

## Introduction: Why Key Thinkers?

As 1999 slowly but surely gave way to 2000, and we entered a new millennium, a not altogether surprising phenomenon emerged: the media's preoccupation with cataloguing the cultural, economic and social achievements not only of the last century, but the preceding 1000 years. Examples of this encyclopaedism are legion, with in the UK critics' lists of the best album of all time, polls of the most significant British figure, polls of the greatest film ever made, and readers' surveys of the most important works of fiction (for anyone interested: The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*; Winston Churchill; Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*, and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* – at least according to some polls). It was against this background of post-millennial 'listomania' that we began compiling the initial edition of this book, which was intended as a comprehensive and critical guide to a limited selection of important thinkers and intellectuals influencing the contemporary development of spatial theory. From the outset, however, we were determined that this book should amount to more than an exercise in nostalgia, and that rather than looking backward to profile the figures who have done so much to establish key ideas about space and place, this volume would be forward-looking, highlighting those thinkers who are currently doing most to shape the way that we think about the world around us – and, by inference, will undoubtedly

shape debates about space and place in the immediate future.

Given this remit, this volume is designed to offer a critical discussion of a selection of figures who have been influential in debates about space and place in the past 50 years or so. Our key criterion has been to select those who, in our opinion, have contributed significantly to *theoretical* discussions of the importance of space and place in shaping cultural, social, economic and political life in recent years. These include those working in important intellectual traditions such as positivism, phenomenology, Marxism, feminism, post-structural, queer, post-colonial, post-modern and subaltern theory (for the uninitiated, these terms are defined in the **glossary**) as well as those who have moved between, or among, theoretical and philosophical traditions. Indeed, one of our strategies of selection has been to include thinkers advocating different conceptions and approaches in order to highlight the diverse ways in which space and place have been theorised and debated. It is not then a list of the most important thinkers (although all of our selections have been influential), but rather a selection designed, on the one hand, to illustrate the utility of a biographical approach to understanding knowledge production, and on the other to demonstrate the plethora of ways of thinking spatially.

Given our disciplinary background and the key concepts at the heart of the

book – space and place – it is perhaps unsurprising that geographers dominate our list; given the inequalities that characterise academic geography (as well as other forms of intellectual labour – see Sidaway, 2000), it is also unsurprising that white, Anglo-American academics are most numerous. Yet in seeking to recognise the diverse intellectual traditions and ideas that are shaping the way that we conceive of and write about space and place, our list includes many working beyond the Anglo-American academy, and includes several figures who blur the lines between academic thought, scholarly writing and critical praxis. Furthermore, our selection includes anthropologists, sociologists, economists, historians, political theorists, philosophers and planners (as well as many who elude easy disciplinary categorisation). The fact that nearly half of the thinkers profiled here are not conventionally defined as ‘geographers’ is an acknowledgement of the centrality of space in social theory and the significance of the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies, and literary studies over the past 30 years, alongside the ‘cultural turn’ in geography that has seen a broad engagement with social theory by geographers (see Hubbard et al., 2002).

While it is easy for geographers to overstate the extent to which this spatial turn has transformed the social sciences and humanities, as the entries that follow demonstrate, space and place have become totemic concepts for those exploring social, cultural, economic and political relations. For example, many anthropological readings of the tactics of everyday life have foregrounded place in setting the rhythms of social conduct (see entries on **Marc Augé**, **Tim Ingold** and **Michel de Certeau**) whilst many of the key ideas in contemporary cultural studies concerning representation (such

as those associated with **Edward Said**, **Stuart Hall**, **Benedict Anderson** and **Raymond Williams** to name but a few) have stressed the importance of space as a framing device in the creation of cultural imaginaries. Writing on globalisation and the informational society has also located the concepts of space and place at the centre of economic thought, with **Anthony Giddens**, **Manuel Castells**, **Saskia Sassen**, and **Amartya Sen** among numerous other ‘global gurus’, all offering their own distinctive takes on the importance of (virtual and real) space in creating new forms of (crisis-prone) capitalism. Post 9/11, important work on the contours of the ‘war on terror’ also makes great play of geo-political imaginations, with thinkers as diverse as **Jean Baudrillard**, **Gerard Ó Tuathail**, **Paul Virilio** and **Judith Butler** all drawing on a rich repository of spatial thought when arguing for the importance of mediated images of war and terror in contemporary international relations.

Crang and Thrift (2000: 1) consequently suggest that ‘[s]pace is the everywhere of modern thought’. The consequence of this is that academics outside the discipline have begun to theorise space in ways that have appeal for geographers. This means their work is being imported into geographical thought in a variety of ways. Conversely, work by geographers is increasingly being used and read by those in other social sciences and humanities. In part, this explains why so many of the theorists profiled in this book would not necessarily consider themselves to be ‘geographers’, even though their work is inherently geographical or has been adapted and reworked by geographers. On the other hand, the book profiles a number of thinkers who would certainly identify as geographers. What is evident here, however, is that our choice of key thinkers in the geographical tradition is

entirely biased towards human geographers, despite the apparent common ground shared between physical and human geographers as they explore the constitutive role of space-time in the making of the world around us (see Massey, 1999). Yet despite occasional conversations between physical and human geographers (see Raper and Livingston, 1997; Harrison and Dunham, 1998), and sporadic attempts to unite the discipline through the forging of a shared philosophy and method (e.g., Haggett and Chorley, 1969), it remains the case that physical geography has remained relatively untroubled by theoretical debates about the nature of space and place. As **Doreen Massey** (1999) notes, for physical geographers the notion of *absolute space* still predominates, with phenomena seen to pre-exist their location in space. While this version of spatiality still informs certain human geographical writing – see entries on **Brian Berry**, **Reg Golledge**, **Peter Haggett**, **Waldo Tobler** and **Alan Wilson** in particular – the more widespread understanding of space among human geographers is that social, economic and political phenomena are the product of spatial-temporal locality, and that the articulation of interrelations brings space into being. For example, **Nigel Thrift** offers the following definition:

As with terms like 'society' and 'nature', space is not a commonsense external background to human and social action. Rather, it is the outcome of a series of highly problematic temporary settlements that divide and connect things up into different kinds of collectives which are slowly provided with the means which render them durable and sustainable.

(Thrift, 2003: 95)

Hence, while there are physical geographers who are attempting to contribute to unfolding theoretical debates about the nature of

space and place (Kent, 2003), most physical geographers have ignored postmodern, post-colonial or post-structural attempts to deconstruct, critique or reconstruct languages of space and place, and have only made marginal contributions to the literatures problematising concepts such as globalisation. As such, our selection of thinkers does not include any who would identify themselves as a physical geographer, but hopefully does not ignore physical geography, as many of the thinkers here offer food for thought for those in the natural as well as the social sciences (for some, notably **Bruno Latour** and **Donna Haraway**, the distinction often made between 'objective' hard science and the 'subjective' social sciences is a problematic one in any case).

Notwithstanding our decision to focus on those who are presently some of the most influential in theoretical debates over space and place, there are still many thinkers – both dead and alive – who act as key reference points in debates over the spatiality of social, economic and political life. As in Elliott and Turner's (2001) excellent *Profiles in Contemporary Social Theory*, our most difficult decision has therefore been selecting whom to omit (starting with a long shortlist of several hundred names that had to be pared down to a more manageable 66). In the final analysis, we have attempted to include a *representative* rather than exhaustive selection of names, and while we are keen to stress that each of the thinkers profiled here is relevant to contemporary *theoretical* understandings of space and place, there are of course many others who have made significant interventions in geographic debates through their empirical, practical and synoptic contributions. Hence, our choice of key thinkers should not be regarded as some barometer of influence for those for whom space and place are central foci of analysis, as it ignores many (and it would

perhaps be invidious to mention names here) who have made significant contributions in applied geography, Geographic Information Systems, policy-oriented studies, action research and cartography, as well as the many whose prime contribution to geography is their empirical research (whether on environmental issues, the economy, social processes, politics, the country or the city) and those that act as key synthesisers drawing together materials into pedagogically orientated texts. In this sense, our selection of thinkers should not be read as a guide to who's currently hot (and who's not) in human geography (after all, there are plenty of citation analyses around for those who want a guide to which practitioners exercise most influence within, and beyond, the discipline – see Yeung, 2002). Rather, it stands as a user-friendly guide to *some* of the more important thinkers informing current debates about *space* and *place*. In the following section, therefore, we seek to outline why these concepts are fundamental in theoretical debates in geography and across the social sciences – and begin to show why their definition is variously problematised and clarified by the existence of different traditions of social, economic and political thought – from positivism to critical theory, from feminism to psychoanalysis, and from postmodernism to post-structuralism.



Geography ... has meant different things to different people at different times and in different places.

(Livingstone, 1992: 7)

In popular discourse, space and place are often regarded as synonymous with terms including region, area and landscape. For geographers, however, these twin terms have provided the building blocks of an intellectual (and *disciplinary*) enterprise that stretches back many centuries. Yet, as Livingstone intimates, the theoretical specification of space and place has remained a matter of some dispute, being transformed as new ways of 'thinking geographically' have developed. Rather than reiterate Livingstone's analysis of how the 'geographical tradition' developed and mutated from an era of early modern navigation, through Enlightenment exploration and on to the institutional geographies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Heffernan, 2003), we want to focus here on the more recent history of spatial thinking in human geography to illustrate the diverse ways in which space and place are presently conceptualised and analytically employed to make sense of the world.

As noted above, many physical geographers remain fairly uninterested in problematising the idea that space is straightforwardly empirical, objective and *mappable*. Likewise, until the 1970s, most human geographers considered space to be a neutral container, a blank canvas which is filled in by human activity. Here, space is defined and understood through Euclidean geometry (with *x*, *y* and *z* dimensions) and, for analytical purposes, treated as 'an absolute container of static, though movable, objects and dynamic flows of behaviour' (Gleeson, 1996: 390). This absolute or 'empirico-physical' conception suggested that space can be conceived as outside human existence; rather than playing an active role in shaping social life, it is regarded as a backdrop against which human behaviour is played out (an idea explicitly addressed in **Torsten Hägerstrand's**

time-space modelling). In the 1950s and 1960s this conception of space was refined by a number of practitioners who sought to re-style geography as a positivist spatial science, seeking to construct theory or 'spatial laws' on the basis of statistical analysis (Robinson, 1998). This was reflected in the publication of texts covering the principles of statistical analysis to geographers (e.g. Gregory, 1963), and, later, those that sketched out the principles of spatial statistics based on regression, clustering and autocorrelation (Abler et al., 1971). For many, the ultimate promise of this progressive process of statistical testing and theory-building was the construction of predictive spatial models (with **Waldo Tobler**, **Peter Haggett**, **Brian Berry** and **Alan Wilson** as leading practitioners).

Retrospectively, this period is thus described as representing a pivotal moment in the history of the discipline-geography's 'Quantitative Revolution' (Bird, 1989; **Barnes**, 2001a) – and while many geographers were not swept up in the enthusiasm for quantification, hypothesis-testing and statistical analysis, this new 'scientific' paradigm was nonetheless responsible for ushering in a new conceptualisation of space which became widespread among even those geographers resistant to the notion of quantification. In effect, this was to conceive of space as a surface on which the relationships between (measurable) things were played out. Looking towards other disciplines, notably neo-classical economics and physics, this placed emphasis on the importance of three related concepts – direction, distance and connection. In short, it became axiomatic that the relationships between things on the Earth's surface could be explained in terms of these key concepts, and that it was possible to discern regular patterns that could be mapped and modelled (**Wilson**, 1999).

This heralded a new language of spatial physics where human activities and phenomena could be reduced to movements, networks, nodes or hierarchies played out on the Earth's surface.

Reacting against this rabidly objective type of analysis, some scholars took inspiration from psychology, developing a behavioural perspective that explored the role of the conscious mind in shaping human spatial behaviour (see **Kevin Lynch** and **Reg Golledge**). While this perspective held to the tenets of positivist inquiry, merely replacing concepts of absolute distance with notions of subjective distance, the historical and geographical materialism which emerged in the 1970s ushered in a rather different interpretation of spatiality, whereby space was deemed to be inherently caught up in social relations, both socially produced and consumed. Here, 'new' urban sociologists joined forces with geographers to document the role of urbanisation in capitalist society, with **Manuel Castells**, **David Harvey** and **Neil Smith** arguing that the city concretised certain class inequalities. On a different scale, economic geographers (e.g., **Peter Dicken**, **Michael Storper** and **Linda McDowell**) and those working in the 'localities tradition' (e.g. **Doreen Massey** and **Andrew Sayer**) sought to expose the way that spatial divisions of labour perpetuated capitalist structures, while political theorists (such as **Immanuel Wallerstein**, **Stuart Corbridge** and **Peter Taylor**) wrote of the international division of labour that was secured through particular geopolitical and territorial strategies. Yet, it was arguably not until the work of the Marxist theorist **Henri Lefebvre** (1991) that this notion of space as socially produced was convincingly (if sometimes obtusely) articulated.

Lefebvre implied that absolute space cannot exist because, at the moment it is colonised through social activity, it

becomes relativised and historicised space. Insisting every society, and every mode of production produces its own space, he further distinguished between the abstract spaces of capitalism, the sacred spaces of the religious societies that preceded it, and the contradictory and differential spaces yet to come. In outlining this history of space, Lefebvre implied that conceiving and representing space as absolute (as had been common in geography and across the social sciences) was in fact implicated in the production of relativised abstract space (i.e., the space of capitalism). Rejecting this, he proposed a trialectics of spatiality which explores the differential entwining of cultural practices, representations and imaginations. Moving away from an analysis of things in space, this is an account that sees space as 'made up' through a three-way dialectic between perceived, conceived and lived space (see also **Ed Soja**). Here, place emerges as a particular form of space, one that is created through acts of naming as well as the distinctive activities and imaginings associated with particular social spaces.

For many geographers, place thus represents a distinctive (and more-or-less bounded) type of space which is defined by (and constructed in terms of) the lived experiences of people. As such, places are seen as fundamental in expressing a sense of belonging for those who live in them, and are seen as providing a locus for identity. As with space, within regional and quantitative approaches place was conceived in absolute terms, simply as a largely self-contained gathering of people in a bounded locale (territory). This understanding of place was challenged by humanistic geographers who, in the 1970s, sought to supplant the 'people-less' geographies of positivist spatial science with an approach to human geography that fed off alternative philosophies – notably

existentialism and phenomenology (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001). Focusing on the experiential properties of space, the writings of David Lowenthal, **Anne Buttner**, **David Ley**, Edward Relph and **Yi-Fu Tuan** in particular were of great value in reminding geographers that people do not live in a framework of geometric relationships but in a world of meaning. For example, **Tuan's** (1977) poetic writings stressed that place does not have any particular scale associated with it, but is created and maintained through the 'fields of care' that result from people's emotional attachment. Using the notions of *topophilia* and *topophobia* to refer to the desires and fears which people associate with specific places, his work alerted geographers to the sensual, aesthetic and emotional dimensions of space. The humanistic tradition that these thinkers developed conceptualised place as subjectively defined. As such, what constituted a place was seen to be largely individualistic, although attachments and meanings were often shared (simply put, a place meant different things to different people).

As **Thrift** (2003) contends, one thing that does seem to be widely agreed is that place is involved with *embodiment*. The humanistic use of methods that evoke the multisensory experience of place (i.e., its visual, aural, and tactile elements, as well as its smells and tastes) provides one means by which this bodily geography of place has been evoked, though the relationship between the human body and highly meaningful places is often more complex than even these methods can reveal (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001). Indeed, being 'in place' involves a range of cognitive (mental) and physical (corporeal) performances that are constantly evolving as people encounter place. In **Nigel Thrift's** work on practice and affect it is suggested that these encounters

cannot be adequately registered through language and discourse (hence, his talk of 'non-representational' theory). Stressing the importance of the pre-cognitive nature of being in the world (i.e., the way we intuitively inhabit places that are close and familiar to us without even thinking about it), Thrift alerts us to the practical knowledges and awarenesses that are deployed in everyday life. Other commentators suggest these skills come easier to some than others, with the geographies of embodiment implicated in the making of class (see **Pierre Bourdieu**), gender (see **Judith Butler**, **Linda McDowell**, **Cindi Katz**) and racial divides (see **bell hooks**, **Allan Pred**). Either way, place is seen to be made through the rhythms of being that confirm and naturalise the existence of certain spaces (a point made by **Henri Lefebvre** in his *rhythmanalyses* of modern life, **Marc Augé** in his reading of the spaces of transit, and in **Tim Ingold's** work on path-making).

While places have generally been theorised as authentic, close and *lived* spaces, those adopting structuralist and critical approaches have argued that places are complex entities situated within and shaped by forces from well beyond their own notional boundaries. Here, there is a recognition that places should not be romanticised as pre-political entities but that they are shaped by often oppressive institutional forces and social relationships. This is an idea explored extensively by thinkers such as **Doreen Massey** through her notion of a progressive sense of place. For her, a place is the locus of complex intersections and outcomes of power geometries that operate across many spatial scales from the body to the global. Places are thus constituted of multiple, intersecting social, political, and economic relations, giving rise to a myriad spatialities. Places and the social relations within and between them are

the results of particular arrangements of power, whether it is individual and institutional, or imaginative and material. Such a formulation recognises the open and porous boundaries of place as well as the myriad interlinkages and interdependencies among places. Places are thus relational and contingent, experienced and understood differently by different people; they are multiple, contested, fluid and uncertain (rather than fixed territorial units). The work of **John Urry**, **Tim Cresswell** and others, furthers these ideas, focusing on how the social, and its spatial expression as place, is composed of the ceaseless flow of people and materials across and between spaces, reconceiving social relations as a dense assemblage of mobilities. From such insights has developed the emergence of *relational geographies* as one of the key buzz concepts of twenty-first century geography (Jones, 2009).

As detailed in the discussion so far, given the different ways space and place have been operationalised, they remain relatively diffuse, ill-defined and inchoate concepts. Yet, they also remain fundamental to the geographical imagination, providing the basis of a discipline which is united primarily by its insistence on 'grounding' analyses of social, economic and political phenomena in their appropriate geographical context. In social and cultural geography, this focus on space and place has been further complicated by the adoption of different theoretical and methodological traditions. Crucial here is the continuing influence of two very different strands of geographic enquiry – on the one hand, Marxist accounts that explore the role of culture in the making of spaces of domination and resistance, and, on the other, the landscape studies of Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School (as well as the less celebrated German *Land-schaft* tradition) with their emphasis on

'place-making' (evident in the ways of life that are inscribed on the landscape). Yet, far from holding these literatures in abeyance, 'new' cultural geographers have worked with them, creating a productive dialogue between them as they endeavour to examine how the world is invested with cultural meanings: the work of **Denis Cosgrove** on the role of landscape in creating social and cultural orders is a case in point, while **Gillian Rose's** feminist critique of the landscape motif offered an influential perspective on the gendering of space and place. As Baldwin et al. (1999) suggest, cultural geographers accordingly regard both space *and* place as culturally produced, recognising the importance of both in the making of culture.

The idea that culture not only takes place, but makes place, is now manifest in a bewildering variety of work (including research into how the worlds of money, work, politics and production are enculturated). Reviewing this, Baldwin et al. (1999) assert that this coalesces around two key issues – firstly, the power and resistance played out in the everyday and, secondly, the politics of representation. Such concerns are certainly evident in those texts that were most significant in marking out the contours of a 'new' cultural geography. **Peter Jackson's** (1989) *Maps of Meaning*, for instance, offered a distinctive take on the cultural politics of place by emphasising the discursive construction of people and place via language. Here, Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony was used to stress that such representations were crucial in the making of social and cultural orders, while **Raymond Williams'** close attention to spatialised language was also an important influence. Drawing on similar theoretical sources of inspiration, as well as more traditional urban sociology, scholars in the so-called LA school (**Michael Dear, Ed Soja, Michael Storper and Mike**

**Davis**, among others) showed how such close attention to the material and discursive workings of power could be used to illuminate the 'struggle' for the city. Again, a key assertion was that the meaning of place is fought over in the realms of cultural politics, being fundamental in the making (and re-making) of identity and difference. Writing in the context of Los Angeles, held up as the exemplary post-modern city (and 'capital of the twentieth century'), such authors developed the idea that the class divides that characterised the modern industrial city were being recast and redrawn in the late capitalist era as capital and culture entwined to produce an entirely new city. Characterised as decentred, fragmented and carceral, this postmodern city is one where categories of belonging are problematised, and where notions of a politics of difference take on heightened significance (as **Iris Marion Young** shows).

This attention to the making of cultural identities through cultural practices of boundary maintenance also highlights how concepts of place (and space) have been problematised and challenged by postmodern and post-structural theories that emphasise the slipperiness and instability of language. Rejecting universal definitions of 'place', such notions stress that places are real-and-imagined assemblages constituted via language. As such, the boundaries of place are deemed contingent, their seeming solidity, authenticity or permanence a (temporary) achievement of cultural systems of signification that are open to multiple interpretations and readings. Within geography, significant attention has therefore been devoted to the way that some taken-for-granted ways of representing the world (e.g., maps, atlases and aerial photographs) are in fact partial, distorted and selective, offering a particular 'way of seeing': **Brian Harley's** influential



deconstruction of maps, for instance, showing how cartography is implicated in the making of the world, not just its representation. Likewise, **Trevor Barnes'** ongoing explorations of the making of economic geographies have done much to demonstrate the way that spatial practices produce different spaces and places. This attention to the contingent nature of space and place has also problematised the taken-for-granted (binary) distinctions that often structure cultural understandings of the world – e.g., the distinction of self and other, near and far, black and white, nature and culture, etc. Most powerfully, perhaps, work on the construction of global North and South, often scripted in terms of an opposition of Oriental and Occidental values, has shown (through the writing of **Edward Said** and **Homi Bhabha** in particular) that geopolitical processes of power and resistance (including 'global terrorism') rely on the spatial metaphors. While geographers may be keen to take potshots at those corporations and individuals most obviously involved in the stigmatisation of the South (including those involved in the development 'industry' – see **Amartya Sen** and **Michael Watts**), **Derek Gregory's** writing on spatial imaginaries of 'Otherness' squarely implicates geographers in this process. In response, there has been a widespread geographical engagement with postmodern ideas about reflexivity, polyvocality and the need to acknowledge the fluid identities of place, not least through the promotion of subaltern studies (as championed by **Gayatri Spivak**).

On occasion, this focus on language and representation has shifted the attention of geographers from the making of social, political and economic worlds to the making of individual subjectivities, though an obvious tension remains between those accounts which focus on the role of spatialised language in the

construction of self (via **Michel Foucault's** ideas about the imbrication of power and knowledge) and those that borrow from psychoanalytical theories (e.g., the work of Melanie Klein, Julia Kristeva, Derek Winnicott and **Judith Butler**) to explore the projection of the self into places that are part real, part fantasy (see **David Sibley**). This psychoanalytical perspective offers yet another take on space and place, whereby the unconscious mind is seen to 'map' itself onto space in ways that have important consequences in the constitution of gender and sexual identities. Here, as **Gillian Rose** (1993) contends, it is argued that the negotiation of the self, and its complex amalgam of desire, anxiety, aggression, guilt and love, takes place within and through the material and symbolic geographies of everyday life, with the psyche employing strategies to sustain its structure and relationship with the world.

Beyond this focus on the contested nature of space and place, elucidating the relationship *between* space and place remains a strong area of interest for geographers, particularly in the literature on *scale* (see **Neil Smith**, 2000). One key strand here is scrutiny of the way places are being transformed through processes of globalisation. Though alert to the entwining of local and global, and the creation of cultural hybridity, a key motif in such work has been that of global homogeneity. Claiming that a 'global space of flows' (to use **Manuel Castells'** terminology) is increasingly responsible for disseminating a standardised repertoire of consumer goods, images and lifestyles worldwide, the implication is that 'local' ways of life and place identities are being undermined by the logic of global capital accumulation as space is annihilated by time. Recently, a number of geographers have cited the work of anthropologist **Marc Augé** (1996), whose discussions

of the familiar spaces of the supermarket, shopping mall, airport, highway and multiplex cinema revolve around the idea that these are 'non-places', symptoms of a super-modern and accelerated global society. Drawing obvious parallels with humanistic geographers' work on placelessness, he appears to suggest that there are now many 'non-places' which are solely associated with the accelerated flow of people and goods around the world and do not act as localised sites for the celebration of 'real' cultures.

The cultural theorist **Zygmunt Bauman** (2000) similarly writes of these as 'places without place', making an explicit link to the spatial strategies of purification and exclusion that are at the heart of consumer society (simultaneously condemning the shallow and banal sociality evident in so many sites of consumption). As **Peter Taylor** (1999) has spelt out, the implication here is that local place is being obliterated by global space, while on a different scale, several leading commentators have argued for the redundancy of the nation-state in an era where global corporations are key makers of the global economy (as **Peter Dicken's** work on transnationalism demonstrates). In extreme 'globalist' accounts, as well as in the sometimes apocalyptic writings of **Paul Virilio** and **Jean Baudrillard**, these changes appear to signify not just the 'end of history', but the death of geography.

Exploring the way real and imagined place identities are bound up with the ways in which we experience and represent time and space, **David Harvey's** (1989) discussion of the condition of post-modernity (rather than super-modernity) offers a more nuanced account of place-making under conditions of globalisation. Drawing on the ideas of Lefebvre in particular, Harvey explores how places are constructed and experienced as material

artefacts, how they are represented in discourse and how they are used as representations in themselves, relating these changing cultural identities to processes of time-space compression that encourage homogenisation *and* differentiation. In doing so, he points out the contradictory manner in which place is becoming more, rather than less, important in a period of globalisation, stressing that the specificity of place (in terms of its history, culture, environment and so on) is crucial in perpetuating processes of capital accumulation.

Such arguments have also been addressed by geographers (albeit in a different manner) in the context of locality studies and regional geography. For example, **Benno Werlen** and **Anssi Paasi** have extensively explored the process of regionalisation and how regions are discursively and materially produced through the interplay of local and global processes. Further, the attempt by **Doreen Massey** (1991), as noted above, to interrogate a 'progressive sense of place' has also been influential for those exploring the equation between globalisation and place identity. For example, several authors including **J.K. Gibson-Graham**, **Linda McDowell**, **David Harvey** and **Saskia Sassen**, who have explored the economic geographies wrought in an era of globalisation, have sought to explore the tensions between fixity and mobility, noting that place, if anything, is becoming more, rather than less, important in an economy where 'image is everything'. Literatures on economic agglomeration, location and specialism across a wide variety of sectors (e.g., high-tech industry, advanced producer services, finance and banking) all thus point to the importance of face-to-face contact, quality of life and placed proximity in the creation of new 'global' industries. In the literature on global cities, for example, scholars such

as **Peter Taylor**, **Michael Storper** and **Saskia Sassen** have developed **Castells'** take on global space of flows by demonstrating that key world cities have become more important in a global era as they are the strategic 'places to be' for those who seek to control the global economy. As **Nigel Thrift's** work on performance and the 'non-representational' nature of space emphasises, these are also places where knowledge is embodied and acted upon by those who are, in effect, the 'fast subjects' of global society (see also **Linda McDowell** on 'capital cultures').

In **Peter Jackson's** (1999) summation, the emergence of new place identities through hybridisation denies any simple equation between globalisation and the homogenisation of space. Instead, he argues that the meaning (and hence value) of different goods and cultures is created and negotiated by consumers in different places, with the 'traffic in things' across space implicated in the making of social relations. In many ways, this echoes work in anthropology concerning the meaning of material artefacts, but adds a distinctive geographic focus via notions of displacement, movement and speed. Far from asserting the death of place (or, conversely, its resurgence), this points to a geography that is open to notions of difference and the post-structural insistence (expressed forcefully by **Gilles Deleuze**) that the world is constantly being territorialised, de-territorialised and re-territorialised in unexpected ways. For some commentators, the corollary of this is that space and place need to become conceived of as fragile entities, constantly made and remade through the *actor networks* that **Bruno Latour** insists involve people, things, languages and representations. We might speculate that it is through the creation of shared notions of place – and common understandings of space – that networks

gain their power. Economic, political and social orders are thus immanent in these networks, being reinforced or re-made as 'material' moves through the network and takes different (commodity) forms in different contexts. Hence, there is no 'constitutive outside' which explains an 'inside'; place is not a location whose character can be explained through reference to wider spatial processes. Instead, such perspectives interpret both space and place as entities always becoming, in process and unavoidably caught up in power relations.



## INTELLECTUAL AND DISCIPLINARY GENEALOGIES

As should be clear from the above discussion, there are many varying opinions on how to theorise and study the world. In particular, there is much debate between proponents of different theoretical traditions (positivism, Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism and so on) as they seek to develop and use concepts to think spatially. Of course, how such knowledge is produced is itself theorised, with a number of commentators developing disciplinary and conceptual histories that trace out the development and adoption of spatial ideas and approaches (for example, see Bird, 1989; Cloke et al., 1991; Hubbard et al., 2002; Johnston, 1986; 1991; 2000; Livingstone, 1992; Peet, 1998; Unwin, 1992). These most commonly are genealogical projects that seek to explain spatial thinking at the time of writing – mapping the present – by charting the conceptual paths followed by spatial theorists.

The most popular approach to date has been, following Kuhn (1962; 1970), to focus on identifying different geographic traditions that come to dominate spatial thinking through a particular period – becoming the dominant paradigm; and to document the transition – a paradigm shift – between traditions as new philosophical approaches emerge to challenge previous ways of thinking. Indeed, the pages of academic journals and books are full of debates in which the authors claim that their ‘new’ way of looking at the world represents the most meaningful, progressive and correct way of doing geography, rejecting existing modes of exploration and explanation out of hand and inviting others to adopt and develop their ‘new’ approach. These paradigm shifts, Johnston (1996) has argued, are the by-product of generational transitions. He suggests that as new schools of thought emerge, they are embraced at first by younger academics. As the productivity of earlier generations, schooled in different approaches to geography declines, the emerging generation become co-opted into the geographical establishment taking over the editing of journals, incorporating their ideas into teaching and writing textbooks. In this way, Johnston (1996) contends that academics of different age cohorts become socialised through different paradigms so that education and training produces generational shifts in ways of thinking about space and place.

It is common for those adopting such a paradigmatic approach to plot the intellectual development of Geography (e.g., Johnston, 1996) to argue that positivist spatial science emerged in the late 1950s to challenge – and ultimately supplant – a regional tradition concerned with describing and mapping (see especially the entries on **Brian Berry**, **Torsten Hägerstrand**, **Peter Haggett**, **Waldo**

**Tobler** and **Alan Wilson**). This positivist paradigm was itself challenged in the early 1970s by other approaches such as behavioural geography (see entry on **Reg Golledge**), humanist traditions (see entries on **Anne Buttimer**, **David Ley** and **Yi-Fu Tuan**), and structural approaches, such as Marxism (see entries on **David Harvey**, **Neil Smith** and **Michael Watts**) and feminism (see entries on **Gillian Rose**, **Doreen Massey**, **Linda McDowell** and **J.K. Gibson-Graham**). From a paradigm perspective, we might suggest that these dominant ways of thinking space and place were challenged in the 1990s by postmodern (see entries on **Michael Dear** and **Ed Soja**) and post-structural perspectives (see entries on **Jean Baudrillard**, **Judith Butler**, **Gilles Deleuze**, and **Michel Foucault**). Into the 2000s, geographers appear to have become fixated on questions of non-representation and affect, with **Nigel Thrift**’s work being particularly suggestive of new ways of doing geographies that are faithful to the multiplicity and immanence of the world – a notion also captured in the notion of ‘relational space’ central to the work of **Doreen Massey** and others.

However, the notion of paradigm shifts has been subject to critique as it has become more apparent that different approaches to geography are never completely overthrown (Mayhew, 2001; Hubbard et al., 2002). While it is true that institutional arenas of publishing outlets, departments, professional organisations, and informal socio-academic networks can reinforce the interests or agendas of particular academic communities, nonetheless there are always dissenting voices. Different ways of thinking about space and place are always concurrent rather than consecutive even if at particular moments some are more fashionable than others. The danger of a paradigmatic approach to understanding the geographical tradition is that it creates

a linear narrative that suggests that spatial thought has developed through unified (and generational) paradigms when in reality consensus has seldom been complete or stable (something that Johnston acknowledges when he employs the paradigm concept). The notion of sequential progress thus creates a false consistency in which contributions that deviate from the dominant narrative are omitted. Noting this tendency, **Sibley** (1995) has documented the ways in which the geographies and histories of women, people of colour, those in developing countries, and other oppressed groups, have tended to be written from certain dominant positions, thereby silencing their voices and providing selective and partial geographical accounts.

Further, a paradigmatic approach often fails to fully explore the mechanisms by which ideas are constructed and knowledge is generated. As such, they often trace out trajectories of thought while glossing over the nuances in how intellectual ideas are developed within complex social and institutional structures and practices. Indeed, as **Donna Haraway** (1991) and **Pierre Bourdieu** (1988) explain in their own distinctive manners, spatial thought is not developed in a vacuum, but is rather constructed by individuals (and individuals collaborating) and situated within their own personal and political beliefs, the culture of academia, and institutional and social structures. From this perspective ideas are never 'pure' but rather emerge and become legitimated and contested according to particular material and social contexts.

Accordingly, an understanding of how ideas emerge, how they are adopted and how they evolve, requires an approach that acknowledges the situation and conditions in which they are constructed. The approach adopted in this book – biographical essays on key thinkers – seeks

to provide such an analysis. While such a biographical approach does not reveal a broad historicisation of spatial thought, it is very useful for demonstrating the genealogy of intellectual ideas, revealing for example the ways in which personal history affects intellectual development, as the entries for **Edward Said**, **bell hooks** and **Anssi Paasi** demonstrate. Edward Said's experiences of being born into a Christian-Arab family in Palestine during British administration, and his subsequent fight throughout his adult-life for Palestinian self-determination, undoubtedly shaped his thinking about the relationship between culture and imperialism. Likewise, bell hooks has attributed her attempt to theorise the problems of black patriarchy, sexism, and gender subordination to her childhood experiences of growing up as a young black woman in Kentucky (United States) during the 1950s and early 1960s. And **Anssi Paasi's** thinking on regions and regional geography has been shaped by the nature of Finnish academia and his strong empirical focus on Finland (see also Moss, 2001, on autobiographical accounts of the intellectual development of geographers).

Consequently, a biographical approach reveals how individual thinkers engage with a rich legacy of ideas drawn from past generations (as well as the influence of their contemporaries). Indeed, it should be clear from the cross-referencing between entries that no theorist develops their view of the world in an intellectual vacuum. The courses they took as students, discussions with their mentors and colleagues, the texts that they have read, and papers they have heard, all expose them to a multitude of ideas that shape their own intellectual development. Such development can be traced across thinkers to reveal a rough genealogy of ideas. For example, **Gillian Rose's** ideas about

the privileging of male ways of conceiving of space and place have been heavily influenced by psychoanalytic and post-structural writings. One major source of inspiration here has been the works of the feminist philosopher **Judith Butler**. Judith Butler, in turn, while again drawing from a diverse set of philosophical texts, has extensively utilised the writings of **Michel Foucault**. Likewise, when developing his critical philosophy, Foucault was influenced by (amongst others) the German philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. Of course, Gillian Rose is not the end point in this lineage but is rather a node in a complex web of interconnections, with her theorisation in turn no doubt providing influence and inspiration for a generation of feminist and cultural geographers. Moreover, Foucault has inspired many other spatial theorists in ways that are quite strikingly different to the performative analyses of Butler and Rose: for example, **Arturo Escobar** has used his writings on power to study international development, while **Brian Harley** cited Foucault extensively in his deconstruction of the map as a spatial language.

Indeed, it is clear from many of the entries that the same source of inspiration can be interpreted and used in different ways. For example, both **Ed Soja** and **David Harvey** draw upon **Henri Lefebvre's** seminal text *The Production of Space* to develop their own ideas about the workings of capital, but differ in the interpretation and weight they place on Lefebvre's argument. Of course, a particular thinker can also influence different audiences because their own thoughts have transformed over time as they themselves come into contact with the thoughts of others and develop new lines of argument. For example, **David Harvey** remains a key influence on spatial science due to his book *Explanation in Geography* (1969), which

provided a theoretical blueprint for positivist geography. At the same time, he is also a key source of inspiration and ideas for Marxist geographers who draw upon his 1973 book *Social Justice and the City* (and subsequent work) which utilised the writings of Karl Marx to construct structural explanations for socio-spatial inequality. Indeed, his 1982 text *The Limits to Capital* remains perhaps the most important statement by a geographer on the uneven production of space under capitalism.

A situated approach to understanding the production of spatial thought also, of course, reveals the extent to which place makes a difference to knowledge creation. For example, groupings of particular scholars in particular universities at particular periods can produce cross-generational schools of thinking. While Paris so often seems to be the locus of social theory (see **Jean Baudrillard**, **Manuel Castells**, **Gilles Deleuze**, **Michel Foucault**, **Marc Augé**, **Henri Lefebvre**, also Gane, 2003), other centres also emerge if we search for key locations in the theorisation of space and place. For example, Carl Sauer inspired the Berkeley school of cultural geography that influenced several generations of American geographers; **Stuart Hall** was a key actor in establishing Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies whose work did much to shape 'new' cultural geography; the 1950s Washington graduate class (including **Brian Berry** and **Waldo Tobler**) are widely acknowledged as fuelling the so-called 'quantitative revolution'; and the writings of **Michael Dear**, **Ed Soja**, **Michael Storper**, **Mike Davis** and colleagues means that Southern California is widely acknowledged as the home of post-modern urbanism. On the other hand, the development of an individual's ideas can represent a reaction *against* the place where they are/were

located. For example, to return to **Gillian Rose**, her book *Feminism and Geography* (1993) is widely acknowledged to have grown out of her critique of the Cambridge school of geography in which she was educated. A biographical approach thus alerts to the significant role of disciplinary spaces of education, as well as the often neglected sites of the *field*, the *body* and the *act of dissemination* by which knowledge is produced and circulated (Dewsbury and Naylor, 2002; see also Driver, 1995). As such, the biographical approach adopted in this volume focuses on both the *roots* (origins) and *routes* (directions they have evolved) of thinking on space and place. While not providing an exhaustive account, the following entries ultimately allow us to discern the many roots and routes – the intellectual genealogies – that explain why space and place have come to mean such different things to different people in different places.



At a time when some are rightly suspicious of the concentration of academic power and influence in the higher education sector (see Short, 2002), and others are seeking to resist the logic of the auditing procedures that relies on measures of individual research output (see Sidaway, 2000), there are some dangers inherent in compiling a list of key thinkers. Yet, as we have shown in our introduction, our intention is not to identify the most important or influential theorists, but to provide a guide to some (but inevitably not all) of those figures who have progressed our *theoretical* understanding – in some important way – of space and place,

at the same time as illustrating the diverse traditions of geographical thinking. While choosing just a few thinkers inevitably privileges them as key conduits of theorising and practising geographical analyses – and simultaneously marginalises and silences other thinkers and their theories – it is important to appreciate the ways in which knowledge is produced through intellectual encounters and dialogues (as illustrated in the previous section).

Given our intention to highlight the theoretical contribution these figures have made, the entries here do not offer a thorough or balanced overview of the career of each thinker. Instead, each follows a common format, starting with an overview of each subject's academic scholarship alongside some basic biographic information. While this overview is, of necessity, cursory, it hopefully provides an understanding of how each thinker developed their ideas in particular social, spatial and temporal contexts. This contextual material is followed by a summary of the way that each has conceived of space and place, aiming to identify why each is regarded as an important and influential thinker in debates on space and place. In a final section, each contributor offers a critical reflection on the work of each thinker, outlining some of the key controversies that adhere to each thinker's work (while showing how their work has been adapted by those working in different geographical and theoretical traditions). Each entry concludes with two reference lists: the first being a guide to each thinker's most important 'key' works. Here, the most important and key works by each thinker are listed, with an emphasis on those works that are most readily and widely available (hence, where there are multiple editions of one book in existence, we have tended to list the

most recent English version rather than the first edition). The second reading list contains minor books, papers and chapters (where these are cited in the text), as well as a range of secondary sources. It is

our hope that each entry inspires readers to explore these references, and develop their own take on the varied geographical imaginations deployed by these key thinkers on space and place.

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