Cultural geography. Different encounters, encountering difference

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Abstract

In the first half of this paper it is argued that cultural geography is a dynamic and diverse field that extends well beyond a single branch of human geography. The boundaries between it and other sub-disciplines are often blurred. People have «different» encounters with cultural geography depending on their sub-disciplinary convergences. People also have different encounters with cultural geography depending on where they live and work. «Place matters» in the construction, production and representation of cultural geography. It takes different forms in different places. In the second half of the paper it is argued that as cultural geography continues to encounter «difference» in many guises, four possible future trends are likely: first, it is probable that there will be continued growth in cultural geography; second, there may be mounting recognition that cultural geography needs to be critical offering possibilities for radical critique and reflection; third, cultural geographers are likely to continue with their efforts to think about what, if anything, might lie beyond representation; and finally, cultural geographers are likely to deepen their reflections on the politics of knowledge production leading to more multi-language publishing practices in this area.

Key words: bodies, critical approach, cultural geography, emotions, place.

Resum. *Geografia cultural. Trobades diferents, trobant la diferència*

A la primera part d'aquest article, s'hi defensa que la geografia cultural és un camp prou dinàmic i divers com per ser considerat una simple branca de la geografia humana. Els límits entre aquesta subdisciplina i d'altres són sovint difícils de discernir. Hi ha tantes visions de la geografia cultural com subdisciplines a partir de les quals s'hi convergeix. També hi ha tantes aproximacions possibles a la geografia cultural com llocs on es viu o es treballa. En la construcció, producció i representació de la geografia cultural, el lloc hi és important, ja que la geografia cultural adquireix formes diferents en llocs diferents. En la segona meitat de l'article, s'hi argumenta que, mentre la geografia cultural continua presentant moltes diferències en facetes distintes, s'hi aventuren quatre possibles tendències futures. En primer lloc, és probable que continuï l'expansió de la geografia cultural; en segon lloc, existeix un reconeixement creixent que la geografia cultural necessita ser crítica i oferir, així, possibilitats per a la crítica i la reflexió radicals; en tercer lloc, és probable que els geògrafs culturals continuïn esforçant-se a esbrinar què hi ha més enllà de la representació si és que hi ha res. Finalment, és probable que els geògrafs culturals aprofundeixin

les seves reflexions sobre la política de producció de coneixement que porti a una diversitat lingüística més gran en les publicacions d'aquesta àrea.

Paraules clau: cossos, enfocament crític, geografia cultural, emocions, lloc.

Resumen. *Geografía cultural. Encuentros diferentes, encontrando la diferencia*

En la primera parte de este artículo, se defiende que la geografía cultural es lo suficientemente dinámica y diversa como para no ser considerada una simple rama de la geografía humana. Los límites entre ésta y otras subdisciplinas son a menudo difíciles de discernir. Existen tantas visiones de la geografía cultural como subdisciplinas a partir de las cuales nos aproximamos a ella. También existen tantas visiones de la geografía cultural como lugares de residencia o de trabajo. En la construcción, la producción y la representación de la geografía cultural, el lugar es importante, ya que la geografía cultural toma formas distintas en lugares diferentes. En la segunda parte del artículo, se argumenta que, mientras la geografía cultural continúa presentando muchas diferencias en distintas facetas, se entrevén cuatro posibles tendencias futuras. En primer lugar, es probable que continúe la expansión de la geografía cultural; en segundo lugar, existe un reconocimiento creciente del hecho que la geografía cultural necesita ser crítica y ofrecer así posibilidades para la crítica y la reflexión radical; en tercer lugar, es probable que los geógrafos culturales continúen esforzándose en averiguar qué hay más allá de la representación, si es que hay alguna cosa, y, finalmente, es probable que los geógrafos culturales amplíen sus reflexiones sobre la política de producción de conocimientos, lo cual puede comportar una mayor diversidad lingüística en las publicaciones de esta área.

Palabras clave: cuerpos, enfoque crítico, geografía cultural, emociones, lugar.

Résumé. *Géographie culturelle. Rencontres différents, trouvant des différences*

Dans la première moitié de cet article on constate que la géographie culturelle est un terrain d'étude si dynamique et divers et qu'elle ne peut pas être comprise simplement comme une branche de la géographie humaine. Les limites entre la géogrpahie culturelle et d'autres subdisciplines sont souvent difficiles d'écarter. Il y a autant de visions de la géographie culturelle comme subdisciplines prochaines. Aussi, existent autant de visions de la géographie culturelle comme des espaces de résidence ou travail. Dans le processus de construction, production et représentation de géographie culturelle, le lieu est important parce que la géographie culturelle prend des formes différentes dans les lieux différents. Dans la deuxième moitié de l'article on dit que comme la géographie culturelle continue à rencontrer beaucoup de différences en relation à des aspects différents, quatre tendances futures possibles sont possibles. D'abord, c'est probable qu'elle continue en avant; en deuxième partie, il y a une reconnaissance que la géographie culturelle a besoin d'être critique et offrir des possibilités à la critique et la réflexion radical; en troisième partie, des géographes culturels continuent avec leurs efforts de penser à propos de qu'est-ce qu'il y a au-delà de la représentation (s'il y a quelque chose); et, finalement, les géographes culturels ont des chances d'approfondir leurs réflexions sur la politique de la production de connaissance conduisant à plus de pratiques de publication multi langue dans cette branche géographique.

Mots clé: corps, approche critique, géographie culturelle, émotions, place.

Summary

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Introduction

The discipline of geography has long maintained a focus on and engagement with culture and cultural landscapes. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that cultural geography, or cultural geograph*ies* (pluralizing the term may reflect more aptly the wideness and diversity of the field —see Atkinson *et al.* 2005, XII) extend well beyond a single branch of human geography. The boundaries between cultural geography and other sub-disciplines are often blurred. For example, my approach to cultural geography has always been filtered through my engagement with feminist and social geography. These days, however, social geographical research is often carried out under the banner of cultural geography (Del Casino and Marston 2006, p. 996; also see Valentine, 2001). Vincent Del Casino and Sallie Marston (2006, 1001) note that in the United States «[c]ultural theoretical approaches have become central to the way that geographers analyze the "social"». This merging of ideas across fields means that encounters with cultural geography differ depending on one's relationships with other sub-disciplinary areas. Needless to say, cultural geography also shares territory with a range of other disciplines *outside* of geography such as cultural studies, communication and media studies, ethnic studies, postcolonial studies, and history.

Encounters with cultural geography also differ depending on where one lives and works. «Place matters» (Monk, 1994) in the construction, production and representation of geography. In 2003 the journal *Social & Cultural Geography* (edited by Rob Kitchin, Michael Brown, Lily Kong and Gill Valentine) began publishing a new regular section titled «Country reports» (see Kitchin, 2003a; for examples of these reports see Dowling (2005) on Australia, Dodman (2007) on the Carribean, Hsin-Ling *et al.* (2006) on Taiwan, Lineham and Ní Laoire (2006) on Ireland, and Paasi (2005a) on Finland). The aim of the «Country reports» is two-fold. First, to provide a forum in which social and cultural geographers from different parts of the globe can share knowledge. Second, to disrupt the dominant trend towards English-language and Anglo-American hegemony in the international production of geographical knowledge (Gutiérrez and López-Nieva, 2001; Kitchen, 2003b). The reports are an attempt to acknowledge and value the myriad of ways in which social and cultural geography is constructed around the world. Anglo-American ways of knowing, interpreting and writing are clearly not the only ways. Clearly «different» people in «different» countries have «different» encounters with cultural geography.

This paper engages with these different encounters with cultural geography and with cultural geography's encounters with difference. It is divided

into two main parts. The first part addresses the question «what is cultural geography?» (sometimes seemingly simple questions such as this are the most difficult to answer). In addressing this question it is necessary to consider the ways in which cultural geography varies from place to place. The second part of the paper addresses the question «where to from here for cultural geography?». This is always a difficult question to answer but I think there are a number of trends that seem likely to continue and some new directions that might be taken in the future that are worthy of discussion.

What is cultural geography?

Despite reading and publishing in cultural geography for more than a decade I'm still not sure exactly what it is. This uncertainty does not stem from a lack of information on the topic. Over the past few decades there have been enough journals, articles, authored books, edited books, textbooks and dictionaries written on culture (e.g. Williams, 1976) and on cultural geography (e.g. Anderson and Gale, 1992; Foote *et al.*, 1994; Jackson, 1989; Mitchell, 1995 and 2000; Sauer, 1962; Stratford, 1999) to fill many libraries (in the US and UK at least). Many of these texts focus on what cultural geography is, how it ought to be thought about, and how it ought to be carried out. Rather, my uncertainty about what cultural geography is stems from a sense that formal definitions have a way of leading to «problems of closure and exclusion» (Atkinson *et al.*, 2005, p. VIII). I am cognizant of a point made by Mike Crang (1998, p. 1) that «Defining the word *culture* is a complex and difficult task which has produced a range of very different definitions» (italics in original). Crang continues that maybe it is easier to actually define and grasp the term «cultural geography» than it is to define and grasp each of its constituent parts. This is because culture «can only be approached as embedded in real-life situations, in temporally and spatially specific ways» (Crang, 1998, p. 1).

This view is shared by Kay Anderson, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (2003) in the *Handbook of Cultural Geography* (a 580 page edited collection that presents the work of more than 50 authors). Anderson *et al.* (2003, p. 2) explain «Cultural geography is a *living* tradition of disagreements, passions, commitments and enthusiasm» (my emphasis). They claim that cultural geography does not have clearly defined boundaries and it has not carefully marked out a fixed terrain for itself over the decades. Anderson *et al.* (2003, p. 2) suggest cultural geography is much more «a series of intellectual —and, at core, politicized— engagements with the world». In the introduction to *Handbook of Cultural Geography* they point out that it soon became clear to them that it is very difficult to delineate «the field» of cultural geography. Anderson *et al.* (2003, p. XVIII) argue:

> Indeed, if there is one thing about cultural geography that we know for sure, it is that it is not a field. As we debated this «broader» problem, it became clear to us that the field of cultural geography was better marked both by its dis-

ruption of the usual academic boundaries and by its insatiable enthusiasm for engaging new issues and ideas —whatever their source.

Consequently Anderson *et al.* (2003, p. 2) do not provide a history of cultural geography as though it were «a character in an academic drama». They do not present a seamless story of key foundational figures and iconic texts that mark the discipline's journey. Instead they offer multiple stories about a range of different figures and texts that make up the contested terrain of cultural geography. Cultural geography varies hugely over time and space which no doubt contributes to making it so interesting but also so difficult to define.

Pamela Shurmer-Smith (2002, p. 3) in introducing her edited collection *Doing Cultural Geography* argues cultural geography is concerned with «the ways in which space, place and the environment participate in an unfolding dialogue of meaning». Alison Blunt, Pyrs Gruffudd, Jon May, Miles Ogborn and David Pinder (2003, 2) in another edited collection *Cultural Geography in Practice* understand cultural geography as being «a very broad and diverse field with a whole series of connections to other ways of understanding "culture"».

Given these definitions it is unsurprising that the topics covered under the label «cultural geography» are wide-ranging. A small sample of topics mentioned on the back covers of some of the books on cultural geography currently sitting on my desk include the roles of states, empires and nations, corporations and the city, shops and goods, literature, music and film (Crang, 1998), the body, national identity, empire and marginality (Blunt *et al.*, 2003), the streets, back yards, out bush in the wilderness (Stratford, 1999), and landscapes and «culture wars» (such as a struggle over public art in Denver) (Mitchell, 2000). Questions about the politics of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and nationality in a myriad of spaces such as the street, home, sports field, and shopping mall are pertinent to many cultural geographers. Given the breadth of topics, theories and methodologies employed under the label cultural geography it seems that «any single or univocal definition of "cultural geography" would be misleading» (Johnston *et al.*, 2000, p. 134; for debate over cultural geography's scope and methods see Foote *et al.*, 1994).

While in recent years cultural geography has prospered in many parts of the Anglo-American world this is not the case everywhere. Gill Valentine (2001, p. 166) notes in an article titled «Whatever happened to the social? Reflections on the "cultural turn" in British human geography» that she is telling «a very specific story about this particular tradition, which does not necessarily resonate with the development of human geography in other parts of the world where cultural geography has had a different tradition and a different trajectory».

As most readers of *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* will be aware, cultural geography to date has received next to no attention in Spain (García-Ramón *et al.*, 2003). Maria Dolors García-Ramón, Abel Albet and Perla Zusman (2003, p. 419) note that not «a single reflection or elegy has been devoted» to cultural geography. Social geography has faired a little better but it is still not

a field that geographers in Spain (for a variety of reasons) have been interested in developing either theoretically or empirically. García-Ramón *et al.* (2003) argue geographers in Spain, even if their work is socio-cultural in its orientation, tend not to identify as social or cultural geographers. «Social geography and cultural geography *per se* are almost totally absent from Spanish university curricula» (García-Ramón *et al.*, 2003, p. 420). This is not to say that there is no socio-cultural geographical work being carried out in Spain but rather that it tends to be carried out under other labels, in particular «geographical thought», «gender geography», and «the city».

In my own country, Aotearoa New Zealand, the situation is somewhat similar to that in Spain in that there are a number of geographers who do not represent themselves as cultural or social geographers even though their research contributes to this sub-disciplinary area. Robin Kearns and Ruth Panelli (2006) argue that in New Zealand much socio-cultural work is published in research streams such as «population movement and urban change», «services and social inequalities», «rural geographies», «embodiment» and «Maori geographies». Kearns and Panelli (2006, p. 325) claim there is «evidence of a maturing of socio-cultural geography embedded in New Zealand universities illustrated in recent publication of texts which incorporate local examples». Many of the themes of Anglo-American social and cultural geography resonate in New Zealand geography but they are not the only drivers. Kearns and Panelli (2006, p. 325) state that New Zealand social and cultural geographies have been strongly infused by critical perspectives and as is the case with Spanish geography (see García-Ramón *et al.*, 2003) «feminist approaches have been especially important for invigorating social and cultural analyses».

Australia, on the other hand, has a strong tradition of cultural geography. The Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) has an active Cultural Geography Study Group (see IAG Cultural Geography Study Group, *http://www.iag.org.au/cultstudy.html*, accessed 29 June 2007; Mee and Waitt, 2003) and in recent years several books have been published that focus entirely on Australian cultural geographies and landscapes (Stratford, 1999; Winchester *et al.*, 2003). Kathleen Mee and Gordon Waitt introduce a special edition of *Social and Cultural Geography* on «Culture Matters» in which the articles stem from a meeting of the Cultural Geography Study Group of the IAG held at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

It is not possible to comment on all the «Country reports» that have to date been published in *Social and Cultural Geography* because by now there are now quite a number of them including reports from Australia, Brazil, Britain, (Anglophone) Caribbean, Canada and Québec, Denmark, Estonai, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South East Asia, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, and the United States. Many of the reports function at two levels. First, they provide an account of social and cultural issues in the country under consideration. Second, they provide information on the state of the art of the discipline of cultural geography in the country concerned.

As a whole the reports illustrate the huge variation in cultural geography across globe. Language is an important issue raised by many of the commentators. For example, Roberto Lobato Corrêa and Zeny Rosedahl in their discussion of «Brazilian studies in cultural geography» explain that some cultural geography texts have been translated into the Portugese language whereas others have not. This makes a profound difference to the «development» of an area of study. García-Ramón *et al.* (2003) also mention the importance of translation. They provide an example of a text by Milton Santos titled *Por una geografía nueva* (1990) being translated from Portuguese to Spanish. This influenced how some geographers conceived the relationship between time and space.

Social and Cultural Geography publish «Country reports» in both English and in the country's national language in order to the challenge the linguistic hegemony of English. Sometimes the decision of what «second» language to publish the report in is complex. For example, in the «Country report» on South Africa, Jane Battersby (2004, p. 155) explains:

> South Africa has eleven official languages [...] Afrikaans would be the obvious choice for the second language of publication [...] However, this relative dominance of Afrikaans is a result of apartheid (and colonial) language strategies, which promoted the language and devalued black languages. This is the legacy we are attempting to overcome.

Understandably, in this instance the report was published in English only.

To conclude the first part of the paper, it has been established that cultural geography is difficult to define mainly because it is a living, lively and complex «field» (if one can even call it a field —see Anderson *et al.*, 2003, p. 2) that insects with so many other fields in human geography and beyond. It's also been established that cultural geography is not the same everywhere and therefore over the next few years it will undoubtedly unfold differently in different spaces. In general though there are some interesting possible trends worth noting. In the second part of the paper I turn attention to the question «where to from here for cultural geography?» This question is difficult to answer but as I indicated earlier I think there a couple of trends that seem likely to continue and some new directions that might be taken in the future which are worth discussing.

Where to from here for cultural geography?

The first trend that I think is set to continue over the next few years is growth in cultural geography. During the past few decades it has carved out important territory in the discipline and I think this will continue for a few years to come. Consider, for example, the success the journal *Social & Cultural Geography*. This journal, which began publication in 2000, concerns itself with the «spatialities of society and culture, particularly the role of space, place and cul-

ture in relation to social issues, cultural politics, aspects of daily life, cultural commodities, consumption, identity and community, and historical legacies» (front cover *Social & Cultural Geography*). In 2005, five years after *Social & Cultural Geography* began publishing, it was ranked for the first time by Thomson Scientific (formerly ISI —Institute of Scientific Information) Journal Citation Reports. Journals cannot be ranked immediately because data needs to be collected over a period of years. It came in at 7th out of a total of 38 geography journals. Whilst the weaknesses of citation and impact factor indexes are acknowledged (see Yeung 2001 and 2002) this is still a remarkable result for a «new» journal. Clearly social and cultural geography, in general, occupies a strong position in the discipline of geography.

The journal *Cultural Geographies* (formerly *Ecumene*, edited by Philip Crang and Mona Domosh) also ranked highly in the Thomson Scientific Journal Citation Reports coming in 10th out of 38 geography journals and 4th out of 51 Environmental Studies journals. *Cultural Geographies* aims to publish:

> […] scholarly research and informed commentaries on the cultural appropriation and politics of nature, environment, place, and space. It welcomes contributions from the growing numbers of scholars and practitioners across the arts, humanities and social and environmental sciences who are interested in these cultural geographies. (*Cultural Geographies*, available *http://cgj.sagepub.com/*, accessed 21 August 2007)

Blunt *et al.* (2003, 3) sum it up when they say «What is certain is that cultural geography is becoming more and more popular. There are more and more courses put on to introduce students to it. There are more and more books devoted to explaining what it is and how it should be thought about».

The second trend that I think might continue in cultural geography over the next few years, and one that I personally welcome, is that it will become increasingly «critical». David Aitkinson, Peter Jackson, David Sibley and Neil Washbourne (2005, p. VIII) argue «Given the ways that power is embedded throughout society, we suggest that, in their theoretical articulation and in their engagement with social relations and questions of human well-being, cultural geographies —above all else— must be *critical*» (italics in original). Aitkinson *et al.* use the term «critical» in two senses, that is, to refer to that which is fundamentally important and to the notion of critique. I concur that cultural geography needs to be critical, that is, it needs to carry a political imperative, to recognize the materiality of people and places, and to acknowledge the politics of knowledge production. Cultural geography is about the multiple and complex ways in which spatial and cultural relations are mutually constituted, it is about meaning, it is about «things», it is about the way individuals and groups live their lives and what they do. Therefore, cultural geography is about *power*. Given this it is unsurprising that cultural geographers often focus on various axes of identity such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class and religion. These axes of identity are inevitably linked to power relations

and to issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia and elitism. These politics are both reflected and reinforced in space and place.

Over the past decade cultural geographers have increasingly begun to put power relations at the centre of their analyses. In the 1970s and 1980s «radical geographers» inspired by political and social movements such as Marxism, anarchism, feminism and environmentalism offered profound critiques of political issues of the time. Cultural geographers seemed slower to question the structure of society. When I started researching sexual violence in the mid 1980s and pregnancy in the early 1990s at the Department of Geography at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand I did *not* identify as a cultural geography. I was interested in the culture of sexual violence and then of pregnancy but I did not see myself as a cultural geographer. I identified as a feminist geographer who was interested in bodies, emotions, and everyday experiences. To me this didn't seem to be the «stuff» of cultural geography or even of the emerging «new» cultural geography. Cultural geography, as I understood it in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was something for scholars engaged in work on landscapes, texts, metaphor, representation, symbols, and meanings (see Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Duncan and Ley, 1993). I too was interested in these things but I also wanted to talk about power relations, the production of knowledge, and the messy materiality of bodies (including sexual difference, abjection, and bodily fluids) (e.g. Longhurst, 1995, 1999). Cultural geography did not seem to offer a discursive space in which this was possible.

Over the intervening fifteen to twenty years, however, things have changed (see Atkinson *et al.* 2005 on critical cultural geographies and Anderson *et al.* 2003 as an example of the breadth of critical work carried out under the label «cultural geographies»). As the wider political context changed and the «cultural turn» in geography progressed (see Johnston *et al.*, 2000, p. 141-43) questions about cultural processes figured more and more prominently on a range of geographers' research agendas. At some point it became possible (and even desirable) to talk more explicitly about power relations, the production of knowledge, materiality, and more recently, emotions. I became increasingly interested in what cultural geography had to offer me and what I might have to offer cultural geography.

This leads to a third possible trend in cultural geography. For a number of years now «nonrepresentational theory» or NRT has been a corner-stone of much cultural geography. The term «nonrepresentational theory» was coined by Nigel Thrift in *Spatial Formations* (1996) (also see Thrift 1997, 2007) and tends to be used as an umbrella term that covers a broad array of work that aims to shift geography's emphasis away from representation and on to practice or performativity in a manner that emphasizes flows and relationships. In a report on cultural geography in *Progress in Human Geography* Hayden Lorimer (2005, p. 84) makes an argument for replacing the term non-representational geography with «more-than-representational» geography. Lorimer (2005, p. 84) argues that the «teleology of the original "non-" title» has proven to hin-

der understanding of non-representational-theory and geography and he prefers instead to think of «more-than-representational» geography. Lorimer (2005, p. 84) refers to geographies that are concerned with

> […] how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, every-day routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive trig-gers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional inter-actions and sensuous dispositions.

I like the idea of a more-than-representational cultural geography. In Lorimer's (2007, p. 96) «Progress Report» he extends this idea arguing «anoth-er order of abstract descriptors» including «instincts, events, auras, rhythms, cycles, flows and codes» have been added to the «more traditional signifiers of identity and difference (class, gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, disability)». Lorimer (2007, p. 96) reads this shift as an openness to accommodate new versions of «sociomaterial and socionatural assemblages, and thus exceed pure-ly human versions of subjectivity and spatiality».

Eric Laurier and Chris Philo (2006) also point to what they call «a gathering hesitation about human geography's representational focus». Although they acknowledge that there are things that they value about non-representational theory (such as it positively challenged them to recast aspects of their research) they also question the limits of representation. Laurier and Philo (2006, p. 354) pose that «there are things that we (humans) can feel, sense, and express that are unspeakable, unsayable and unwriteable. Dance, tears, shock, touch, faces, gestures and more that are indeed aporias, puzzling and yet fundamen-tal to life».

Maybe over the next few years we will see more and more of our «lived experience», our own and our research subjects', make its way into cultural geography. The sensuality, fleshiness and fluidity of bodies, our routines and encounters with others, and our emotions, I hope will increasingly make their way on to cultural geographers' research agendas. This move is being prompt-ed, in part, by developments in other sub-disciplinary areas such as feminist geography and emotional geography. For more than ten years now a number of feminist geographers have critically deployed the concept of performativi-ty (Butler, 1990) in ways that illustrate that lived subjects cannot be extracted from space or time (see Bankey, 2001 and Davidson, 2000 on agoraphobia as examples or work that blend bodies and spaces).

More recently geographers interested in emotion have begun to argue that in order to understand how «lives are lived and societies made» (Anderson and Smith, 2001, p. 7) we need to consider emotions (Davidson, Bondi and Smith, 2005). This emerging interest in emotional and affective geographies (see Tolia-Kelly, 2006) has brought an increased recognition that bodies are lived and experienced through emotions (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bennett, 2004; Laurier and Parr, 2000; Widdowfield, 2000). Our «most immediate and intimately *felt* geography is the body, the site of emotional experience and

expression *par excellence*» (Davidson and Milligan, 2004, p. 524, italics in original). Emotions are not just tied to individual bodies, they are also inseparable from wider structures and processes (Bondi, 2005; Thein, 2005). Many cultural geographers are now beginning to pay attention of this work. Liz Bondi (2005, p. 433) offers a word of caution though. She says that although geographers are now beginning to include emotions in their work it's often in ways that allow the discipline to proceed «as normal». Bondi (2005, p. 433) raises an important point: «emotions and emotional life might be too safely contained within, and too severely limited by, conceptual framings that evacuate the radical potential of this new work».

A fourth and final point about the future of cultural geography is that with the publication of «Country reports» in *Social & Cultural Geography* I am hopeful that there might be some destabilization of Anglo-American cultural geography. Opening up cultural geography to authors beyond the English-speaking world opens up opportunities for new ways of «doing» cultural geography (see Aalbers and Rossi, 2007 on «multi-tier publishing spaces in European human geography»). As Kitchin (2003a, p. 523) notes it is not a matter of bringing the work of «geographers at the margins» to geographers at the «Anglo-American centre» so that their ideas can be taken and plundered. Nor is a matter of bringing non-Anglo-American geographers into what remains a largely untouched Anglo-American body of cultural geographical work in order to co-opt «others» into Anglo-American ways of knowing. Rather, as García-Ramón *et al.* (2003) argue in relation to Spain, it is about combining a rich tradition of empirical study with «original theoretical reflection». They argue that cultural and social geography in Spain must be «built upon our own needs and concerns» and that it «should provide Spanish geography with the specificity and potential to contribute to the traditions being developed in the international framework» (García-Ramón, 2003, p. 424). It is my hope that more of this kind of work will emerge in the future contributing to a rich international dialogue amongst cultural geographers and others from all over the world.

It may be that there is a touch of naivety in my comments. Kirsten Simonsen (2003, p. 255) argues that while she welcomes *Social & Cultural Geography's* initiative to add a «Country report» section the strategy risks casting the authors as unproblematized interpreters who «by way of a dual and ambiguous position between discourses —mediates the otherwise unknown and inaccessible "other" to the powerful inhabitants of the "centre"». This is a perceptive and useful point, nevertheless, it is evident that publishing practices in the academy need to become increasingly multi-lingual in order to subvert the hegemony of the Anglo-American English speaking and writing world (García-Ramón, 2003; Kitchin, 2003b; Paasi, 2005a and 2005b) and that a start must be made somewhere.

Conclusion

Cultural geography is a contested and exciting sub-discipline within human geography. While it might be difficult and not all that useful to define culture and cultural geography it is certainly not difficult to find examples of rich cultural geographical research (e.g. Atkinson *et al.*, 2005; Anderson, 1995; Anderson *et al.*, 2003; Anderson and Gale, 1992; Blunt *et al.*, 2003; Crang, 1998; Mitchell, 2000; Oakes and Price, forthcoming; Parr, 2003; Winchester *et al.*, 2003). Cultural geography overlaps with many other sub-disciplines within geography. Many of it topics, theories and methodologies are also of concern to critical, social, feminist, political, economic, urban, postcolonial, and post-structuralist geographers, to name but a few. It also overlaps with other disciplines such as cultural studies, communication and media studies, ethnic studies, postcolonial studies, and history. We all have different encounters with cultural geography depending on our (other) various disciplinary identities. I have written this paper from the perspective of someone who feels both like an insider and an outsider in cultural geography. There are things about it I feel comfortable with, for example, that it is a field or «style of thought» (Anderson *et al.,* 2002, p. XIII-XIV) that keeps changing, and there are things about it that I do not feel as comfortable with, for example, that in the past it has tended to focus overly on representation at the expense of things such touch, gestures, and emotion. As Ian Cook *et al.* (2005, p. 16) argues «researchers' identities and practices make a big difference». My reading of cultural geography has been and continues to be filtered through my other disciplinary identities as a feminist and social geographer.

People's encounters with cultural geography also depend on where they live and work. In this paper the point has been stressed that cultural geography is not the same everywhere. «Place matters» in the production of cultural geographical knowledge. Cultural geographers are increasingly recognizing (for example through the «Country reports» published regularly in *Social and Cultural Geography*) that we must engage with difference in relation to the politics of knowledge production and the continuing hegemony of Anglo-American cultural geography. There is no doubt that a diverse array of research and teaching takes place under the title of cultural geography and sometimes in countries such as Spain and New Zealand under other titles. Geographers working in a number of different countries engage in a range of theoretical and methodological approaches to a vast range of topics. There is dynamism in this work.

Over the next decade it seems likely that cultural geography will continue to grow. The discipline of geography has long maintained a focus on and engagement with culture and cultural landscapes and this seems set to continue given the current interest in this area. It also seems likely that there may be mounting recognition that cultural geography needs to be critical offering possibilities for radical critique and reflection. This is not necessarily meant to imply that other cultural geographers in the past have necessarily approached

their work in an *uncritical* fashion (see Atkinson *et al.*, 2005, p. XIII) but that we might see a different kinds of critique emerge as cultural geography opens up to other perspectives. Cultural geographers are also likely to continue their efforts to think about what, if any thing, might lie beyond representation. It remains to be seen what kind of effects areas such as emotional geography might ultimately have on cultural geography. Finally, cultural geographers are likely to deepen their reflections on the politics of knowledge production leading to more multi-language publishing practices in this area. The language of human geography including cultural geography is still overwhelmingly English and this poses a set of challenges (such as those not being fluent in English being disadvantaged and English speakers ignoring non-English literatures) that need to be faced over the coming years.

By taking up this invitation to report on cultural geography I realize that in a sense I am actually not just «reporting» per se (i.e. presenting some kind of existing truth about cultural geography) but actively constructing cultural geography in a particular way. I recognize my account is partial and has only scratched the surface of what is a huge and complex field. Mine is a small contribution that I hope will feed into wider discussions about what cultural geography is, where it has come from, and where it might go in the future.

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