybrid geographies' written about by Lewis Holloway (2007; 2009) and Carol Morris (2009) are those employed in the commercial breeding of farm livestock. They show how the genetic revolution has created entirely new spaces and scales of knowledge, meaning that cows are very differently understood as creatures. They consider such developments as a powerful expression of 'biopower', a concept that originates with Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, relocated, so as to include animal lives. Biopower captures the human will to regulate conditions of living and the nature of life itself.

Second, geographers have learned some important lessons from social anthropology about the ways that the lifeworlds of humans and non-humans are enmeshed or co-constituted. The 'relational ecology' of Tim Ingold (2000; 2011) has had a telling effect. Drawing on ethnographic observations of the lifestyles of non-Western, indigenous peoples, Ingold explains the cosmological beliefs that inform systems of environmental perception in these worlds. Here, animals, birds, trees, rivers, weather *and* humans are all 'persons', who might come to share in each other's wisdoms, sometimes even shifting identities and bodies as they do so. This makes indigenous knowledge systems and languages about the skies, sea and land among the world's most ancient, but also shows how well attuned indigenous ideas are to prevailing environmental theories concerned with ontological hybridity and fluidity. 'Old ways' that originate in the lived experiences and practical skills required for the upkeep of extended communities of humans and non-humans serve to remind us that not everything is new under the sun. Geographers have taken these ideas on different travels, exploring nearby worlds and familiar landscapes, the kinds found in fruit orchards (Jones and Cloke, 2002) and among herd animals (Lorimer, 2006), showing the meshing together of agencies into local swirls of life.

Finally, when it comes to challenging the principles of 'human exceptionalism' and 'ontological separatism', Bruno Latour, a French sociologist, has his own ideas. Like Ingold's, these imports have been highly influential in geography. Latour offers up a powerful argument about the state of humankind: 'we have never been modern' (1993). By this provocation, Latour means to expose something he believes has been hiding in plain sight for centuries. Namely, that the model separating 'culture' and 'nature' is a false intellectual construct. Instead of imposing this model to claim power and making distinctions, we need to apprehend worlds as they actually

are. That is, as a succession of fabricated environments, comprising human and non-human beings, involved in spatially distributed interactions, normally through socially equivalent conditions. Latour's particular way of thinking places greatest emphasis on the practical relations existing between actors and agents and intermediary objects and technologies. It is attentive to a social realm made up of networks, circulations and translations. It has been applied, rather like a helpful tool or template, to all manner of socio-technical spaces and ordinary situations. He once used it to explain the operations of an entire public transportation system, affording agency to its constituent parts (Latour, 1996). Some geographers have taken up his toolkit, using it to explain the ways that water vole conservation happens (Hinchliffe *et al.,* 2005), how the hunting of foxes has been represented in the British countryside (Woods, 2000) and how elephants were hunted in the British Empire (Lorimer and Whatmore, 2009). As well as scrambling nature and culture, Latourian thinking can break down all manner of other dualisms: organic/inorganic, inside/outside, architectural/environmental, biological/artificial. What results from this melding together of social, natural and technical environments? Bruno Latour has likened what results to a 'parliament of things'. In so doing, he aims to provide the practical impetus for a new social ideal, where emerging sciences and technologies can be subject to public scrutiny, and as a consequence become more transparent.

In different ways, the proliferation of big ideas has helped more-than-human geographers to grapple with very tricky questions concerning the extent to which it is ever possible to claim to fully know **animality**, and how to write about the agency of non-human entities. To different degrees, this work still struggles with concerns raised about anthropomorphism, or what is called 'x-morphism' in the case of other objects (Laurier and Philo, 1999). Anxieties also remain about what ultimately is bound to remain unknowable, since for all the inter-species affinities that are detected, there is still a 'beastliness of being animal' that must also be respected. In the following section, I want to turn the focus of attention to an alternative kind of experiment told as a true animal story that will provide some imaginative resources to work through these ethical and moral conundrums.

'One pig': the animal–art–agriculture–advocacy assemblage

Having decided to buy himself a pig, Matthew Herbert took a trip to market. Well, sort of. Truth be told, this most traditional kind of transaction took place by more modern means. Herbert's own record label 'Accidental' (a micro-operation run out of the second floor of Unit 11, Block A, Greenwich Quarry, London) agreed to pay £100 to take legal ownership of one pig, selected from a litter of eleven piglets born to a sow on a family-run piggery in Kent, England. You can see the invoice (No. 1421) (see Figure 3.4), processed in March 2009. Over the next 20 months, Herbert amassed an archive of field and farm recordings that track the lifecycle of the pig, all the way from birth to slaughter to plate. As his purchase steadily put on the pork, Herbert kept a blog, documenting its development and describing its health and general welfare. In the process, one pig morphed into 'One Pig': an unlikely centrefold star in an experiment combining recorded music and live performance, art and appetite, animal-rights activism and animal husbandry, travelling all the way from farm to fork, and then to places beyond. Clearly, the life and the

PAID
19 FEB 2010
Chq 001414

To: Accidental Records Ltd
2nd Floor
Unit 11, Block A
Greenwich Quarry
London
SE8 3EY

Date: 8th Feb 2010

Invoice No: 1421

INVOICE

Qty	Details		Total
1.0	Pig	100.00	100.00

You are welcome to settle this invoice by BACS.
Please post/fax/email your remittance to the details shown above.

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO "

TOTAL TO PAY £100.00

KENT

Figure 3.4 Just as there are many ways 'to skin a cat', there are lots of methods for purchasing a pig. Here is documentary evidence of Matthew Herbert becoming the proud owner of 'One Pig'. Credit: Matthew Herbert/Solar Management Ltd

death of this pig is going to require a little more explaining . . .

The first thing to clear up about Matthew Herbert is that he is no pig farmer. Nor is he a geographer. He is a musician – critically acclaimed among the cognoscenti of a genre known as 'electronica' (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6) – and he's a meat-eater too. Herbert has a history of audio experimentation, especially when it comes to sourcing the sounds that are used in his recordings. Some years ago, he wrote an influential artists' manifesto entitled 'Personal Contract for the Composition of Music' (PCCOM), which appeals for recording artists to avoid using drum machines and pre-existing samples in their work. Herbert suggests that sounds should come live-from-life. Sticking to his principles, he uses everyday life in the twenty-first century as a sound palette: 'With the invention of the sampler, I can now explicitly root my work in the literal, critical present. I can describe the real in the frame of the imaginary' (www.matthewherbert.com/biography).

This creative vision for truth-telling has shaped his recording practice ever since. On *The Mechanics of Destruction*, Herbert samples McDonald's products and Gap merchandise as a protest against corporate globalism. *Plat Du Jour*, another activist album, contains one track of compressed sounds that retell 'The Truncated Life of a Modern Industrialised Chicken'. The album *One Pig* pushed the political–ethical project of human–non-human relations further still. It is a musical portrait of an animal bred, ultimately, for human consumption. In the process, Herbert attempts various things: to make more meaningful the lives of animals reared for meat; to force us to ask critical questions about the global meat industry; and to make more transparent the direct consequences of our appetites and actions. So is it a recording to relish? You can decide for yourself by listening at: www.matthewherbert.com (or search for 'One Pig' on YouTube). I should be honest. Some tracks don't necessarily make for the easiest of listens. It ranks as the kind of thing music critics tend to describe as 'challenging'. Spliced through the crunchy beats and melodic blips are classic farmyard sounds (hay shuffling under foot and trotter), darker echoing squeals, distorted grunts, a chorus of competing snorts and oinks, mechanical clunks and clangs, a medley of manipulated scraping, sucking, sipping and slurping sounds, a knife being sharpened (then cleaned, perhaps?), a hacksaw cutting (for legal reasons, Herbert was not able to record actual sounds from the pig's slaughter), human voices, kitchen clatter, chomping and chewing noises and the appreciative kind of exhalation ('aaaahhhhhhh') made by a happy eater whose taste buds are being given an extra special treat. The butchering of One Pig was announced plainly on Herbert's blog: 'Wednesday, February 10, 2010 at 11:18PM. The pig is now dead.' Track by track, the affect of listening can be comfortably appealing, sometimes funny, but also disorienting and disturbing.

The afterlife of this individual pig keeps on happening, taking diverse forms of cultural expression and occupying unexpected spaces. The album artwork (see Figure 3.7) displays a range of lavish dishes cooked with the pig's meat ('ballotine of pork shoulder with tomato jelly', 'five-spice braised pig's head with borage and organic summer vegetables') and a selection of by-products derived from body parts (pig trotter candelabra, pig fat candles, a pigskin drum). The drum was one of the percussion

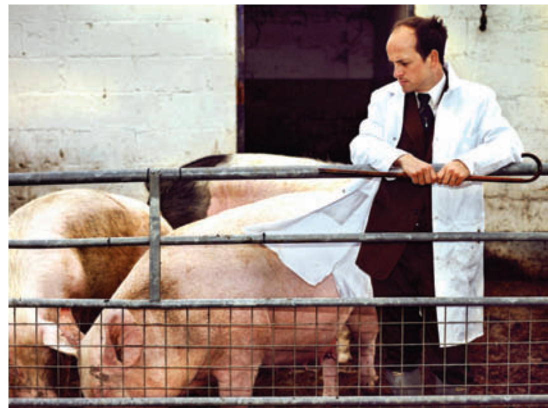


Figure 3.5/Figure 3.6 Matthew Herbert keeping company with pigs during field recordings at a piggery. Such intimacy in relations between humans and livestock is not new; in the pre-modern world, a swineherd was a person who looked after pigs. Credit: Matthew Herbert/Solar Management Ltd

instruments used for a string of live dates during recent European and UK tours. In these performances, Herbert's quintet appeared on stage dressed in traditional butcher's outfits (shirt-and-tie, knee-length white coat). He described the shows as an alternative kind of remembrance service, the music built from memories of the ghost-pig, and backed by slide projections from its former life (a bit like a farm-family album). Digital and material technologies were crucial to the spectacle of pig re-presentation. Performances centred on the 'StyHarp', a custom-built instrument formed of glowing red wires that mark the perimeter walls of an otherwise invisible pigpen. It is played by plucking and pulling, actions that activate a series of sound modules. Part way through the set, a chef joined the musicians on stage. The sizzling sound of pork frying was amplified. The smell of meat cooking filled the venue.

Figure 3.7 Some of the culinary products of One Pig's life and Herbert's artistic labours. Credit: Matthew Herbert/Solar Management Ltd

Audience participation was encouraged. As a finale, taste samples were dished out to the most curious on the dance floor, an act rendering One Pig as an assemblage of animal-art-agriculture-advocacy.

SUMMARY

- A range of contrasting theories and concepts currently inform geographical thought about how it is possible to reconfigure relations, persons and entities as 'post-human'.
- When it comes to a world of hybrids, capitalism, compassion and creativity are all motors of invention, but the formation of new entities can occur as an accidental event too.
- It is possible to identify possibilities and problems in the post-human condition, though it seems highly unlikely that a universal moral–ethical judgement can be cast. Instead there will be local geographies of reaction, ranging from opposition to enchantment.

Conclusion: Between creaturely wonder and animal welfare

It is very difficult to say with any degree of moral certainty if One Pig was luckier than the anonymous millions that are reared annually in agro-industry and then processed through the global meat industry. Quite possibly it was, in its short life. But for all the creaturely wonder engendered, ultimately this single animal befell the same fate. Arguably, the creation of ambiguous feeling is precisely the point of Herbert's more-than-human project.

It seems only proper that this chapter finds a way to end by returning to where it began, with

gut feelings about non-human animals . . . as foodstuffs (Highmore, 2011). At present, commercially reared pigs really are big business on the world stage, in spite of recent food scares (Mizelle, 2011; Law and Mol, 2008). Pork is a key foodstuff catering to growing appetites and shifting dietary patterns among the expanding populations of Asia. Recently, Tulip (the UK's largest maker of Danepak Bacon and Spam) signed a £50 million pork export deal with China, the world's biggest pork market. The *Guardian* newspaper reported that:

> Much of the exported pork will be offal, tripe, trotters, ears and other parts of the so-called 'fifth quarter' – the parts even meat-eating Brits tend to turn their nose up at, but the Chinese savour.
>
> [The *Guardian*, 2012]

To me, this seems like capitalism in its purest form. As a globalized rationale for slaughterhouse efficiency the visceral concept of the 'fifth quarter' recalls the earliest days of the pork industry when American meat packers boasted about how they had found a use for 'everything but the squeal'. As well as pork, UK exports of live breeding pigs to China are being stepped up. Up to 900 at a time travel east by jumbo jet, on a non-stop twelve-hour flight, then 'once breeding herds have been established, farmers send bottles of semen to keep the production line going, supplemented by a new batch of sows every year' (Kollewe, 2012). What we have here are sites, flows and things (in the shape of farming practices, health protocols, live animals, trade emissaries, rendered meat, food safety officers and bodily fluids) *all* on the move around the globe. For Emma Roe, this is a situation raising critical issues around standards of animal welfare and about the material realities of agri-industrial production. Her unflinching account of a pig 'slaughter event' contains genuinely discomforting details:

> The pig carcass is put in hot water at 60 degrees Celsius to loosen its hairs. The pig is wet and slippery when it comes out of the hot bath. Some smaller pig carcasses slip onto the floor and are dragged back again onto the table. Then the carcass is put in a big tumbler to dry and 'rub off' as many hairs as possible. A pig has edible skin, so the hairs are meticulously removed, and as little water as possible is used to clean the meat (should any faecal matter slip out of the rectum as the whole of the digestive system is removed).
>
> (Roe, 2010: 271)

The graphic journey that Roe takes her readers on, along the brimming gutters of the food factory, was one once undertaken by Upton Sinclair (1906) in his novel *The Jungle*, and is today rehearsed by celebrity chefs and television film crews.

We might feel like we know that script. But what stuff really matters here? It seems that even at the same time as the categories of human and non-human blur (or all but dissolve), a sense for what is humane and inhumane must be protected. As sentient human-animals we feel the suffering of others. That offers us very good grounds for establishing a new relational ethics that can encompass more of life that is more-than-human. We must also acknowledge that these relational ethics will shift in shape and expression, according to the multiple beings enrolled into their constitution and the locally global spaces in which they keep on taking place.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. What parts of the post-human condition are you comfortable about, and what bits make you most concerned? Ask yourself why.
2. What happens to your normal daily round of work and leisure activities if you try to rethink them as assemblages of hybrid entities, enrolled together by relations and connections?
3. Discuss whether the concept of more-than-human geographies might have significant implications for *physical geography*.
4. Discuss how the experience of listening to Matthew Herbert's 'One Pig' recordings made you feel.
5. Read through a daily newspaper (online or hard copy) and try to identify an article or feature that is concerned with something that poses a challenge to the idea of sealed-in human and non-human entities.

FURTHER READING

Davies, G. (2003) 'A geography of monsters?' In: *Geoforum* 34(4) 409–12.

A short commentary piece that throws open the possibility of thinking about the world as populated by monsters, old and new.

Lorimer, H. (2006) 'Herding memories of humans and animals'. In: *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24(4) 497–518.

A paper that explores how it is possible to entwine the life stories of the humans and animals that make up a herd and the place of indigenous knowledge systems in this social arrangement.

Roe, E. (2010) Ethics and the non-human: the matterings of animal sentience in the meat industry. In: B. Anderson and P. Harrison (eds.) *Taking-place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*. London: Ashgate, 261–83.

A book chapter offering a detailed and insightful consideration of the ethics of the meat industry. It draws on fieldwork findings from inside the slaughterhouse and leaves very little to the imagination.

Whatmore, S. (2002) *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Culture, Spaces*. London: Sage.

An excellent, radical and influential book that explains the theoretical conditions for thinking of geographies as hybrid.

WEBSITE

www.matthewherbert.com

As well as the full album version, One Pig's life recordings have been compressed into a three-minute-long montage track, available on digital format. Alternatively, courtesy of Micachu, you can listen to an EP of dancefloor-friendly remixes of original One Pig tracks.

CHAPTER 4

MODERN–POSTMODERN

Mark Goodwin

Introduction

The term **modern** has been used for many centuries to distinguish a new social order from previous ones, and ideas of the modern are most commonly defined through their opposition to the old and the traditional. This 'oppositional definition' has taken many forms. In post-Roman Europe the term *modernus* was used to distinguish a Christian present from a pagan past (Johnston *et al.,* 2000), while in the late seventeenth century the quarrel between the 'Ancients' and the 'Moderns' spilled out from a debate over literature to embrace ideas of religion and social issues, causing the term 'modern' to enter widespread public usage for the first time. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the term modern acquired another meaning, this time denoting a qualitative and not just a chronological difference from pervious eras. To live in a modern age denoted not just newness but also progress and betterment. Linked to the **Enlightenment** search for rational scientific thought, the idea began to emerge that humans could change history for the better, and that progress could be controlled and ordered – rather than history being done to people in a manner that was preordained

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries this notion of **modernity** as progress held sway (see also Chapter 32). Rapid changes in economy, technology, culture and society meant that, in Europe at least, each generation could claim to be qualitatively different from previous ones. Stephen Kern, for instance, summarizes the changes that were taking place at the end of the nineteenth century:

> From around 1880 to the outbreak of World War I a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space. Technological innovations including the telephone, wireless, telegraph, x-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile and airplane established the material foundation for this reorientation; independent cultural developments such as the stream of consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, Cubism, and the theory of relativity shaped consciousness directly. The result was a transformation of the dimensions of life and thought.
>
> (Kern, 1983: 1–2)

Our experiences of these 'transformations in life and thought' became labelled as modernity (Berman, 1982). Their artistic, cultural and aesthetic expression was called **modernism**. So, while ideas of being modern can be traced back several centuries, notions of modernity and modernism coalesced around a very particular twentieth-century experience – one to be especially found in the emerging cosmopolitan urban centres of Berlin, Paris and New York. The impacts of modernity and modernism spread out from these cultural heartlands to influence us all. Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the built environment that most of us inhabit has largely been shaped by modernism. The houses we live in, the offices and factories we work in, the chairs we sit on and the tables we sit at, and the graphic design we see around us – on shop fronts and in newspapers and magazines – have all been created by the aesthetics and ideology of modernist design.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, however, modernism was challenged by a new movement which significantly did not label itself as another stage in modernity. Instead it self-consciously proclaimed itself to be **postmodern** – to be different from, and moving beyond modernity. In the arts and literature, in philosophy and in the social sciences, **postmodernism** and **postmodernity** began to flourish. As the geographer Michael Dear put it in 1994 'Postmodernity is everywhere, from literature, design and philosophy, to MTV, ice cream and underwear' (1994: 3).

What I want to do in the rest of this chapter is to trace the continuities and discontinuities between the modern and the postmodern and to sketch how geography and geographers have been influenced by, and in turn influenced, both movements.

CASE STUDY

Marhall Berman's description of Modernity

There is a mode of vital experience – experience of space and time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils – that is shared by men and women all over the world today. I will call this body of experience 'modernity'. To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into air'.

(From Berman, 1982: 15)

Modernism and post-modernism: continuities and discontinuities

Dear (1994: 3-4) identifies three components of postmodernism and postmodernity – style, epoch and method. We will use this classification to trace and analyse the shift from the modern to the postmodern.

Style

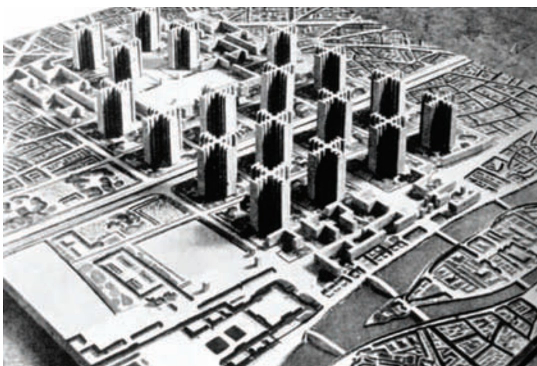
While we can trace the shift from a modern to a postmodern style across art, literature and music, architecture has become paradigmatic for discussing such a shift. Indeed, it has often been used as the starting point for discussions of postmodernity more generally, perhaps because it provides a very visible and public presence of changes in style. It also provides an immediate link to the concerns of geographers interested in the changing form and function of the built environment. The modern movement certainly stamped its authority on the architecture of the age: at the core of the movement lay the idea that the world had to be completely rethought and that following the carnage of the First World War, a more rational and enlightened society could be built – both socially and architecturally. The result was a set of sweeping changes in urban design, both in

Figure 4.1 Villa La Roche, designed by Le Corbusier.

terms of planning whole neighbourhoods and designing individual buildings. The latter came first, with initial appearances of architectural modernism being confined to small-scale infill buildings. The famous Villa La Roche, for instance, designed in 1925 by Le Corbusier, perhaps the most famous of all modernist architects, for a Swiss banker and art collector, lies at the end of a cul-de-sac in the Parisian district of Auteuil, still surrounded by nineteenth-century housing (see Figure 4.1).

In the 1930s, inspired by the famous Bauhaus movement, this modern style of architecture began to be used to design and construct housing estates, office blocks and whole communities. It reached its zenith with the large-scale urban renewal schemes of the 1950s and 1960s which can be found in almost every major city in the western world. The watch words of this urban design were rationality, order and efficiency, and the result was a technocratic and industrialized ordering of public space. Figure 4.2 contrasts an early Le Corbusier vision for the complete reordering of Paris (never built of course!) with the layout of Stuyvesant Town in New York, a private housing community which was built immediately after the Second World War. The universalism of modern architecture means that the same forms can be found across the globe, the result of new construction techniques and the mass use of 'new' materials such as glass, steel and concrete. Somewhat ironically, by the end of the 1960s, modernist architecture came to be seen as drab, functional and commonplace and had lost its early rationale as a revolutionary opposition to the traditional forms of what the modern movement perceived as the reactionary nineteenth century.

Reaction to modernist architecture formed part of the anti-modernist movements which developed towards the end of the 1960s. These eventually crystallized around the emergence of a new postmodern style. In opposition to the austerity and formalism of modern architecture, postmodernism developed as a more playful alternative, emphasizing pastiche and collage. Rather than emphasizing the universalism of functional modernism, postmodern architecture was centred around vernacular and traditional styles, often rooted in regional traditions, with the result that diversity and pluralism replaced uniformity. An early example of such architecture was provided by the AT&T building in New York (now the Sony Building), designed by Philip Johnson



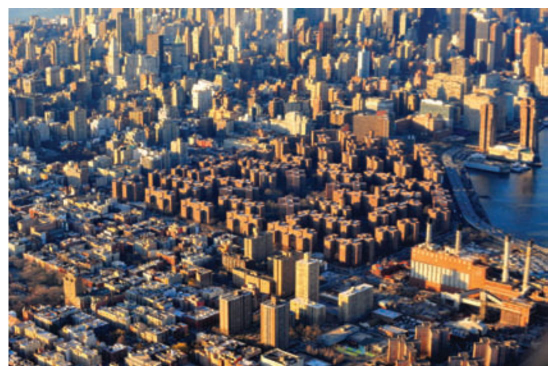


Figure 4.2 (a) Le Corbusier's dream for Paris in the 1920s; (b) the achieved design for Stuyvesant Town, New York. Credit: (a) © FLC/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2013; (b) Alec Jordan (Creative Commons)

and completed in 1984 (see Figure 4.3). Here the playfulness of postmodernism is celebrated by a pediment at the top resembling Chippendale furniture and an arched entry some seven stories high. As construction techniques developed, architects began to create even more distinct building forms. Figure 4.4 shows the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, designed by Frank Gehry; the contrast with the traditional modernist towers in the background is stark.

Figure 4.3 AT&T building in New York, an early example of postmodern architecture, with more austere and functional modernist blocks adjacent and behind. Credit: Getty Images

Figure 4.4 The Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in the foreground, with more traditional and functional modernist office towers in the background. Credit: Getty Images

SUMMARY

- Modernism developed in opposition to the perceived tradition and conservatism of nineteenth-century art, literature and architecture.
- Modernism developed to encompass a global style, emphasizing universality, functionalism and order.
- Postmodernism developed in opposition to the perceived austerity of modernism and emphasized diversity, playfulness and plurality.

Epoch

The surface differences between the architectural styles of modernism and postmodernism are clear to see. They are reinforced by other cultural differences in literary styles and in photography and design (Harvey, 1989; Huyssen, 1984). The question is whether these are enough to signal a radical break with past social and cultural trends and thereby form a distinct epoch following that of modernity. One key problem for those attempting to chart such a break is the difficulty of theorizing contemporary trends. As Dear puts it:

> any landscape is simultaneously composed of obsolete, current, and emergent artifacts: but how do we begin to codify and understand this variety? And at what point is the accumulated evidence sufficient to announce a radical break with the past? The idea that we are living in 'new times' is seductive, but there are no clear answers to these questions.
> (Dear, 1994: 3)

Geographers have played a key role in the search for such answers. In particular, two extremely influential books, both published in 1989, placed space, uneven development and urbanism at the centre of these debates. The first, David Harvey's *Condition of Postmodernity* became a bestseller across the humanities and social sciences. The second, Ed Soja's *Postmodern Geographies* consciously set out to reassert the role of space in social theory more generally. Both emphasized the role of geography and uneven development as active moments in the construction of both modernity and postmodernity, rather than as simple reflections of them. Harvey had the more critical take on ideas of postmodernity as a distinct new epoch. His understanding was traced through the four parts of the book. Part one examines the major themes in the transition from modernism to postmodernism across elements as diverse as urban planning, painting, literature and music. But Harvey differs from many academics that have identified similar changes by relating them to underlying shifts in the capitalist economy. The second part continues this theme, by setting out and analysing a political–economic transition away from **Fordism** and situating the rise of postmodern representations within this transition. Here again, the cultural practices of postmodernity are related to underlying economic shifts. For Harvey, the shift towards flexible accumulation helps to explain why postmodernity often appears as fleeting and ephemeral. But for Harvey, while the surface appearances of capitalism may have changed, its underlying logic, which leads to a constant set

of crises, remains the same. In Part three of the book, Harvey examines different conceptions of space and time under modernity and postmodernity. Again, he tends to highlight the similarities between the two rather than the differences by emphasizing that both modern and postmodern periods are dominated by what Harvey calls '**time–space compression**'. This is not just about ever-quicker forms of global communication and travel, but also refers to the ever-accelerated rate at which capital has to turnover to make a profit. For Harvey this leads to an accentuation of volatility and ephemerality in fashion, consumer goods and production techniques as well as in ideas, ideologies and values. In this sense, Berman's idea that modernity is characterized by all that is solid meting into air (see Case Study on p. 52) is now transferred to postmodernity. In Part four Harvey merges political, economic and cultural analyses to produce an understanding which emphasizes the continuing internal contradictions of capitalism, rather than the categorical distinction between modernism and postmodernism (see Table 4.1).

Soja stresses the differences of postmodernism from modernism, but also refuses to see it as a distinct epoch, preferring instead to characterize it 'as another deep and broad restructuring of modernity, rather than a complete break' (1989: 5). However, Soja uses the move towards postmodernity to emphasize the role of space in social thought. This is not just about empirically investigating the new spaces and architectural forms of postmodernity, but of building a spatial awareness into the very foundations of social theory. According to Soja (1989: 31), the traditions of the two dominant social theories within modernism – Positivism and Marxism – caused the 'virtual annihilation of space by time

CASE STUDY

Ed Soja's description of postmodernity

With exquisite irony, contemporary Los Angeles has come to resemble more than ever before a gigantic agglomeration of theme parks, a lifespace comprised of Disneyworlds. It is a realm divided into showcases of global village cultures and mimetic American landscapes, all-embracing shopping malls and crafty Main Streets, corporation-sponsored magic kingdoms, high-technology-based experimental prototype communities of tomorrow, attractively packaged places for rest and recreation, all cleverly hiding the buzzing workstations and labour processes which hold it together. The experience of living here can be extremely diverting and exceptionally enjoyable, especially for those who can afford to remain inside long enough to establish their own modes of transit and places to rest. And of course, the enterprise has been enormously profitable over the years. After all, it was built on what began as relatively cheap land, has been sustained by a constantly replenishing army of even cheaper imported labour, is filled with the most modern technological gadgetry, enjoys extraordinary levels of protection and surveillance, and runs under the smooth aggression of the most efficient management systems, almost always capable of delivering what is promised just in time to be useful.

(Soja, 1989: 246)

Fordist modernity	Flexible postmodernity
economies of scale/master code/ hierarchy homogeneity/detail division of labour	economies of scope/idiolect/anarchy diversity/social division of labour
paranoia/alienation/symptom public housing/monopoly capital	schizophrenia/decentering/desire homelessness/entrepreneurialism
purpose/design/mastery/determinancy production capital/universalism	play/chance/exhaustion/indeterminancy fictitious capital/localism
state power/trade unions state welfarism/metropolis	financial power/individualism neo-conservatism/counterurbanization
ethics/money commodity God the Father/materiality	aesthetics/moneys of account The Holy Ghost/immateriality
production/originality/authority blue collar/avant-gardism interest group politics/semantics	reproduction/pastiche/eclecticism white collar/commercialism charismatic politics/rhetoric
centralization/totalization synthesis/collective bargaining	decentralization/deconstruction antithesis/local contracts
operational management/master code phallic/single task/origin	strategic management/idiolect androgynous/multiple tasks/trace
metatheory/narrative/depth mass production/class politics technical-scientific rationality	language games/image/surface small-batch production/social movements/pluralistic otherness
utopia/redemptive art/concentration specialized work/collective consumption	heterotopias/spectacle/dispersal flexible worker/symbolic capital
function/representation/signified industry/protestant work ethic mechanical reproduction	fiction/self-reference/signifier services/temporary contract electronic reproduction
becoming/epistemology/regulation urban renewal/relative space	being/ontology/deregulation urban revitalization/place
state interventionism/industrialization internationalism/permanence/time	laissez-faire/deindustrialization geopolitics/ephemerality/space

Table 4.1 David Harvey's characterization of modernity and postmodernity – using both political–economic and cultural–ideological relations. (Source: D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 1989: 340)

in critical social thought', squeezing geography out of the picture. But if modernist social theory emphasized time, progress and historical development, for Soja, postmodernity entails an analysis of space and uneven development. Like Harvey, Soja makes this manoeuvre by emphasizing the uneven urban and regional development entailed in new forms of economic production. He illustrates this in the book by analysing what he calls 'the dynamics of capitalist spatialisation' (1989: 191) and uses Los Angeles as an exemplary case study of 'postmodern urbanism'. But he does so by building a new type of urban analysis, after noting how language and description tends to be linear and sequential, making it difficult to envisage the simultaneity of past and present that is inherent in all landscapes. In his final chapter on Los Angeles he offers a view from above, taking the reader on an imaginary cruise around the circumference of the sixty-mile circle which encompasses the built-up area of LA. The Case Study on p. 57 provides an example of how Soja renders the experience of postmodernity especially visible.

SUMMARY

- Geographers such as Harvey and Soja have played a key role in seeking to understand the transition from the modern to the postmodern.
- Both authors conclude that postmodernity is an extension rather than a replacement of modernism.
- Both insist on joining political and economic analysis to an understanding of cultural and ideological shifts.
- Both use the debate about whether postmodernity is a distinct epoch to reassert the importance of space in social theory.

Method

The third component of modernity and postmodernity identified by Dear (1994: 3-4) is that of method. Here, Dear is identifying different ways of viewing and understanding the world. As we noted earlier, modernism grew out of the enlightenment search for order, rationality and science. Within this search was a concern for uncovering the universal laws which underpinned both the physical and the social worlds. In the physical world, such universality is more straightforward, and grand narratives built around a universal understanding of gravity or evolution or relativity or nuclear fusion, are commonplace – if occasionally contested. In matters of the social world, things are not so straightforward. The grand social theories of modernism, however, were conducted as if they were. Positivism and Marxism took on the character of 'metanarratives', used by their adherents to explain all kinds of social and economic behaviour. For the positivists, rational man, acting to optimize his own individual interests, provided the foundation for economics and economic development. For Marxists, class struggle provided the motor for history and historical development. The developing discipline of geography was also enrolled into

this search for universal laws. For some, like Soja, it responded too enthusiastically, resulting in what he termed 'Modern Geography's fixation on empirical appearances and involuted description' (1989: 51).

Indeed, by the 1960s Human Geography had embraced a so-called 'scientific' approach, which had as its rationale the search for universally applicable laws of human behaviour. People were reduced to little more than dots on a map or integers in an equation and were all assumed to operate according to the same general laws – indeed, it was the very search for these controlling laws that drove this entire approach. This kind of reasoning dominated Human Geography in the 1960s and most of the 1970s and generated the search for law-like statements of order and regularity that could be applied to spatial patterns and processes. Hence the succession of models that appeared in geography over this period, for instance, Christaller's model of settlement hierarchy, Alonso's land use model, Zipf's rank size rule of urban populations and Weber's model of industrial location. All were an attempt to use law-like statements in order to explain and predict the spatial outcomes of human activity.

One such model that Human Geographers used to explain patterns of flow between two or more centres was the so-called **gravity model**. This proposed that we can estimate the spatial interaction between two regions by multiplying together the mass of the two (equated conveniently with population size) and dividing it by some function of the distance separating them. The model was used to 'explain' all kinds of flows, from those of migration to passenger traffic, telephone conversations and commodity flows. Noticeable by their absence are any references to the actual motivations for the behaviour of the individuals who are migrating or commuting or speaking to each other on the phone or purchasing the commodities. The freedom to choose one's behaviour is given no space whatsoever and people's actions are assumed to conform to a general pattern, which is itself based on a model derived from a crude analogy with Newton's law of universal gravitation developed in 1687. Thus what was originally conceived as a way of accounting for the behaviour of distant bodies in the universe was being used to explain a whole host of social, economic and cultural activities by reference to the two variables of population and distance. These, and the relation between them, were felt to govern, or control, the rate and nature of population movement.

Postmodernity consciously rejected the search for universal truths and instead emphasized that all knowledge is socially produced by those with particular positions and particular interests. This led to a strategy of deconstruction, 'a mode of critical interpretation that seeks to demonstrate how the (multiple) positioning of an author (or reader) in terms of class, culture, race, gender, etc., has influenced the writing (and reading) of a text' (Johnston *et al.,* 2000: 621). The outcome was a destabilization of meaning, which in turn cast doubt on the authority of those who claimed to be privileged interpreters. Local knowledges were prioritized alongside scientific ones, and postmodernism sought to undermine the modernist belief that theory can mirror and explain reality. As Dear puts it, 'more than most, therefore, postmodernists, learn to contextualise, to tolerate relativism and to be conscious always of difference' (1994: 4). However, critics of postmodernism seized on such relativism to argue that this amounts to a kind of 'anything goes' academia, where every single viewpoint is equally valid. Geographers were again at the forefront of these debates as they sought to understand how the meanings and interpretations of all kinds of texts – from books, to maps, to landscapes – were socially

derived and mediated. In the end though it is worth remembering a warning from Dear, that 'in our shifting world, postmodern thought has not removed the necessity for political and moral judgements: what it has done is to question the basis for such judgements' (1994: 4).

SUMMARY

- Modernism and postmodernism contain their own ways of viewing and understanding the world.
- Modernism has tended to search for universal laws, emphasizing rationality and order.
- Postmodernism has tended to emphasize the relative and socially situated basis of all knowledge claims.

Conclusions

Geography and geographers have inevitably been heavily influenced by the social and cultural movements we know as modernism and postmodernism, both in terms of what they have studied and how they have studied it. Geographers have also played leading roles in the interpretation of modernity and postmodernity and especially in analysing whether we have passed from one to the other. Putting these two elements together, we can now see the way in which an explicit concern with modernity and postmodernity revolutionized geography in the 1980s and 1990s. It caused geographers to ask all kinds of questions: about the relationship between the past and the present; about the relationship between society and space (see Chapter 2); about the role of space in social theory and social change; about diversity and difference, and how they should be rendered visible (see Chapters 5 and 6); and about how we represent and understand different types of meanings and interpretations (see Chapter 9). In many ways then, debates around notions of the modern and the postmodern presaged a flowering of geographical enquiry and a serious reintegration of Human Geography into broader debates within social science and philosophy. The encounter has undoubtedly changed Human Geography, but Human Geographers have also changed our understandings of what it means to be modern or postmodern.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Choose a geography that is well known to you – for instance, your journey to university, the place where you live, places you have worked – and see if you can find elements of modern or postmodern architecture in the built environment.

2. Examine a contentious social issue and see how many different interpretations of it you can establish. Think about why these different voices are there and analyse which ones are most powerful.
3. Using particular examples, explore the ways in which cultural and economic change are linked.
4. Do you think modernity has come to an end?

FURTHER READING

Berman, M. (2010) *All That is Solid Melts into Air*. London: Verso.

A new edition of a wonderful book which examines the experience of modernity by charting the impact of modernism on art, literature and architecture.

Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. London: Blackwell.

Soja, E. (1989) *Postmodern Geographies*. London: Verso.

The two books which opened up geography's engagement with debates around modernity and postmodernity – and which brought a geographical sensitivity to subsequent debates on these themes.

Le Corbusier (1927) *Towards a New Architecture*. London: The Architectural Press.

Try to find a copy in a library of this English translation of Le Corbusier's 1923 classic French text *Vers une Architecture*. There is also a new 2008 edition (published by Frances Lincoln Ltd, London) with an introduction which sets the book in its original context. Read this to understand why modernism gained such a hold for those seeking to build a new world after the First World War by sweeping away the disorder and chaos of the old one.

Jencks, C. (2007) *Critical Modernism – Where is Post Modernism Going?* London: Wiley Academy.

A book by one of the doyens of the postmodern movement which provides an overview of both postmodernism and its relationship with modernism.

CHAPTER 5
SELF–OTHER

Paul Cloke

Introduction: self-centred geographies?

Some people say that you should not judge a book by its cover. However, it is often interesting to pause and reflect on why books, organizations or in this case subjects such as geography are represented by particular 'cover' images. Figure 5.1 shows the cover of the 1994 Annual Report of the Royal Geographical Society, which is the organization representing academic and non-academic geographers in Britain. The image was designed to show geography in a positive light, as a subject that causes adventurous individuals to embark on exciting expeditions of learning in which they can discover the secrets of far-flung places and understand the lives of exotically different people. It is the 'us here' subjecting the 'them there' to serious geographical scrutiny.

This image, however, unintentionally poses other questions about 'us' and 'them'. The 'us' might suggest that Human Geographers can somehow be categorized as a homogeneous group of people, studying our geography in a somewhat standardized way – a bizarre supposition on a number of counts, not least the 'maleness' of the encounter that is represented. The 'them' seems to have been selected on the grounds of their exotic difference to us. They, too, are in danger of being stereotyped. The strangeness of the place along with differences in skin colour, language, dress and 'culture' seem to be sufficient to mark out an appropriately 'other' subject of study. 'Us' encountering 'them' is on our terms. Exotic difference is defined by our mapping out of people and places in the world, and our assumptions about what is, and what is not, a normal view of life.

Perhaps these questions read too much from one particular image, especially since the RGS/IBG has subsequently sought to rectify in its output any previous perceptions of social or cultural insensitivity. However, these questions do reflect some of the most important themes to have arisen in Human Geography over recent years. The first is a highlighting and questioning of the geographical self. Not so many years ago, Human Geographers were taught to be objective in their studies, so that anyone else tackling the same subject would come up with the same results. They were, in effect, being positioned as some kind of scientific automaton whose background, identity, experience, personality and worldview needed to be subjugated to the need for objectivity. The 'I' was personal pronoun *non grata* when it came to doing geography. However, the *self* does matter, and does

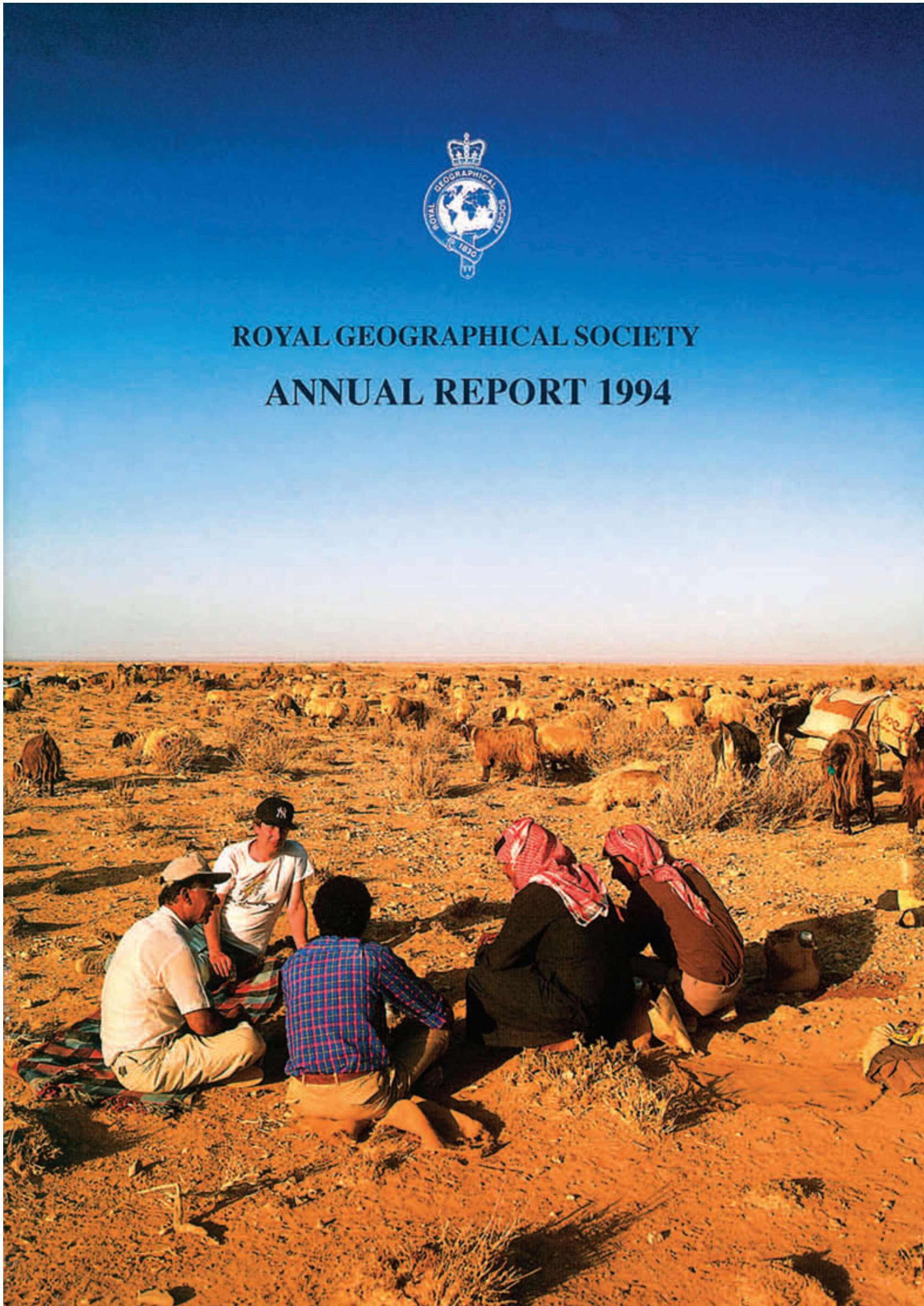


Figure 5.1 Annual Report of the Royal Geographical Society, 1994. Credit: Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

influence the geography we practise. We do have different place- and people-experiences, different political and spiritual worldviews, different aspects to our identity and nature, and all of these factors will influence how we see the world, why our geographical imaginations are fired up by particular issues and, ultimately, what and how we choose to study.

The danger of *not* acknowledging and reflecting on the self is not only that we can unknowingly buy into other people's orthodoxies, but also that we can assume that everyone sees the same world as we do. We can, thereby, impose our 'sameness' on to others. The second set of questions, then, concerns recognition of how we deal with 'others'. It is extraordinarily difficult sometimes to do anything but see things from our own perspective, however hard we try to escape from our self-centred geographies. Yet as soon as we move beyond the samenesses of self, we immediately begin to stylize and stereotype the differences of 'the other'. This has been the subject of much recent questioning across the range of human sciences, including Human Geography, under the rubric of debates on '**Otherness**' and 'Othering'. How do we think about people who are not like us without 'othering' them, without prioritizing the self and at best offering benign tolerance to others (Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, 1994)? Do we categorize others in order to control them – socially, culturally, politically, economically, spatially (Leeuw *et al.,* 2011)? Do we equate difference with abnormality or deviance?

Dealing with otherness and difference is therefore fraught with difficulty, as these are by no means neutral categories, and any critical assumptions about them being 'obvious' or even 'threatening' require very considerable reflection. For example, we need to challenge any assumptions that appropriate dealings with others are somehow automatically transacted through our citizenship – both in terms of our status as 'citizens' of Human Geography, which is somehow already sufficiently attuned to issues of otherness, and in terms of our state-citizenship through which it might be thought that welfare and aid functions already take care of the need to deal with others. The French anthropologist Marc Augé has suggested that we need to adopt a two-pronged approach to understanding otherness. First, we should seek *a sense for the other*. In the same way that we have a sense of direction, or family, or rhythm, he argues that we have a sense of otherness, and he sees this sense both disappearing and becoming more acute. It is being lost as our tolerance for others – for difference – disappears. Yet it is becoming more acute as that very intolerance itself creates and structures othernesses such as nationalism, regionalism and 'ethnic cleansing', which involve 'a kind of uncontrolled heating up of the processes that generate otherness' (Augé, 1998: xv). Second, we should seek *a sense of the other*, or a sense of what has meaning for others; that which they elaborate upon. This involves listening to other voices and looking through other windows on to the world so as to understand some of the social meanings that are instituted among and lived out by people within particular social or identity groups. This combination of an intellectual understanding of the other and an emotional, connected and committed sense of appreciation for the other can perhaps best be summarized in terms of attempting to achieve solidarity with the other by participation and involvement in their worlds. Rather than converting 'them' into 'our' world, such solidarity involves a conversion of ourselves for the other, hence as I wrote a decade ago:

> I believe that any re-radicalized geography will be measured to some extent by the degree to which radical and critical geographers achieve a going beyond the self

> in order to find a sense for the other in practices of conversion for the other.
> (Cloke, 2004: 101)

As the remainder of this chapter suggests, the attempt to inculcate the curricula and research of Human Geography with senses of the other, and with reflections on the self, has proved to be a complex and politicized process. Perhaps this reflects less the novelty of the ideas being worked with than the way they speak to and critique an absolutely central concern of Human Geography: developing knowledge of people and places beyond those one already knows. This chapter argues that this critique is worthwhile, and therefore discusses some of the delights, as well as difficulties, of bringing explicit reflections of self and other into our Human Geographies.

Self-reflections

In many ways, '**reflexivity**' has become one of the most significant passwords in Human Geography over recent years. To reflect on the self in relation to space and society has been seen as a key with which to open up new kinds of Human Geographies that relate to individuals more closely, and that individuals can relate to more closely. In particular, reflexivity has been used by **feminist** and **post-colonial** geographers in their respective political projects to persuade Human Geographers to reflect something other than male, white orthodoxies. A poem by Clare Madge (see Case Study box opposite) urges geography to connect 'in here' rather than 'out there' by becoming a subject 'on my terms and in my terms'.

Her frustration with the subject is echoed in the book *Feminist Geographies* (Women and Geography Study Group, 1997) where the writing (usually by men) in geography is critiqued, but the problems of proposing alternative forms of writing (usually by women) are starkly acknowledged:

> Much academic writing . . . is characterized by a dispassionate, distant, disembodied narrative voice, one which is devoid of emotion and dislocated from the personal. In contrast to this, writing which is personal, emotional, angry or explicitly embodied is implicitly (and often explicitly) portrayed as its antithesis: something which (maybe) has a place in the world of fiction and/or creative writing, but which, quite definitely, is out of place in the academic world . . . to be masculine often means not to be emotional or passionate, not to be explicit about your values, your background, your own felt experiences. Feminist academics wishing to challenge those exclusions from the written voice of Geography find themselves in a dilemma, however, for if academic masculinity is dispassionately rational and neutral, writing which is overly emotional or explicitly coming from a particular personalized position is often dismissed as irrational, as too emotional, as too personal – as too feminine, in other words. Thus feminists who want to assert the importance of the emotional in their work, or feminists who want to acknowledge the personal particularities of their analysis, run the risk of being read as incapable of rational writing, of merely being emotional women whose work cannot be universally relevant.
> Women and Geography Study Group, 1997: 23)

It has therefore been important for Human Geographers not only to *theorize* the self in new ways, but also to position the self appropriately in the *practising* of Human Geography, such that knowledge is situated in the conscious and subconscious subjectivities of both the author/researcher and the subjects of writing and research. In terms of new ways of

CASE STUDY

Clare Madge: An Ode to Geography

Geography,
What are you?
What makes you?
Whose knowledge do you represent?
Whose 'reality' do you reflect?
Geography,
You are not just space 'out there'
To be explored, mined, colonised.
You are also space 'in here'
The space within and between
That binds and defines and differentiates us as people.
Geography,
I want you to become a subject
On my terms and in my terms,
Delighting and exploring
The subtleties and inconsistencies
Of the world in which we live.
The world of pale moonlight and swaying trees in a bluebell wood.
The world of sand and bone and purple terror.
The world of bright lights flying past factory, iron and engine.
The world of jasmine scents and delicate breeze.
The world of subversion, ambiguity and resistance.
The world of head proud, shoulders defiant under the gaze of cold eyes laying bare the insecurity underlying prejudice.
The world of music, laughter and light,
Of torment and exploding violence
Of tar and steel strewn with hate
While the moon gently observes and heals.
Geography, could you be my world?
Will you ever have the words, concepts and theories
To encapsulate
The precarious, exhilarating, exquisite, unequal world in which we live?
I believe so.
By looking within and without, upside down and inside out,
Come alive geography, come alive!

(Women and Geography Study Group, 1997)

theorizing the self, Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (1995) discuss four interconnected ideas that map out the territory of the human subject:

1. *The body*: orders our access to and mobility in spaces and places; interfaces with technology and machinery; encapsulates our experiences of the world around us; harbours unconscious desires, vulnerabilities, alienations and fragmented aspects of self, as well as expressions of sexuality and gender; and is a site of cultural consumption where choices of food and clothing and jewellery, for example, will inscribe meanings about the person.
2. *The self*: can be understood in a variety of ways, ranging from a personal identity formed by an ongoing series of experiences and relationships, but where there is no distinctive characteristic in these experiences and relationships to suppose an inner, fixed personality, to a personal identity in which self-awareness serves to characterize each experience as belonging to a distinct self.
3. *The person*: a description of the cultural framework of the self and allows for different selves in different frameworks. For example, if you were born and brought up in Rwanda, Albania or Cuba, your person would reflect the cultural frameworks of life in those places.
4. *Identity*: where the person is located within social structures with which they identify. Traditionally this would have been seen to involve rigid structures such as class and family, but more recently identities have tended to be constructed reflexively and therefore often flexibly leading to new identity issues – for example, focusing on alternative sexualities, ethnicities or resistance to local change.

The subject is therefore 'in some ways detachable, reversible and changeable', while in other ways it is 'fixed, solid and dependable'. It is certainly 'located in, with and by power, knowledge and social relationships' (1995: 12).

Some of these theoretical distinctions may at first be difficult to grasp, but they do serve to emphasize just how difficult it actually is to be reflexive about the self in our Human Geography. To what extent is it possible to know and to reflect on our selves, to appreciate fully how, precisely, the self is responsible for how we think, how our imaginations are prompted, how we interpret places, people and events, and so on? How much more difficult is it to understand the selves of others whom we might wish to study? These practices, which I have identified earlier as being important political and personal projects in Human Geography, are perhaps more difficult than they first appear. The multidimensionality of the body, the relationally dependent and often subconscious nature of the self, the culturally framed (and therefore flexible) person and the changeable and overlapping influences of identity render reflexivity a most complex, and some would say impossible, task. Indeed a whole new angle on Human Geography – **non-representational theory** (see Thrift, 2007; Anderson and Harrison, 2010a) has sprung up in which the focus has switched specifically to non-reflexive accounts of human being and becoming in which the instinctive, habitual and performative are emphasized.

Nevertheless, the breaking down of detached and personally irrelevant orthodoxies in Human Geography has remained a task that many continue to consider sufficiently worthwhile to warrant attempts to bring reflexivity into a prominent position in the practice of Human Geography. Three interconnected and often overlapping strategies are briefly outlined here. First, a strategy of **positionality** can be identified in which 'telling where you are coming from' can be employed tactically as a contextualization of

the interpretations that are to follow (see Browne *et al.,* 2010). Sometimes this involves the identification of key political aspects of the self, for example, a feminist positioning, which will self-evidently influence what occurs subsequently and which provides us with new positions from which to speak. On other occasions, particular spatial or social experiences will be described that are used to claim expertise or insight into particular situations. Take, for example, George Carney's autobiographical preface to *Baseball, Barns and Bluegrass*, his book on the geography of American folklife. Here, he describes his childhood in the foothills of the Ozarks, and how the folk knowledge accumulated during that time has been translated into a scholarly pursuit of cultural tactics of American folklife more generally. Not only does his folk heritage equip him for this work, but it also punctuates what he writes and how he writes it.

Second, a more radical strategy of **autoethnography** can be pursued involving different kinds of self-narrative that use the perspective of self-involvement to produce wider understandings of different kinds of social contexts. Autoethnography represents one significant way of both presenting the 'self to self', and presenting the 'self to others', and takes a number of forms (see Butz and Besio, 2009), including:

- analysing our own biographies in order to interrogate and illuminate wider phenomena
- reflective narratives on empirical or ethnographic encounters
- responses from subaltern groups to their representation by others
- 'indigenous' ethnographies from members of subordinated groups who take on academic positions from which to speak
- other forms of 'insider' research, often involving participant observation, witnessing and testimony (see Kindon, 2010; Dewsbury, 2009).

Autoethnography opens up intriguing possibilities for studying, for example, our gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, sense of place, and also our work, leisure, tourism and other activity geographies through the medium of our personal involvement. At the same time it is important to recognize the challenges inherent in these approaches, including: the difficulties of knowing the self well enough, especially given its dynamic and multi-faced nature; the risk of self-obsession and consequent failure to communicate with others; the dangers inherent in presenting what are perhaps sensitive self-narratives to others who may be in positions of power and/or judgement; and the problematic task of shaping our self-representations to different audiences. Butz and Besio (2009) argue that these challenges resonate with the need for what they call *autoethnographic sensibility*, involving efforts to:

- perceive ourselves as an inevitable part of what is being researched and signified
- understand research subjects as autoethnographers in their own right
- interconnect self-narratives with the contexts, narratives and voices of others in any particular network of social relations.

Even with autoethnography, then, there are strong arguments for including 'other' voices in our own stories.

A third strategy therefore is to acknowledge *intertextuality* in our practice of Human Geography, by finding ways of recognizing the significance of our selves as important influences that shape our geographies, while at the same time seeking to listen to other voices. The texts that result from such encounters are complex dialogues. The Human Geographer will shape the conversation, both by the

CASE STUDY

George Carney's autobiographical preface

The first eighteen years of my life were spent on a 320-acre farm in Deer Creek Township, Henry County, Missouri, some six miles south of Calhoun (population 350), ten miles northwest of Tightwad (population 50), and five miles west of Thrush (population 4). My parents, Josh and Aubertine, inherited the acreage and farmstead buildings from my grandpa and grandma Carney, who retired and moved to Calhoun. The eighty acres to the north of the farmstead consisted of hardwood timber (walnut, hickory, and oak), Minor Creek, which flowed in an easterly direction as a tributary to Tebo Creek, and some patches of grazing land. The remaining 240 acres, south of the farmstead, were relatively rich farmland where my Dad planted and harvested a variety of crops ranging from corn and soybeans to alfalfa and oats. Classified as a diversified farmer, he also raised beef and dairy cattle, hogs, sheep, and chickens. Thus, my roots lay in a rural, agrarian way of life in the foothills of the Ozarks.

My early years fit the description that is often used to define the *folk* – a rural people who live a simple way of life, largely unaffected by changes in society, and who retain traditional customs and beliefs developed within a strong family structure. I was experiencing the *folklife* of the Ozarks. Folklife includes objects that we can see and touch (tangible items), such as food (Mom's home-made yeast rolls) and buildings (Dad's smokehouse). It also consists of other traditions that we cannot see or touch (intangible elements), such as beliefs and customs (Grandpa Whitlow's chaw of tobacco poultice used to ease the pain of a honeybee sting). Both aspects of folklife, often referred to as material and nonmaterial culture, are learned orally as they are passed down from one generation to the next – such as Grandpa Carney teaching me to use a broad axe – or they may be learned from a friend or neighbor – for example, Everett Monday, a neighbor, instructing me on the techniques of playing a harmonica.

Through this oral process, I learned many of the traditional ways from the folk who surrounded my everyday life – parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, preachers, and merchants. The most vivid memories associated with my early life among the Ozark folk are the six folklife traits selected for this anthology – architecture, food and drink, religion, music, sports, and medicine.

Since leaving the Ozarks for the Oklahoma plains some thirty-five years ago, I have developed a greater awareness and deeper appreciation for American folklife and all its spatial manifestations. My teaching and research interests have been strongly influenced by those folk experiences of yesteryear. Students in my introductory culture geography classes are annually given a heavy dose of lectures and slides on the folklife traits covered in this reader. My research has increasingly focused on two of these traits – music and architecture. Clearly, my roots have made a lasting impression – one that I have converted into a scholarly pursuit.

(Carney, 1998: xv–xxii)

individuality of their own subject-experience and by the questions that are asked of the 'other'. In turn, other individuals will have different, changing and even competing experiences and will represent themselves differently to different people. The 'results' of the encounter will usually be 'interpreted' by the Human Geographer in the light of their self-positioning. This may involve a process of 'finding new places to speak from', and bringing them into the conversation, or it may involve a tactic of 'letting people speak for themselves' and seeking for a plurality of voices (a 'polyphony') to emerge. Interpretations are then usually written down, often using quoted extracts of other voices, but almost always with the author in control, exerting power over what is included and excluded, what is contextualized and how, and what storylines are used to shape the narrative of the 'findings'. In all these processes and practices, the need to recognize the interconnections between the powerful self and the 'subjected to' other is paramount.

The increasing use of ethnographic strategies and qualitative methods in Human Geography (see Cloke *et al.*, 2004; Crang and Cook, 2007) has certainly helped to provide research practices with which we can be more reflexive about our selves, and the relationships between our selves and others. In the end, however, we have to realize just how 'easy' it can become to think and write about ourselves, and how difficult it is to know enough about our selves to be reflexive in our geographies. Delvings into **psychoanalysis** (Sibley, 1995) have begun to help our understandings here but there still seems to be an inbuilt desire to empower the self over the other, however much a many-voiced, polyphonic geography is being aimed at. In the more general context of the problems in the world, such preoccupations with the self might be regarded as inappropriate, if not positively dangerous!

SUMMARY

- Reflexivity – reflecting on the self in relation to society and space – is an essential process in recognizing how our individualities contribute to all aspects of our practice of Human Geography. It also gives us grounds on which to challenge seemingly 'orthodox' geographies and to make our Human Geography more relevant to us and to others.
- The difficulties involved in understanding the self are often underestimated. The human subject is a complex mix of body, self, person and identity, and for some, spirit and soul will also be important considerations.
- There is an interconnected range of strategies by which the self can consciously be included in the practice of Human Geography.
- The dangers of exaggerating the self in our reading, thinking, researching and writing about Human Geography are very real and can divert us from important issues relating to others.

Sensing the other

John Paul Jones (2010, 43) argues that 'a central problem in social geography is how to sort out 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.' It is important, therefore, to take serious notice of different kinds of people who are situated in different kinds of spaces and places, and who experience, mould and negotiate these spaces and places in a different way to ourselves. This interest in the differences of the other has implications for the ways in which we conceptualize and practise our Human Geographies, and also for the ways in which these geographies are politicized. Dealing with the 'other' is of course linked to dealing with the 'self'. To reiterate, the arrogance of the self is often manifest in an assumption that others must see the world in the same way as we do. Alternatively, we will often place ourselves in the centre of some 'mainstream' identity that is defined not only around our self-characteristics but also in opposition to others who are not the same as us. Think, for example, about the way white people often assume that only 'non-white' people have an ethnicity and find their own whiteness unremarkable. As Chris Philo has suggested, then, we are often 'locked into the thought-prison of "the same"' (1997: 22), which makes it impossible for us to appreciate the workings of the other. Indeed we will often seek either to *incorporate* the other into our sameness, or to *exclude* the other from our sameness, in order to cope with the threat that difference seems to present to the perceived mainstream nature of our identity (see Sibley, 1995). Both incorporation and exclusion are highly political acts that trap the other in the logic of the same.

The interest in recognizing 'other' Human Geographies focuses attention not only on that which is remote to us, but also should make us rethink what is close to home. Two examples serve here to highlight some of the principal themes in the recognition of otherness in proximal and remote situations. The first relates to the neglect of 'other' geographies close to home and focuses on rural geographies (see Chapter 48), although the principles involved relate to a wide range of Human Geography contexts. Philo's (1992) review of 'other' rural geographies emphasized that most accounts of rural life have viewed the mainstream interconnections between culture and rurality through the lens of typically white, male, middle-class narratives:

> there remains a danger of portraying British rural people . . . as all being 'Mr Averages', as being men in employment, earning enough to live, white and probably English, straight and somehow without sexuality, able in body and sound in mind, and devoid of any other quirks of (say) religious belief or political affiliation.
>
> (Philo, 1992: 200)

Such a list is important in its highlighting of neglect for others, but also runs the risk of immediately producing a formulaic view of what is other. Thus, we can recognize that individuals and groups of people can be marginalized from a sense of belonging to, and in, the rural on the grounds of their gender, age, class, sexuality, disability, and so on. However, as David Bell and Gill Valentine (1995b) remind us, the mere listing of socio-cultural variables represents neither a commitment to deal seriously with the issues involved nor a complete sense of the *range* of other geographies. Indeed, our very recognition of *these others* serves to 'other' *different others* and exclude them from view.

A specific illustration within this rural context is offered in Figure 5.2, which presents a well-known self-portrait by the photographer Ingrid Pollard (see Kinsman, 1995). Her autobiographical notes suggest that the photograph is a self-aware comment on race, representation and the British landscape. She sets herself in the countryside, and through juxtaposing her identity as a 'black photographer' with the cultural construction of landscape and rurality as an idyll-ized space of white heartland, she graphically expresses a sense of her own unease, dread, non-belonging – of other. The black presence in 'our' green and pleasant land says much about whiteness = sameness in this content. However, as the Women and Geography Study Group (1997) point out, the otherness in this representation is by no means a unidimensional matter of race. They suggest that:

> Pollard is claiming a different position from which to look at and enjoy English landscapes (albeit an uneasy pleasure); a right to be there and a right to be represented and make representations. She challenges, disrupts and complicates the notion of a generalisable set of shared ideas about England and the implicitly white and masculinised position from which it is usually viewed.
>
> (1997: 185–6)

Ingrid Pollard the 'black *woman* photographer', then, exposes another critical edge of otherness in this content and clearly the multidimensional nature of identity is by no means exhausted by these labels. In our seemingly known worlds, therefore, we make assumptions about the nature of people and places; about who belongs where, and who doesn't fit into the sameness of our mainstream; about who, what, where and when is other.

The second illustration is even better known within Human Geography, having achieved

Figure 5.2 'Pastoral Interlude' (1988) '. . . it's as if the Black experience is only ever lived within the urban environment. I thought I liked the Lake District; where I wandered lonely as a Black face in a sea of white. A visit to the countryside is always accompanied by a feeling of unease; dread . . . feeling I don't belong. Walks through leafy glades with a baseball bat by my side . . .' Credit: Ingrid Pollard. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 5.3 A guard with a zither player in an interior, by Ludwig Deutsch (1855–1935). The illustration was used on the cover of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, 1995. Credit: Christie's Images/The Bridgeman Art Library

almost cult status in attempts to formulate post-colonial approaches to the subject. Edward Said is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in the USA. He is a Palestinian, born in Jerusalem and educated in Egypt and America, who is most famous for his analysis of the way the West imagines the Orient or East (including the Arabic Middle East) as different to itself (for a review of these and other 'imaginative geographies' see Chapter 16). In his classic book *Orientalism* (1978; 1995) Said traces how the Arab world has come to be imagined, represented and constructed in terms of its otherness to Europe:

> the French and the British – less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians and Swiss – have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling Orientalism, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilization and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other.
>
> (1995: 1)

Representations of the romantic, mystical Orient, he argues, act as a container for western desires and fantasies that cannot be accommodated within the boundaries of what is normal in the West. Yet at the same time, representations of the cruel, detached and money-grabbing nature of the Oriental Arab serve to underline the assumed hegemony of the West over political–economic and socio-cultural norms:

> Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilisation. Always there lurks the assumption that although the Western consumer belongs to a numerical minority, he is entitled either to own or to expend (or both) the majority of the world's resources . . . a white middle-class westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the non-white world but also to own it, just because by definition 'it' is not quite as human as 'we' are.
>
> (Said, 1995: 108)

Through the process of Orientalism, the societies and cultures concerned are marginalized, devalued and insulted, while the imperialism and moral superiority of the West

are legitimized. Said's contestation of the othering of Orientalism points the way for wide-ranging inquiry by Human Geographers into how different people and places are similarly othered. It also shows us that at the heart of what we take to be familiar, natural, at home, actually lurk all kinds of relations and positionings to that which is unfamiliar, strange and uncanny (Bernstein, 1992).

From these illustrations it becomes clear that whether otherness is close to home or positioned in some far-off exotic space, it is often difficult to detach ourselves, both conceptually and empirically from a frame of study that validates the self, the same and the familiar as waymarkers for the understanding of others. Two sets of issues arise from this conclusion. First, there is a need to think through much more deeply about what constitutes otherness in Human Geographical study, otherwise our main contribution may only be to further emphasize the othernesses that are *reinforced by* such study. At one level, this requires a grasp of the multidimensional nature of identity. As Mike Crang (1998a) puts it:

> very few people are the 'same' as others – everyone is different in some respects. The most we could say is that certain groups share certain things in common, so who is counted as part of a group or excluded from it will depend on which things are chosen as being significant . . . Belonging in a group depends on which of all the possible characteristics are chosen as 'defining' membership. The characteristics that have been treated as definitive vary over space and time with significant political consequences attached to deciding what defines belonging.
> (1998a: 60)

We need to recognize, therefore, that 'same' and 'other' identities are:

- Contingent – in that differences which define them are a part of an open and ongoing series of social processes.
- Differentiated – in that individuals and groups of people will occupy positions along many separate lines of difference at the same time
- Relational – in that the social construction of difference is always in terms of the presence of some opposing movement.

(Jones and Moss, 1995)

Even with greater sensitivity for other identities, we are usually still trapped in a concern for what Marcus Doel (1994) calls 'the Other of the Same' – that is, we translate othernesses into our language, our conceptual frameworks, our categories of thought, and thereby effectively obscure the other with the familiarities of the samenesses of our self. The real difficulty, then, is to find ways of accessing 'the Other of the Other' – that is, the unfamiliar, unexpected, unexplainable other that defies our predictive, analytical and interpretative powers and our socio-cultural positionings.

The second set of issues relates to the methods we employ in order to encounter 'others'. As with our self-reflections, the increasing use of **ethnographic** and qualitative methods is important to this project. However, researching the other through ethnography takes a long time. Drawing lessons from anthropology, we would have to conclude that to carry out appropriate studies of unknown peoples and worlds can take several years. Consider, for example, the account of French anthropologist Pierre Clastres (1998), who spent two years with so-called 'savage' tribes of Indians in Paraguay in the 1960s. He acknowledges that even 'being there' with his research subjects did not break down the very considerable barriers of communication and cross-referenced understanding, until

circumstances changed many months into his research. Even over this timescale it proved difficult to form a bridge between himself (and here we might wonder whether his concept of 'savages' got in the way of effective communication) and the mythologies, embodiments and social practices that lay at the heart of the very existence of the Guayaki Indians (see Case Study box).

CASE STUDY

Pierre Clastres: Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians

They really were savages, especially the *Iroiangi*. They had only been in contact with the white man's world for a few months, and that contact had for the most part been limited to dealings with one Paraguayan. What made them seem like savages? It was not the strangeness of their appearance – their nudity, the length of their hair, their necklaces of teeth – nor the chanting of the men at night, for I was charmed by all this; it was just what I had come for. What made them seem like savages was the difficulty I had in getting through to them: my timid and undoubtedly naive efforts to bridge the enormous gap I felt to exist between us were met by the Atchei with total, discouraging indifference, which made it seem impossible for us ever to understand one another. For example, I offered a machete to a man sitting under his shelter of palm leaves sharpening an arrow. He hardly raised his eyes; he took it calmly without showing the least surprise, examined the blade, felt the edge, which was rather dull since the tool was brand-new, and then laid it down beside him and went on with his work. There were other Indians nearby; no one said a word. Disappointed, almost irritated, I went away, and only then did I hear some brief murmuring: no doubt they were commenting on the present. It would certainly have been presumptuous of me to expect a bow in exchange, the recitation of a myth, or status as a relative! Several times I tried out the little Guayaki I knew on the Iroiangi. I had noticed that, although their language was the same as that of the Atchei Gatu, they spoke it differently: their delivery seemed much faster, and their consonants tended to disappear in the flow of the vowels, so that I could not recognize even the words I knew – I therefore did not understand much of what they said.

Figure 5.4 Jyvukugi, chief of the Atchei Gatu. Credit: Pierre Clastres

But it also seemed to me that they were intentionally disagreeable. For example, I

asked a young man a question that I knew was not indiscreet, since the Atchei Gatu had already answered it freely: '*Ava ro nde apa?* Who is your father?' He looked at me. He could not have been amazed by the absurdity of the question, and he must have understood me (I had been careful to articulate clearly and slowly). He simply looked at me with a slightly bored expression and did not answer. I wanted to be sure I had pronounced everything correctly. I ran off to look for an Atchei Gatu and asked him to repeat the question; he formulated it exactly the way I had a few minutes earlier, and yet the *Iroiangi* answered him. What could I do? Then I remembered what Alfred Métraux had said to me not long before: 'For us to be able to study a primitive society, it must already be starting to disintegrate.'

I was faced with a society that was still green, so to speak, at least in the case of the *Iroiangi*, even though circumstances had obliged the tribe to live in a 'Western' area (but in some sense, wasn't their recent move to Arroyo Moroti more a result of a voluntary collective decision than a reaction to intolerable outside pressure?). Hardly touched, hardly contaminated by the breezes of our civilization – which were fatal for them – the Atchei could keep the freshness and tranquillity of their life in the forest intact: this freedom was temporary and doomed not to last much longer, but it was quite sufficient for the moment; it had not been damaged, and so the Atchei's culture would not insidiously and rapidly decompose. The society of the Atchei *Iroiangi* was so healthy that it could not enter into a dialogue with me, with another world. And for this reason the Atchei accepted gifts that they had not asked for and rejected my attempts at conversation because they were strong enough not to need it: we would begin to talk only when they became sick.

Old Paivagi died in June 1963; he certainly believed that he had no more reason to remain in the world of the living. In any case, he was the oldest of the Atchei Gatu, and because of his age (he must have been over seventy) I was often eager to ask him about the past. He was usually quite willing to engage in these conversations but only for short periods, after which he would grow tired and shut himself up in his thoughts again. One evening when he was getting ready to go to sleep beside his fire, I went and sat down next to him. Evidently he did not welcome my visit at all, because he murmured softly and unanswerably: 'Cho ro tuja praru. Nde ro mita kyri wyte. I am a weak old man. You are still a soft head, you are still a baby.' He had said enough; I left Paivagi to poke his fire and went back to my own, somewhat upset, as one always is when faced with the truth.

This was what made the Atchei savages: their savagery was formed of silence; it was a distressing sign of their last freedom, and I too wanted to deprive them of it. I had to bargain with death; with patience and cunning, using a little bribery (offers of presents and food, all sorts of friendly gestures, and gentle, even unctuous language), I had to break through the Strangers' passive resistance, interfere with their freedom, and make them talk. It took me about five months to do it, with the help of the Atchei Gatu.

We need to acknowledge just how difficult it is to form a bridge between ourselves and the complicated essential existences of others, whether far off or close to home. It can be argued that the pressure to publish in the contemporary academy has run the risk of too many 'quickie' ethnographies of othered subjects. As with the Guayaki, an appreciation of the other geographies and experiences of, say, homeless people in a city like Bristol require long-term commitment rather than brief encounters. Only by reconceptualizing otherness, and reviewing the quality of our encounters with it, are Human Geographers likely to become any more attuned to a sense for the other and a sense of the other as suggested by Augé at the beginning of this chapter.

SUMMARY

- Sensing the other is inextricably linked with understanding the self. By assuming that others are somehow the same as us, we can be locked into the 'thought prison' of the same, which makes it impossible to sense the other appropriately.
- Geographies of other people and places can be close to home or in far-off exotic worlds. In either case, Human Geographers should see themselves as observers who are situated *within* the objects and worlds of their observation.
- At the heart of what we take to be familiar, natural and belonging lurk all kinds of relations and positionings with that other that is unfamiliar, strange and uncanny.
- There is a need to think through much more deeply what constitutes otherness in Human Geography. It is usually very difficult to bridge over between self and other.
- There is also a need to avoid methodological shortcuts in encounters with others.

Conclusion

This discussion of the interconnections of self and other raises a number of important issues about our Human Geographies. First, there is the risk that in acknowledging our selves in our work, we become too self-centred and too little concerned with political and other priorities in the world around us. Second, there is the potential for losing our sense of otherness. Third, there is the conceptual and methodological complexity involved in encountering the other of the same, let alone the other of the other. Finally, there a concern over the way in which we can sometimes privilege certain kinds of otherness without giving due attention to the need for sustained, empathetic and contextualized research under appropriate ethical conditions. There can be a tendency to 'flit in and flit out' of intellectually groovy subjects, with the danger that research becomes mere tourism or voyeurism of the subjects concerned.

When we have negotiated these tricky questions, there is one further important issue of self–other interrelations to resolve. In the words of Derek Gregory, 'By what right and on whose authority does one claim to speak for those "others"? On whose terms is a space

Figure 5.5
The power to exclude when engaging in touristic or voyeuristic geographies. Credit: Mikkel Ostergaard/ Panos Pictures

created in which "they" are called upon to speak? How are they (and we) interpellated?' (1994: 205).

In seeking to encounter the stories of other people and worlds, is it inevitable that we become mere tourists, burdened by the authority of our selves and the power of our authorship? Or are there ways in which we can be sufficiently sensitive about the positionality and intertextuality of our authorship that we can legitimately seek to understand and write about the stories of others, without polluting them with our voyeuristic or touristic tendencies, the exclusionary power of which are so graphically illustrated in Figure 5.5? I believe that in this we can learn much from Gregory's emphatic and optimistic answer:

> Most of us have not been very good at listening to others and learning from them, but the present challenge is surely to find ways of comprehending those other worlds – including our relations with them and our responsibilities toward them – without being invasive, colonizing and violent . . . we need to learn how to reach beyond particularities, to speak of larger questions without diminishing the significance of the places and the people to which they are accountable. In so doing, in enlarging and examining our geographical imaginations, we might come to realise not only that our lives are 'radically entwined with the lives of distant strangers' but also that we bear a continuing and unavoidable responsibility for their needs in times of distress more.
>
> (Gregory, 1994: 205)

In this agenda lies a pathway towards more sensitive and meaningful engagements of self and other in Human Geography.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. What aspects of your self are significant in shaping *your* Human Geography? How do you know?
2. To what extent does non-representational theory involve a complete rethink of the self?
3. How is it possible for researchers to represent the other when they are 'so thoroughly saturated with the ideological baggage of their own culture' (Ley and Mountz, 2001)?
4. To what extent is the distinction between *the* self and *the* other crude and oversimplified, given that identity is 'always stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another to see together without claiming to be another' (Haraway, 1996)?
5. What evidence do you see in contemporary Human Geography of an emotional, connected and committed sense of the other?

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