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## Cultural Geography 1: Intensities and Forms of Power

### Abstract

In the first of three reviews I focus on how cultural geography is exploring modes and forms of power in relation to various contemporary conditions, including research on precaritization, dispossession, the state, and anti-black violence. A common concern in this work is with how power relations and effects are lived as part of the composition of experience. I demonstrate how this emphasis on experience manifests in attention to the specificities of modes of power and their *intensities* (how the effects of power comes to form and are present/absent) and *forms* (how power relations are arranged into specific shapes or patterns).

Keywords: Cultural Geography, Power, Politics, Experience, Form, Intensity

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## Cultural Geography 1: Intensities and Forms of Power

### I Introduction

How are cultural geographers engaging with contemporary geographies of power if what participates in and composes the cultural has been expanded beyond signifying articulations? And how might a changed cultural politics help us diagnose the modes and forms of power that characterise the contemporary? In his previous set of reports on cultural geography, Scott Kirsch (2015) tracked how contemporary cultural geography is animated by various materialisms that all, in different ways, bring into question an exclusive emphasis on signifying articulations, mediations or systems. As is now well acknowledged and notwithstanding differences between them, these materialisms have expanded the range of things, forces and worlds that cultural geographers attempt to sense, disclose and write in our work. Accompanying the advent of new materialisms has been a political promise: of types of material politics that are attentive to how relations of domination, coercion, instruction and so on emerge through the assembling of worlds in which diverse human, inhuman and non-human forces become together (see, for example, work on the politics of the subjects, scenes and events of climate change and the anthropocene (Braun and Wakeford 2014; Lorimer 2015; Yusoff 2016)).

Whilst internally various, what this work does is place in question a model of cultural politics that was central to at least some trajectories within the 'new' cultural geography. Cultural politics aimed to disclose, critique and intervene in representational-referential systems with the hope of minimising or ending their symbolic violences. Summarising quickly, the promise and task of a cultural politics of signification orientated to 'cultural objects' (Rose 2016) has been threefold; to discern the operation of systems of representation, particularly how power works through forms of othering; to disclose and critique the symbolic and material violences that are enacted through them or that they enable; and to give attention to, cultivate and sometimes create representations that may break with existing

formations and enable resistances or alternatives. Of course, this practice and promise of cultural politics is far from exhausted and continues to be necessary to any engagement with the contemporary. Recent work has, for example, critiqued how geographies of inclusion and exclusion are made through series of othered scenes, figures, objects and places (e.g. Arik (2016) on how 'Islamism' is constructed as security threat in sexually specific ways or Andersson and Valentine (2015) on the depoliticising effects of individualised images of homelessness). And there have always been other versions of cultural politics within cultural geography, given the variations within the sub-discipline around what kind of thing culture is and differences in how best to characterise and intervene in conjunctures, conditions and contexts (compare a cultural politics of meaning-in-use (e.g. Jackson 1989) with a cultural politics of landscape iconography (e.g. Cosgrove and Daniels 1989)). Nevertheless, other ways of doing cultural politics are emerging in complex relation with the expansion of cultural geography to a host of forces, things and worlds. At the same time, and connected in complex ways to that expansion, there is a sense that new vocabularies and techniques might be necessary to understand contemporary conditions in which new forms of power are emerging and old forms morphing (see, outside of geography, Shabazz (2015) on 'carceral power', Massumi (2015) on 'ontopower', Povinelli (2015) on 'geontopower', or Hardt and Negri (2009), after Deleuze, on 'control').

So in the first of my reports I will explore how cultural geographers are exploring the operation of power in relation to various contemporary conditions. As cultural geographers grapple with neoliberal capitalism, anti-black violence, the state and a host of other forces, what is emerging might be called a politics of experience. The concern is with experience as both the site for the operation of power and as an occasion for the emergence of forms or ways of life that are more than an effect of power. However, experience might seem an odd term to resurrect in the midst of the emergence and the becoming common sense of a variety of new materialisms, with their attendant sense of the plenitudinous diversity of non/in human things that compose worlds. It might appear to re-centre human consciousness and be too tainted by a kind of romanticism. It might appear to

presume a distinction between subject and object (although at least some humanistic cultural geographies made experience into a property of body-environment relations that, at least partially, collapsed that distinction e.g. Seamon 1979). And, yet, cultural geography continues to circle around the concept of experience (or synonyms including the 'felt' or 'lived'). It is never quite jettisoned despite also frequently being under attack; as determined by and secondary to signifying articulations, that is a discursive or ideological effect; as reviving a kind of organism implicit in the idea of a '*whole way of life*' that forgets the ways in which culture as life is fractured and riven by antagonisms; as a residue of humanism that recentres human exceptionalism. What is happening, I think, is that the concept of experience morphs as it is drawn into the orbit of the various materialisms that now populate cultural geography, in particular those materialisms that are attentive to seemingly ephemeral process-events of affect and emotion, as well as those that attend to the diversity of powers and agencies. What is emerging is a politics of experience that revolves around questions of how liveable lives are enabled in a context where power effects and relations are folded with the (de)composition of experience. A politics that resonates with a tradition of listening to and learning from 'voices of experience' in work between social and cultural geography (e.g. Parr 2008) and connects to recent experiments in story-telling, witnessing and testimony (to be discussed in my next report on 'representation') (e.g. Lorimer 2014; Parr and Stevenson 2014).

The review unfolds in two sections. First, I draw out how work in cultural geography discloses and critiques the lived experience of contemporary modes of power as part of a continued engagement with the politics of 'ways of life'. What crosses between quite different work is a concern with the intensities of power – how the effects that are power mutate, morph, and differentially emerge as part of 'ways of life'. This concern with power's intensities happens alongside a renewed concern in cultural geography with how power relations are arranged. In section two, I give space to recent experiments in (re)presenting the geographies of power that, in different ways, attempt to present cultural geographies of power without assuming the form through which power relations are arranged, patterned or shaped.

## II Power's Intensities

Some recent work in cultural geography has begun to supplement the conventional genres that geographers and others have used to diagnose and name distinct modes of power (discipline, biopower, sovereignty, and so on). In his longstanding work on the cultural politics of the Giza Pyramids, Rose (2014), for example, diagnoses 'negative governance' as a specific type of state non-action. It works through the absence or withdrawal of all positive procedures of government. By contrast, Woodward (2014) diagnoses a modality of power that works through an intermittent and intense presencing of the penal state. In the violent policing of protest, the state erupts unpredictably and with violence to diminish protestors' capacities to act and curtail their affective relations to one another. Much more is going on in each account, most notably Rose and Woodward both theorise life (bodily and affective life) as that which is primary to government, but for now we can see them as sharing a concern with what Nealon (2008) calls the *intensities* of power. In both, the concern is with the presencing or absencing of effects of power - that is the intensification of power in particular sites, scenes or bodies or the saturation of power across multiple fields of experience (see also Wilson (2014) on attempts to govern difference through inculcating tolerance and the 'eruptive moments' when tolerance fails and other ways of relating intensify). Other work has begun to push the now familiar claim that power today invests and sorts 'life itself' to unpack exactly how power relations saturate backgrounds of thought and action (e.g. Rutland (2015) on the biopolitical management of 'sensible life' in urban planning). So Pykett and Enright (2016), for example, show how a culture of optimism and optimal functioning is entrained through workplace training programmes that harness knowledges associated with an emergent 'brain culture' (see also Wilson (2015), after Steigler, on 'psychopower' or Ash (2015) on interfaces and 'envelope power'). Through a case study of Singaporean Airlines, Linn (2015), to give an example of a diffuse object of power, details how the atmospheres of passenger cabins are strategically manipulated in attempts to produce a desired

'oriental' mood of comfort (see also Miller (2014) and Closs-Stephens (2016) on atmospheric manipulation and modulation).

By paying attention to particular modes of power and their objects and intensities, this work attends to the specifics of how power operates through complex weavings of material and immaterial elements. Darling (2014), for example, describes the material-discursive complex through which letters mediate and enact relations between the UK state and people seeking asylum. It is through the mundane technique of the letter that the state is rendered momentarily present in a disruptive event in which relations/effects of coercion intensify (see also Ash (2015) on the materiality of 'interfaces' and bodily and perceptual capacities). Recently, this concern with the intensities of modes of power has been brought into conversation with attempts to diagnose and critique how specific types of harm, damage and loss are occasioned in a liberal, neoliberal and/or late liberal context. What's emerging is something like a new vocabulary for describing how some lives survive, endure and flourish as other lives are made or left to die or devalue; including dispossession, precaritization, expulsion, abandonment, destitution, attrition, invisibilisation, and extinction, to name but some. Whilst this work extends beyond the sub-discipline, what some work in cultural geography has begun to do is show how these modalities of power operate by becoming part of and organising experience. Work focuses on exactly how relations of power are felt with particular bodily intensities and how power's experiential intensities are mediated through the practices of adjustment, improvisation, bargaining, and so on that make up specific ways of life. This is a second sense of power's intensity - power as it becomes with the dynamics of experience - alongside the sense of the differential presencing and absencing of the effects of power discussed above. Let's look at examples of two areas of work - on precaritization and on dispossession.

Recent work in cultural geography on precaritisation combines an attention to the bodily intensities of precarity with a concern for how a sense of precarity surfaces in and is dispersed through multiple everyday scenes. Precarity has served as one name for something like an articulated, dispersed structure of feeling in which insecurity is both held in common and fractures and undoes the very

possibility of holding anything in common (Berlant 2011). Work has begun to question the implicit claim of a shared affective experience of intensified fear and unease by giving attention to the composition of what Waite (2009: 416) calls “life worlds that are inflected with uncertainty and instability”. Through interviews with Canadian women born in the 1980s on their experience of employment, Worth (2016) emphasises how women attempt to mitigate feelings of precariousness, feelings that are an ever present background to their daily life and may intensify even in relation to seemingly stable employment. In other words, the women live ways of life that are now inseparable from past and anticipated processes of precarisation, and are conditioned by something like a shared, but dispersed and unevenly distributed mood of insecurity. Countering claims of a homology between precarity and individualisation, Worth shows how the experience of precarisation is mediated by more or less dense social and cultural ties that by offering some certainty enable the force of insecurity to be mitigated or diminished. Waite, Valentine and Lewis (2015) give attention to a different type of precarious life: refugees and people seeking asylum in situations of forced and/or precarious labour. Careful never to reduce people to the status of passive victims, they show how routines are just about achieved in midst of interlocking forms of material, symbolic, bodily and psychological hurt. At the same time, they show how signifying articulations that demonise, vilify and reduce asylum seekers and refugees are encountered by majority populations who themselves feel precarious. Zeiderman (2016) focuses on the precarity of life in the Columbian Port city of Buenaventura on the Pacific Coast. He shows how life for residents in one of the seaside shanty towns is rendered precarious by the intersection of three forces that generate waves of violence – climate change adaptation, Port expansion, and conflict between (para)military groups for control of a key hub of drug distribution. These material-discursive conditions are lived by Afro-Columbians through what Zeiderman calls a ‘submergent’ form of cultural-political life in which precariousness is adapted to through creative practices of marking territory in the face of waves of dispossession (including a cultural project ‘Marcando Territorio’ (‘Marking territory’) that

assembled activists and church leaders with a collective of producers, rappers and singers).

So this is research that focuses on what we could call the “experience present” (Williams 1984: 126) of precaritization and shows how it fractures experience. Recent cultural geography research on spaces of dispossession pays similar attention to how ways of life are assembled and disassembled in the midst of processes of change and restructuring. Whilst understood multiply, dispossession is treated as a process of the production of ‘non-being’ (Butler and Athanasiou 2013) that involves the (more or less violent) removal of something previously held that, in some way, supported or promised to support a life beyond mere survival. Recent work has asked how more than economic processes of dispossession associated with neoliberal restructuring intensify in particular sites, scenes or subjects and are felt and experienced as removal, end, or loss. Samson (2015), for example, traces the ‘epistemic dispossession’ of garbage reclaimers that accompanied an attempt by the state authorities to privatise waste reclamation by enclosing the Marie Louise garbage dump in the township of Dobsonville, Soweto (thus dispossessing informal reclaimers of control of resources on the dump with latent value). The attempt to ignore and appropriate reclaimers’ transformation of Marie Louise into a site of value was met with intensifications of anger and grievances amongst reclaimers that sustained their acts of resistance against the violent event of enclosure. Through a case study of Toronto’s gentrifying Junction neighbourhood, Kern (2016) pays attention to the incremental and accretive violences through which gentrification happens as processes of transformation and displacement/dispossession. As an effect of a complex of symbolic, everyday and practice-orientated changes, dispossession is not only a matter of eventfulness, with its attendant sense of the intensification of power in scenes of eviction or foreclosure. As gentrification works through regimes of manufactured cultural eventfulness to produce the ‘authentic’ sense of a ‘happening place’, dispossession is a matter of non-eventful and non-catastrophic disruptions that accumulate to reshape experience. Dispossession is ordinary, barely noticed, it does not happen and is not felt as an intense event: “The removal of bench outside a café eliminates a place to sit and smoke near the shelter.

Coffee prices go up at all the local shops. Sex workers move north of the train tracks. (13). Cahill, Gutiérrez, Cerecer (2016) focus on the 'intimate dispossessions' of capital accumulation through participatory work with undocumented students in Salt Lake City, Utah, US. Like Samson and Kern, they pay attention to the intensities of dispossession. Through sustained participatory work, they document the everyday struggles that happen as liveable lives are made in the midst of intersecting forms of dispossession (specifically racialized cultural exclusions and 'illegal' immigration status) that reproduce a 'school-to-sweatshop' pipeline. Multiple policies and racialized cultural practices intersect to "dispossess immigrant students of potential futures" (123) and discipline them for a state of labour exploitation. In the midst of dispossessions made up of more or less intense frustrations, thwartings and shocks, parents of children are just about sustained by holding onto the culturally specific promise of the American Dream. However, maintaining proximity to the fantasy of a better life intensifies disappointments and shocks even as it dampens some of the privations of participation in exploitation (see Berlant (2011) on 'cruel optimism' and the indistinction between that which sustains and that which harms as people hold on to fraying fantasies of the 'good life').

What this work does, in part, is disclose how power is now exercised in ever more subtle ways as it saturates experience (a common theme across work on governmentality, discipline, biopolitics and control). Work on precaritization and dispossession share a concern for scrutinising how power is felt and lived with different intensities as part of the composition of lived experience. The point is not simply to valorise the immediacy of the experiential as a counter to a bleak vision of the new insidious forms of domination that are integral to the forms of harm, damage and loss particular to liberal, neoliberal or late liberal life. Nor does this work grant epistemological or ontological privilege to 'actual experience' as the ground of culture, rather than a secondary, determined effect of discourse, ideology or whatever other name is given to signifying articulations. All the work discussed above shows how signifying articulations become part of ongoing processes whereby lines are drawn between valued and devalued lives. Rather, the concern is with how 'ways of life' are made in relation to a myriad of forces that disrupt the

conditions (of recognition, of security, and so on) that allow liveable lives. The concern with power's intensities – in the twofold sense of how and where power intensifies and how power is experienced – is a means, then, of disclosing how exactly power effects surface once considered as a matter of experience.

### **III Power's Forms**

If the work reviewed so far is concerned with the intensities of modes of power, a partially connected strand of work in cultural geography attempts to understand the specific forms that power relations take. Of course, cultural geography has long held a concern for the politically pernicious consequences of particular forms. We might think of how Feminist cultural geographers diagnosed and critiqued the role of the dichotomy form (and the linked forms of the binary and hierarchy) in the emergence and endurance of sexism and racism (Rose 1993). Recent work attempts to present geographies of experience that disclose how power operates but without a-priori assuming how power relations are ordered, patterned or shaped. In the context of an emphasis on relations and relationality, work has described how elements are arranged and organised through a wide range of forms – networks, assemblages, apparatuses, meshwork, nexus, fluids, flows, fire, to name but some. What underpins cultural geographers' interest in multiple forms is, in part, a now longstanding critique of the organising role of the form of the whole (and linked ideas of unity, totality and oneness) in enabling and constraining the accounts cultural geographers give of the world. Here I focus on how recent work has attempted to experiment with presenting geographies of experience without presuming that power works exclusively or even predominantly through the form of the whole (whilst still attending to the negative consequences of the desire for bounded wholeness in forging geographies of inclusion and exclusion). In many ways, what this work tries to do is take seriously earlier critiques of how representations of particular formations (capitalism or globalisation) produced unified, totalising, substantialised images of 'power' (see, in particular, Gibson-Graham 1996). Developing from these critiques, recent work tracks registers of

impact and effect by offering descriptions of experience that disclose how 'ways of life' happen in the midst of power relations that may take multiple forms and happen through different intensities. Let us look at three different examples of this work, noting how they all focus on the mediation of experience by a host of things and forces. What they share is a type of descriptive ethos and style attentive to the effects, real conditions of emergence and energetics of what Stewart (2014) calls "structures of living". (In my next report on 'representation' I will discuss partially connected work that pays attention to experiments in form in art, theatre and literature (e.g. Rogers 2015; Hawkins et al 2015). Noxolo (2014), for example, brilliantly shows how Brian Chickwava's novel *Harare North* evokes at the level of form the insidious violence of waiting without resolution as asylum seekers are articulated simultaneously and recursively (rather than only sequentially) between the 'security-migration' and 'security-development' nexuses.)

Consider Stewart's (2014) uses of creative non-fiction in 'Road Registers', a piece published as part of a special issue of *Cultural Geographies* on stories and storytelling. Stewart's concern is with what she calls "forms emergent in the conduct of life" (ibid. 449). Her empirical object are 'road registers': "links between disparate phenomena, scales, and compositional modes from literature to ordinary practices to state thinking" (ibid. 550). So what she does is pay attention to how the many and divergent forms through which the road registers, including in the aspirational mode of being on the road and in the world that the US car industry has been organised around, including in the emergent weight of a surveillance society engineered into the road, and including in masculinist fantasies of horizons, speed, transgression, and self-control. So, Stewart's are stories of the sometimes fleeting, sometimes more durable, worlds that are made in, through and as the road registers. For example, she describes a scene in which her neighbours are stood around after calling the police after a car almost hit a woman. The driver is known to the neighbours for being a 'crazy driver'. Police have been called before. Stewart writes:

“The scene feels over-filled with the tangled, ricocheting resonances of – what? - isolation, vulnerability, snapping, judging, the state of place, community, policing, and the law”. (552)

Here the road registers in part through an impulse to call the police, in part through the complex that is suburban life, in part through a sense of fractured community. Stewart's is a story of power – perhaps in the scene above how the state permeates and is present in suburban life and how suburban normality is secured. By encountering the real as a set of mutable compositions, Stewart shows us that Neoliberalism, the State, and so on are rarely present as a reified, unified, totalities. So much is now well known, but Stewart also pushes beyond the now familiar claim that power is a relational effect. Rather, she tracks how power surfaces in fragmentary, momentary ways as “structures of living” are made and remade.

Stewart's is, then, an exercise in form that attempts to think ‘ways of life’ outside of either an assumption of coherent wholeness or of incoherent fragments. She tells stories that stay with the activating details of scenes and shows how those scenes are made through a diverse array of intersecting forces and events that cannot be reduced to any one named formation. As such, her work resonates with other recent experiments in form and style in cultural geography and elsewhere. They do similar work of offering new forms to understand the cultural geographies of power. Consider Lavery, Dixon and Hassall's (2014) iteration of their creative theatrical/writing project Hashima. The paper is about an island site, Hashima, located off the coast of Nagasaki, Japan. The paper interrupts the ongoing effort to fix the meaning of the Island in relation to something else and elsewhere, usually as a site of loss. Lavery, Dixon and Hassal do treat the Island as, in part, revelatory of the entangled histories and geographies of colonialisms and capitalisms – specifically the entanglements between forced labour, intensive coal mining and ruination. But, the site is also encountered as a provocation to experiment with how to write singular geographies. So they present a dark or saturnine baroque of bile and melancholy “as a means of grasping and articulating the island's materialities, and the spatiotemporalities they express” (2573). It is difficult to capture here as it is

organised around the strange figure of Hassall and the “fragments of anguish” that make the monstrous geographies of the site (fragments that are assembled and disassembled through first person narration, postcards, and other stylistic devices). But what they do is offer something close to a Labrynthian account of the site, where, after the figure of the Labyrinth in Walter Benjamin’s late writings, “to enter the labyrinth is to enter a realm where the real and mythological overlap, interact, become porous” (2575).

Another example of an experiment in form that attempts to write substantive geographies of experience that are and are more than geographies of power is the remarkable *Hot Spotter’s Report* by Krupar (2013). *Hot Spotter’s Report* is a fable of the nuclear making and remaking of the world. Dwelling on toxic ‘hot spots’ of contamination, the work plays with multiple genres – including satire, camp and the absurd – each of which establishes a different mode of relation and revelation with the living residues of the nuclear state and the cold war. The work discloses and interrupts the toxic mix of chronic and punctual violences that scar and permeate nuclear-industrial landscapes. For example, Krupar uses satire and mimicry to present and disrupt bureaucratic rationalities and feelings. Chapter Two scripts a PowerPoint presentation and an audit by the fictionalised “Endgame of Government Audit”. The overall aim of *Hot Spotter’s Report* being to “reveal the material work that produces the separation of nature as pure and to attend to the remainders of this separation, such as subjugated knowledges, ‘impure’ cancerous bodies, perforated land, and abject materials, such as nuclear waste” (227, emphasis in original).

What these very different experiments all share is an attempt to think about the specific forms that power takes if analysis stays with experience and traces the formation and deformation of specific ‘ways of life’. Whilst perhaps not doing this directly, each experiment hints that capitalism, colonialism, state violence and so on might be revealed through aesthetic forms – including the scenic, the baroque, the monstrous, and the absurd – in addition to realism, abstraction and reportage. Other work does something similar, but begins to address more directly the consequences of thinking form for how we conceptualise modes of power. McKittrick’s (2016) work on race and racisms is interested in disrupting and dislodging what she calls

the “monumental biocentric narrative that is invested in replicating scientific racism even in critique” (13). Her argument is that a “biocentric conception of the human” underpins a large cluster of analytical work in cultural geography and elsewhere on blackness – including work that attempts to draw attention to unjust racial violences. Black life is reduced to black bodies that are further reduced to a site of violation. So McKittrick rethinks power’s form in at least two ways, guided by the imperative not only to “seek consolation in naming violence” (3) but rather to provide clues as to what she calls the question of “what a different form of life might look like by inscribing how freedom is worked out and worked on by those who have been unfree” (13). First, she provides an image of the ‘biocentric loops’ through which racisms and black death are legitimised *and* an analytical leaning to reproduce a biocentric conception of the suffering black body is reproduced in critical analysis. Power operates, in this case, through a series of closed loops through which systems of harm endure and persist. Second, and linked, she offers a concept of the ‘diachronic loop’ as the basis of a creative practice that simultaneously works within and thinks outside a closed system. Her example is, in part, the creative work *Zong!* by NourbeSe Philip. The poem enacts the slave ship of the same name as an occasion in anti-black violence *and* a site for forms of life (intimacies, rebellions, secrets) that cannot be told through an analytics that reduce black life to death and survival. For McKittrick, *Zong!* can be encountered as a diachronic loop in how “the text in its entirety iterates anti-black violence within the context of slavery, but the text also produces a network of words that unfold to produce a knowledge system that momentarily moves outside itself” (11). In this *movement* ‘outside itself’ (which can never be a total or absolute outside) a “different kind of living figure” emerges based on black life, rather than reducing life and living to death and mere survival. What McKittrick does brilliantly, then, is to draw a relation between two different forms – two types of loops – in order both to interrupt the repetition of a biocentric conception of humanness and to open up other figures of living whilst still bearing witness to black-death.

#### **IV Conclusion**

What the three experiments with form do is centre the challenges of finding, fixing and naming power if we start analysis from power effects as elements of experience. The papers reviewed all make the study and presentation of power into a problem by weakening the hold that particular forms continue to have over our diagnosis of contemporary conditions (the forms of the whole and the network in particular). They remain open about the shape that power relations take, with the implicit assumption of the multiplicity and coexistence of different forms, and the background sense that contemporary conditions might require cultural geographers to experiment with new forms. Work on power's intensities does something similar. Outside of binaries between power as centred or decentred, or power as possessed or dispersed, research maps how relations and effects *come to form* as part of experience. Processes of *coming to form* – happening in the midst of the diversity of things and forces that make experience more than simply an effect of power – occur with different intensities and involve different modalities of presence and absence. It is an open question how power intensifies and saturates experience. Power effects may come to form through the mode of a traumatic event, or a diffuse background, or a barely recognised fluctuation in situation, or a host of other intensities and intensifications (see Berlant (2011) and Povinelli (2011) on these and other registers of eventfulness).

A renewed emphasis on power effects and relations as matters of experience is one way, then, that existing practices of cultural politics are being supplemented. Whilst still necessary, a cultural politics orientated exclusively to the critique of representational-referential systems is fraying as the status of cultural objects changes and as modes of power morph and new modes appear. The concern with an expanded sense of experience as process (and synonyms such as 'the lived' or 'the felt') recognises that power effects and relations work through but are mediated by the diversity of elements and forces that compose experience. Whilst influences are diverse, much of this work continues to owe an (implicit or explicit) debt to Foucault on power, and there remains scope for a fuller engagement between his work and that influenced by new materialisms (although see Anderson 2012; Philo 2014). More

specifically, it recalls varieties of 'cultural materialism' orientated to the composition of 'ways of life', but gives an expanded sense of what kinds of things make up 'life'. Under the influence of various materialisms, there are, of course, differences in how experience is disclosed – chiefly around the relation between experience and the human subject, the range of things and forces that compose experience, and how experience is conditioned. Nevertheless, these shifts in how cultural geographers engage with power raise questions about how representation is being theorised, researched and used in contemporary cultural geography (particularly in the context of the emergence of the 'geohumanities' as intellectual project and, increasingly, institutional formation). This is the subject of my next report: how representing and representations are being rethought in the midst of various new materialisms and the concern for experience and 'ways of life'.

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