Poststructuralism

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Our purpose in this chapter is to review key features of poststructuralism and to describe some of the ways this theory is employed within cultural geography. Following some introductory remarks that situate poststructuralism, we provide a synopsis of structuralism, the foundational theoretical framework against which early poststructuralist thought was directed and received its name. From this backdrop we then move to a discussion of some of the more important theoretical tenets of poststructuralism, introduced by way of two influential theorists, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. We then offer a poststructuralist theorization of representation and space, two important categories in cultural geography. The penultimate section offers some thoughts on the poststructuralist methodology of deconstruction. We conclude with a discussion of future articulations between poststructuralist theory and cultural geography.

Poststructuralist thought emerged in geography in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Challenging forms of thought that relied upon traditional theories of objectivity and subjectivity, center and margin, materialism and idealism, truth and fiction, regularity and difference, and certainty and indeterminacy, poststructuralism brought to the entire field of geography a critique that unsettled the ontological and epistemological moorings of extant theoretical frameworks (see, for example, Dixon & Jones 1996, 1998; Doel 1999; Gregory 1994; Keith & Pile 1993; Nast & Pile 1998; Olsson 1992; Pile 1996; Pile & Thrift 1995). What were these existing frameworks, and why did the poststructuralist alternative find currency among cultural geographers? The answers to these questions are related, for at the time of poststructuralism's arrival in the discipline, most geographers worked with one of three metatheories, or 'paradigms' – spatial science, critical realism, and humanism (Johnston & Claval 1984)[1] – and cultural geographers had an uneasy relationship with each of them. First, consider that many so-called traditional cultural geographers were, like many of their spatial scientist counterparts, naive empiricists (Jackson 1994), comfortable in focusing on mapped phenomena with little in-depth analysis of the deeper structures that might underlie these objects (compare, for example, Duncan's 1980 critique of cultural geographers' theory of culture to Peet's

1977 critique of theory within spatial science). Yet most cultural geographers at the time explicitly rejected spatial science: they were skeptical of its adherence to objective modes of social investigation and to its often mechanistic search for order (Ley 1980). Critical realism (Sayer 1984, 2000), by contrast, offered a deeper route to understanding through a structured yet flexible ontology of direct forces and indirect mediations. One might think that critical realism would have proven attractive to many theoretically-minded cultural geographers, but in practice this paradigm was largely silent on issues of interpretation and representation, which had long been central analytic concepts for cultural geographers (Lewis 1979; Meinig 1979). Critical realists also tended to privilege economic over cultural explanations; these were seen as reductionist by some cultural geographers (e.g. Duncan & Ley 1992, 1993). If the 1970s came close to offering a coherent theoretical framework for cultural geography, it was humanism (Buttimer 1976; Relph 1976; Tuan 1976, 1977), and indeed many traditional cultural geographers could be so labeled. But a humanistic geography that focused on the recovery of the experiences and meanings of individuals, when theorized as relatively unmarked by wider social forces, was viewed as overly volunteerist (e.g. Gregory 1981). It is within this uneasy conceptual context that a number of cultural geographers turned to poststructuralism.[2]

It is important to emphasize at the outset that poststructuralism did not offer a clear counterontology to spatial science, critical realism, or humanism. Rather, poststructuralism appeared to undermine each of these frameworks by claiming that any ontology is 'always already' an outcome of epistemology, of our socially constructed ways of knowing. In so throwing ontology into doubt, poststructuralism asks us to reflect not only how we know, but also how elements of ontology – such as space, place, nature, culture, individual, and society – become framed in thought in the first instance. In posing such questions, poststructuralism finds a productive moment in examining how social relations of power fix social practices, objects, events, and meanings as self-evident, given, natural, and enduring. In regard to geography, this requires an analysis of why some objects rather than others are taken to be central to geographic inquiry, as well as an analysis of how those objects are understood to exist and relate to one another.

Such theoretical concerns proved attractive for many cultural geographers. In particular, they focused attention on the 'crisis of representation' that had otherwise escaped critical analysis in geography, thereby introducing such questions as: How has the 'real' world been constructed as a given ontological fact, and who has the power to produce these truths? How can we think about meaning as both indeterminate and contextual? How should we theorize the relationships between meanings, practices, and the material world? And, what is the position of the cultural geographer in this process: as the expert 'decoder' of cultural forms and practices, or as a situated 'interpreter' who can only re-present these forms and practices once again?

Before we begin to address these questions, it seems worthwhile to emphasize that though its intellectual roots are in continental philosophy and literary theory, poststructuralism knows no boundaries when it comes to objects of analysis. So, though its impact has been strongly felt in cultural geography, where it has not only invigorated research questions but has also led to the identification of new objects of analysis – including many reviewed in this volume – its critical stance toward

simplistic forms of truth, representation, and politics have become points of engagement between it and other geographic subfields, including economic geography (Barnes 1996; Gibson-Graham 1996); geopolitics and the state (Hanna 1996; Ó Tuathail 1996); rural geography (Cloke & Little 1997; Dixon & Hapke 2003; Lawrence 1995); cartography (Harley 1989); social geographies of gender (McDowell & Sharp 1997; Rose 1993), 'race' (Kobayashi 1994; Mahtani 2002; Nast 2000; Pred 2000), and bodies (Nast & Pile 1998; Pile & Thrift 1995); tourism geography (Del Casino & Hanna 2000; Hanna & Del Casino 2003); virtual geographies (Crang et al. 1999; Hillis 1999; Kitchen & Dodge 2001); postcolonial geographies (Jacobs 1996; Gregory 1994; Howitt & Suchet 2003; Sparke 1998); and nature–society studies (Braun & Castree 1998; Castree & Braun 2001; Demeritt 2002; Willems-Braun 1997). Moreover, poststructuralism can be credited with destabilizing the very demarcations that permit the identification of 'subfields' – in short, the boundaries between the cultural, social, economic, political, and environmental spheres are far less distinct under poststructuralism than they once were (Dixon & Jones 1996, 1998). It is through this process of destabilization that poststructuralism within cultural geography has wide-ranging implications for geography at large.

Before the Post: What was Structuralism?

The literature associated with structuralism is both complex and wide-ranging, but in all its forms it holds that phenomena, including all manner of practices, objects, events, and meanings (let us call these POEMs for short), are taken to exist not as discrete entities, but as parts relationally *embedded within*, and *constituted by*, underlying wholes, or structures. It is not unusual to see structuralism rendered as an inflexible and static framework, so let us clear up a few misunderstandings. A structure should not be conceived of as an external architecture upon which POEMs are hung, for such a view implies that a structure exists independently of the parts it embeds; instead, structures are constituted solely from the relations among their constitutive elements, or parts. And, since they do not exist independently of POEMs, structures are dynamic and spatially differentiated fields of relations. Finally, structures do not have material form nor do they have the ability to act; they are not visible in the empirical realm, but inasmuch as they systematize the relations and therefore the causal efficacy of POEMs, they are presumed to operate.

The most important structuralist thinker for the development of poststructuralism was the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). His goal was to understand the abstract structures behind all forms of social communication, from painting and religious rituals to chess games and the rules of courtship. As a linguist, Saussure applied his theory of semiotics – that is, the science of signs – to the study of language. In doing so, he rejected the traditional, historical approach to the study of language, a philological endeavor focusing on detailed descriptions of the historical evolution of particular languages and language families. He also rejected the positivist line of research dominant in his day, which sought to understand language through analysis of sounds and their impact on the nervous system. For Saussure, elements of language gain their currency according to the structure

within which they are embedded (Saussure 1974). A particular language, therefore, must be studied as a systematized collection of sounds and inscriptions, each of which, as in structuralism more generally, can only be assigned a value, or meaning, when thought of in relation to the remainder of the elements. But how does language work to transmit meanings from one person to another? In analyzing the relations among these elements, Saussure struck an analytic distinction between the 'signified,' which is the mental construct, or idea, of a particular phenomenon, and the 'signifier,' which takes the form of a distinguishable 'mark,' such as a sound, inscription, or special body movement. Within a language, signifieds are associated with particular signifiers to form a 'sign'; in consequence, when people communicate they use particular signs to convey and understand meaning. And, because signifiers are considered to exist within the realm of the symbolic, that is, as abstract representations that refer to real-world phenomena, the systems of communication within which they are embedded can be thought of as relatively autonomous from any real-world referent. Given that there is no necessary relationship between the signifier and the signified, the actual choice of signifier is arbitrary. This is why, of course, various languages can have different words (signifiers) for the same object (the signified). Indeed, the signifier only has value when it can be differentiated from other signifiers and used to convey a particular signified again and again. All languages, then, depend upon the fact that we learn to recognize this difference between signifiers.

Now the very fact that communication can occur through signifiers that are fundamentally arbitrary, implied for Saussure that a system, or set of rules, must exist by which people can indeed be taught to differentiate between signifiers, and to which all must subscribe if communication is to proceed unhindered. Just as chess and courtship (both systems of signs) are built around certain rules of the game (the moves of the knight, the lingering glance), so too are all languages founded upon abstract regulations that shape the ways in which they are played, or manifested in practice. Within this conception, the underlying structure that allows communication to take place is called the *langue*, while the actual practices by which communication takes place Saussure called the *parole*. To sum up, for Saussure the elements of language constitute interrelated signs, whose mark or signifier is embedded in a structure of langue, which itself may be transformed through the practice of parole.

That Saussure's model could be applied to any number of sign systems in any language and across myriad communication systems accounts in part for its popularity well into the 1960s in a variety of disciplines, including literary theory and philosophy. Freud's psychoanalysis, in particular his analyses of dreams, was also rooted in structuralism. So too was anthropologist Lévi-Strauss's search for the organizing principles of culture. And, in some versions of Marxism, structuralism underwrote attempts to explain many aspects of social life as determined by the underlying mode of production.[3]

Post-ing Structuralism

Though elements of poststructuralism can be found in the work of philosophers such Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, its formal recognition as a body of

theory can be traced to a host of more contemporary social, cultural, and literary theorists. Here we discuss the work of two of the most important theorists, Jacques Derrida (b. 1930) and Michel Foucault (1926–1984).

It was Derrida who, at a 1966 conference on structuralism in the city of Baltimore, introduced poststructuralist thought to an international audience through the presentation of a paper titled 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences.' The major goal of the conference was to stimulate innovation in structuralist thought across a wide variety of disciplines. Yet Derrida's paper (published in 1970 and reissued in 1972) critiqued the very notion of structure by analyzing the process of 'centering' upon which diverse forms of structuralist thought were constructed. Tracing back particularly significant manifestations of this centering process in Western thought, Derrida suggested that what seemed to be secure ontological categories, such as presence, essence, existence, cause, origin, substance, subject, truth, God, and 'man,' were merely epistemological constructs handed down through generations of philosophers and scientists.

Specifically, Derrida noted that in fixing a structure's parts, the whole must simultaneously exclude all of those other elements that do not have some form of relation with its center. In the process, an inside and an outside of the structure are posited. This center around which a structure is assembled holds a paradoxical position, in that while it is related to all of those elements within the structure, it is also held to be fixed and inviolable. As Derrida argues:

it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (it is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere*. The center is not the center. The concept of centered structure . . . is contradictorily coherent. And as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire. (1972: 248; emphasis in original)

As Derrida went on to note, this centering process is the product of a binary – an either/or – epistemology. Such a way of thinking about the world stabilizes not only the meaning of one term, such as Truth, but through the assignation of a periphery, defines an 'other' that falls outside of its purview, fiction. In a similar vein, binary thought produces sharp contrasts between essence and contingence, cause/effect and serendipity, substance and chimera, subject and object, God and idol, and 'man' and nature.

Poststructuralists register three complaints with this mode of thought. First, and following on from the work of Derrida, poststructuralists maintain that in all of these binary systems, what appears to be the 'foundation' for a system of thought is but a hypothetical construct, one that reveals more about the society that produced it than the supposed character of the real world. In this case, poststructuralists turn their attention to the production of centers, margins, and the boundaries that demarcate them. In recognizing centers and margins as products of an either/or mode of thinking rather than the natural state of affairs, poststructuralists are drawn to several key questions. One the one hand, they ask who has the social power to draw the boundary between a center and margin; on the other hand, they question

to what end is any such system of differentiation directed. In recognizing categorizations as the product of social relations of power, attention turns to which social groups have the discursive resources to construct categories; that is, who has the ability to name the world? Thus, a major component of poststructuralist research involves inquiries into the categories that frame 'reality' according to either/or binaries.

Second, binaries presume a 'totalizing' epistemology, so termed because either/or thought can only posit a world in which everything either 'is' or 'is not.' Epistemologically speaking, the effect of binary thought is to constrain what can be conceived about the world. Now, in some instances binary thought can be productive, as in, for example, the formulation of computer languages that operate on an underlying system of ones and zeroes. But in other instances, binaries so stricture what knowledge is possible, that they unduly limit what can be conceived in the world. In this way, the binary epistemology ultimately infuses ontological concepts (e.g., the individual vs. society, local vs. global, chaos vs. order). Consider, for example, our understanding of phenomena as either natural or cultural. Such binary thinking will ultimately organize virtually all questions researchers might want to ask about social or physical systems. These questions, however, can ultimately be exposed as circular in character, for, though researchers may think they are posing questions about 'real' categories, they are by default investigating the products of their own binary epistemology.

A third complaint about binary modes of thinking is that they are not, in fact, as fully relational as structuralism claims them to be. For example, while Saussure's model assumes that language is comprised of an arbitrary system of signifiers whose elements become meaningful through their relation to each other (the word 'cat' does not sound like 'dog' and thus permits us to understand the difference), for him the concept of a feline four-legged mammal (the signified) faithfully re-presented the real-world animal, or referent, independent of the existence of its canine variant. Using Derrida's critique of Saussure, however, we could argue that the mental construct of a feline is not grounded in the one-to-one relationship between it and the referent, but is definable only in relation to all other concepts that give feline its distinction by referring to what feline is *not*. Thus, feline is *negatively* defined in relation to a host of other concepts such as canine, leonine, equine, lupine, and bovine. As such, signifieds are not only relational, but also arbitrary, at least in the sense that biologists have defined classification systems that permit differentiation among these animals. In this manner, poststructuralism throws doubt onto all certainties regarding researchers' ability to 'correctly' represent reality, for our concepts do not simply re-present that reality, in the sense of mirroring their referent, but represent reality within a fully relational system of understanding that permits the referent to be cognized as it is. It was at this point in the development of poststructuralism – the point when theorists saw that centers have no natural locus – that:

language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse . . . that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification *ad infinitum*. (Derrida 1972: 249)[4]

A second influential theorist of poststructuralism was the French philosopher-historian Michel Foucault.[5] Whereas Derrida focused on the dualistic presumptions of Western Philosophy, Foucault undertook to problematize the production of modernist forms of knowledge, noting how 'Western' scientific ideas and practices since the eighteenth century produced a series of non-normal 'others,' such as the insane and the sexually perverted. In doing so, he drew attention to how this modernist undertaking has been underwritten by a particular conception of 'Man' as a unique being, capable of describing, explaining, and mastering the operation of body and mind, as well as society and nature. Hence, within these scientific analyses, Man is not only the object and the subject of his own understanding, he is also understood to orchestrate the social and physical realms within which he lives.

In placing Man within these contexts, Foucault argues, modernist forms of knowledge necessarily establish a series of insurmountable paradoxes. First, Man himself appears as an object to be studied empirically alongside other objects, but is also posited as the transcendental source from which the possibility of all knowledge can flow. Second, in determining the domain of 'conscious thought,' Man has also framed the 'unconscious.' And yet, in presenting 'himself' as the source of intelligibility, Man must attempt to explain this latter realm; that is, to think the unthinkable. And third, Man conceives of himself as the product of history, and yet posits himself as the source of that very history. As Foucault concluded in *The Order of Things* (1973a), modernist sciences of Man simply cannot produce a comprehensive account of their subject/object, and so must disintegrate under the weight of their own contradictions.

Foucault's own historical analyses can be considered a commentary on this same condition, but also a means of stepping outside of the traditional terms of debate in order to produce knowledge that is nonmodernist in technique as well as intent. Among the most important of his concepts is that of "discursive practice." Put briefly, a discursive practice is a regularity that emerges in the very act of articulation. As such, it should not be thought of as an idealized theory of something, nor as a set of meanings that are somehow 'imprinted' onto real-world phenomena. These rely on an idealist understanding of the mind as the source of knowledge, and presume an unwarranted distinction between mind and body, self and social. For Foucault, each articulation establishes the conditions of possibility for thought and action; that is, it posits what is appropriate and reasonable to be thought and practiced. As such, an articulation is more than mere communication – it is an active intervention in the social and physical realms. From this position, Foucault derived two analytic projects.

First, Foucault noted that each articulation is produced and understood within a given context, such that it is afforded meaning. The kinds of articulations Foucault was interested in were those that had gained sufficient authority such that they were deemed to be valid even when they were taken out of context. That is, they had gained the status of truth. Hidden in previous analyses of communication, argued Foucault, were the means by which these particular articulations gained distinction. Within a discourse, he maintained, a disciplining process takes place within and between strategies of power, which are all those techniques by which a statement is accepted as valid and appropriate, and by which that statement could not but be articulated in the way it was. In regard to social research, for example, these

techniques would include empirical confirmation, dialectical argument, and phe-nomenological bracketing. Each of these allows for the privileging of some articu-lations over and above others as valid claims concerning the nature of 'reality.' For Foucault, power is considered within this context to operate through discourse, and to be complicit with the production of specific forms of knowledge that not only claim to provide insight into how the world works, but which are also deployed in the active management of that world. Key to this process is the emergence of a spe-cialized cadre of experts, such as scientists and educators, who draw on these bodies of knowledge to further enhance their own status by ensuring the diffusion of par-ticular ideas and concepts through society. Importantly, this legitimacy ensues not from their 'personal' character, but from the positions they hold within an institu-tional framework, as well as within a given set of social relations. A discourse, then, is not something that is simply produced and received by people; rather, it is tied into a discursive site, such as a school, church, office, scientific laboratory, and so on, where knowledge is actively produced and disseminated.

A relevant example of this mode of analysis is Foucault's commentaries on space. According to Foucault (1984), eighteenth-century France saw a shift in how, and by whom, space was conceived and discussed. Previously, space had been the domain of the architects, who envisioned the governed city as a metaphor for the governed territory. The primary spatial trope was one of penetration, whereby all of the city, and by projection, all of the state, was laid open to the regulatory surveillance and practices of the police. As the century progressed, new cadres of experts, including engineers and builders, emerged as the authoritative sources of knowledge on transport linkages and planning. The associated discourses addressed space in terms of speed, mobility, and networks, and entailed a revisioning of the links between the exercise of political power and the space of both the city and the territory.

Second, and following Saussure's focus on semiotics as a science of signs, Fou-cault interpreted the term 'discourse' far beyond speech to include the inscription of social relations (and thereby the exercise of power) on and through the body itself. The complex interplay of social relations of power both enables and con-strains the body in certain ways: that is, the capacity of the body to be shaped and to act. Foucault refers to the emergence of what he termed "technologies of the self" – disciplinary actions that have become taken for granted. These range from new standards of punctuality to the self-regulation of dress and hygiene. In making this argument, Foucault's aim is not to reiterate the imposition of coercive power over individuals, but to show the tendency for modern-day power to be depersonalized, diffused, relational, and anonymous. Power is not held by one particular group, but rather is exercised through a series of everyday activities. For some critics, such as Terry Eagleton (1990), this position denotes a hopeless pessimism, in that power is understood to 'discipline' and 'normalize' more and more dimensions of everyday life. For Foucault, however, the means of resisting relations of power lie in the disruption of this daily performance. It is at the local level, even unto the site of the body itself, that resistance takes place.

The case studies Foucault chose to pursue, consisting of penal, education, and medical systems, focus accordingly on the ways in which the 'self' is constructed through discursive practices. The ensuing histories are also, however, illustrative of

Foucault's attempt to produce a body of work that does not operate according to modernist modes of interpretation. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1974), he writes:

My aim was to analyse . . . history in the discontinuity that no teleology would reduce in advance; to map it in a dispersion that no pre-established horizon would embrace; to allow it to be deployed in an anonymity on which no transcendental constitution would impose the form of the subject; to open it up to a temporality that would not promise the return of any dawn. (p. 203)

For Foucault, there is no necessary trajectory to history, nor is there a definitive causal mechanism, such as human agency, that lies at the heart of social change. In representing history, then, each mode of analysis – or "genealogy" – must be considered as conceived and articulated around present-day issues and concerns, such that succeeding analyses of the same topic must necessarily rewrite the past from the perspective of the present. Nevertheless, his own project was to bring to light how particular clusters of discourse/power worked to produce, fill, and maintain the categories by which we claim to know the world, such as culture, nature, history, geography, individual, society, modern, primitive, objective, subjective, and so on. All of these terms have an "archaeology" to them, by which Foucault means a series of contexts within which they have been endowed with meaning and significance.

In sum, for Foucault, social researchers cannot, and should not, pursue truth, at least when interpreted as a category with the status of a universal, timeless quality (that is, Truth with a big 'T'). This is because each society has its own regime of truth, the specifics of which are fashioned by: the types of discourses deployed (these can be legal, moral, rational, and teleological, among others); the techniques and procedures used to distinguish between true and false statements; and the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (1980: 131). It is at this point that we can see an affinity between Foucault's account of discursive practices and Derrida's concern to destabilize those centers – such as origin, subject, essence, and Truth – by which explanatory modes of analysis operate. The project of both theorists is to work against accepted ways of thinking, researching, and writing about the world and in so doing open up the question of what it is to 'know.' In the next section we illustrate this rethinking by reference to two important categories within cultural geography – representation and space.

Representation, Space, and their Intersections

Representation stands as a key concept in poststructuralist thought. It can be theoretically distinguished from *re-presentation* by reserving the latter's meaning as implying the impossible, namely, capturing and reflecting – as in confining and mirroring – a real-world referent in thought, language, and visual media. Representation, by contrast, refers to the social mediation of the real world through ever-present processes of signification (Aitken & Zonn 1994; Barnes & Duncan 1991; Cresswell & Dixon 2002; Del Casino & Hanna 2003; Duncan 1990; Duncan & Sharp 1993; Hanna 1996; Harley 1989; Harvey 2003; Jones & Natter 1999; Natter & Jones 1993). By illustration, we can return to the relationships among

signifiers, signifieds, and real-world referents. As should be clear, within poststructuralism such relations are not taken for granted; rather, they become foci of analysis in their own right. This is because signifieds are not presumed to stand alone, but are considered to be defined in relation to each other through the socially constructed discourses that give them their definition and character. As a result of the embeddedness of signifieds in discourse, no signifier can be presumed to stand in a one-to-one relationship with a real-world referent. In light of this reconceptualization, poststructuralists refer to representational processes instead of re-presentation, and they direct their investigations toward an understanding of the mediating role of discourses in representational processes.[6]

Let us consider now some of the implications of this theoretical position. First, poststructuralists take note of and critique forms of thought that distinguish between the "real" world and its "mere" re-presentation in communication, whether conceived in terms of language, sensory perceptions, or electronic media. This critique is a source of continuing conceptual confusion between poststructuralists and other theorists, since much traditional social thought is predicated on the very distinction between the real world of POEMs and their re-presentation in thought and language. Conflated with real/representation are other binary formulations such as materiality/ideology and concrete/abstract (see, for example, Mitchell's 1995, 2000, and 2002 critiques of an 'immaterial' cultural geography). For nonpoststructuralists, this distinction and the impulse to resolve it implies a faith in the possibility of unmediated re-presentation, wherein researchers might actually "get it right." For poststructuralists, by contrast, there is no Truth lurking behind real-world objects. This is not to reject the existence of the world *per se* (cf. Peet 1998), but rather to maintain that the world can never be known in a manner that is not somehow socially mediated. What is more, any claim to know one can emerge as complicit with authoritarian forms of power in which a particular group names and frames "reality" for all (Deutsche 1991). And, it is this non-innocent character of constructs that points to the importance of all the other constructs and to the entire social context within which their interdependencies become fixed and stabilized.

Second, in taking into account these interdependencies, poststructuralists take note of both "context" and "intertext." The former refers to the temporary stabilization of meanings drawn together in the articulation of a discourse that communicates those meanings in a sensible form by establishing differences among them. Context, then, fixes the relational field of meaning, but it does so only by drawing upon previous contexts that are themselves embedded in still other contexts.[7] This intercontextual character of the relations among constructs is intertext, a term specifying how one context is related to others, but also how they might be transformed. In this sense, intertext is the relational field – of flows and concatenations – for the production of new contexts. To give an example, in reading a book, context might be temporarily established by an author who draws upon meanings established within a genre. The act of reading, however, involves the production of a new field of meaning by the reader, within which those meanings are destabilized and restabilized yet again. In this view, and in virtue of the intertextual character of all communication, meanings cannot be permanently fixed according to: the intent behind their production; their content, genre, or mode of dissemination; or the perspectives

of the reader (Natter & Jones 1993). Thus, the meanings that adhere to signifieds cannot be presumed as fixed or fully present, but are always in process, awaiting their deployment in new contexts.[8]

While the above points to the open and unfinished character of representation, it also suggests a problem for reflexive social analysts – that is, those willing to judge their own work within the purview of representation. Put somewhat differently, if representation within poststructuralism denies the disclosure of Truth, and if the subject is no longer speaking with the security and advantage of Identity, then how are we to trust our and others' analyses? Feminists have grappled with these issues at some length (Butler & Scott 1992; Harding 1987; in geography, see Nast 1994). One widely accepted response is to reflect on one's social positionality ('white, heterosexual, male') *vis-à-vis* researched participants and texts, recognizing that the outcome of those inquiries are influenced by the different standpoints (Collins 1990; Hartsock 1985) that infuse the research process. But others (e.g. Scott 1993) have argued, following poststructuralism, that the register of social experience that gives these standpoints their presumed stability (however temporary) is no guarantee of identity. Moreover, in the wake of the 'death' (or dissemination) of the author, the postmodernist claim to recover marginalized voices through a sensitivity to multiple knowledges becomes suspect (see again note 2). The 'differences' that postmodernist inquiry seeks to activate will not be fully relational if inquiry is driven by an underlying faith in the researcher's ability to demarcate center from margin, or, for that matter, to 'fix' the relationship between the real and the represented.

In considering these claims, some critics have responded with the argument that what is lost in the poststructuralist 'crisis of representation' is any possibility of strong evaluation; in particular, poststructuralism is charged with relativism and nihilism (Wolin 1992). But while it is certainly the case that this approach eschews the notion of an external vantage-point from which judgments concerning accuracy and ethicality can be made, this need not lead directly to either relativism or nihilism (Dixon & Jones 1997; Jones 1994). This is because, first, the destabilization of centers – Derrida's "cracking of nutshells" (Caputo 1998) – is very much a political project in the way it points to the constructedness and, hence, the contingency, of all kinds of authoritative claims. To choose to undertake poststructuralist analysis is therefore already a form of evaluation *and* intervention. Second, we can acknowledge that poststructuralism holds that all evaluative-ethical projects, including those undertaken in the name of liberty, community, and democracy, can only be 'evaluated' within the particular spatial-historical contexts of their articulation (Jones & Moss 1995). But even though they exist as discursive, ideal forms without guarantees – how could they be otherwise? – this does not imply the end of politics or of evaluation. Quite the opposite, in fact:

the idea of radical and plural democracy implies that we accept the possibility of contestation, that we accept that conflict is part of the vitality of a modern pluralistic democracy which, of course, means that it will always depend on the capacity of the radical democratic forces to maintain their hegemony. (Mouffe 1993: 92)

In short, whereas in structuralist forms of inquiry the researcher takes on the certainties invested in the roles of arbiter, analyst, and decoder, in poststructuralism

the researcher interprets, activates, and transmutes meanings and their contexts. Indeed, rather than work within the domain of the Same, researchers can explicitly proliferate difference by acting out the multiplicities of a mobile researcher (Rose 1993). Another appropriate methodological strategy might be found in what Cindi Katz (1996) calls "minor theory" – that attempt to work the disruptions of a discourse, seeking weak signs so as to subvert from within, and pushing displacements to the limit.

With these comments on representation in mind, let us now turn to the spatialities of representation by introducing a twofold agenda for geographic research: one, to investigate the spatial character of discourses through an investigation of the geographic meanings embedded in particular representations and discursive sites, and two, to understand the representational character of space itself (Jones & Natter 1999). Regarding the former, we can assert not only that representations signify spatially, say by invoking particular places and stamping them with particular meanings, but also that any signification or discourse is 'always already' spatial. How can this strong view of spatiality within representation be maintained?

An answer is to be found in the dialectic of space and social power elaborated by writers such as Lefebvre (1991) and those geographers who have been influenced by his work (Gregory 1994; Harvey 1989, 1990; Soja 1989, 1996; Massey 1994). Whether conceived as a sublation of dialectical moments or as an overdetermined condition, Lefebvre's concept of social space points to the indivisibility of space and social power – from the ways that social relations are constituted in and unfold through spatial distributions, built environments, and spatial significations, to the ways that space itself is socially produced through relations of social power (Lefebvre 1991). In this view, it is untenable to conceive of social relations of class, gender, race, or nation as falling outside of the purview of the spatiality through which they are practiced and reproduced in everyday life. Even the discourses of progress, morality, and reason (to name just a few) emanating from these relations are spatial – marking sociospatial constructs such as public/private, global/local, and chaotic/orderly. These discourses also carry with them spatial concatenations, attenuations, and disjunctures; that is, they mark the 'other spaces' of stagnation, immorality, and insanity. The analysis of representation is therefore a thoroughly spatial task that falls on all sides of an analytic that specifies communication in terms of production, content (including genre, see White 1987), and reception, and all of these, in turn, are interconnected through myriad spatial contexts that ultimately unhinge this analytic's limits (Natter & Jones 1993; also Doel 1999).

The second moment in this agenda is to consider the representational character of space itself. It is worthwhile first to point to spatial epistemology – our ways of knowing space. Under the aegis of Western reason, this epistemology has been suffused with ocularcentrism, Cartesian perspectivalism, and lineation (Dixon & Jones 1998; also Cosgrove 2003; Driver 1995). Whereas ocularcentrism privileges vision over other forms of knowing and is one basis for social power through surveillance, perspectivalism coordinates vision by situating the viewer from a vantage-point above (Schein 1993); lineation, meanwhile, is the basis for gridding social space – the Cartesian counterpart to categorization more generally. Any number of histories can be written about the imposition of reason's grid epistemology, from the configuration of social space in the projects of colonialism and nation-building

(Anderson 1991; Driver 2000; Gregory 1994; Hannah 2000; Mitchell 1991, 2002; Sidaway 2000), to the carving of towns out of nature and bringing them together through systems of transport (Foucault 1984: 239–56; Scott 1999), to the policing and self-disciplining of bodies in the gendered microspaces of everyday life (Butler & Parr 1999; Crang 1994; de Certeau 1984; Driver 1985; Gregson & Rose 2000; Lewis & Pile 1996; McDowell 1995). Even our concept of scale – cascading as it does through the above examples – can be thought of as an outcome of the grid epistemology (Jones 1998; Strohmayer 2003).

Alternative spatial epistemologies, however, are also lodged in space. Working from a poststructuralist feminist perspective, Gillian Rose (1993) describes a mobile, nonmasculinist, nonspectral, and nontransparent "paradoxical" space, one that is fused (as both/and rather than either/or) with multiple oppositional moments, including Same/Other, oppression/resistance, exclusion/inclusion, and center/margin. This space, partly imagined and partly within grasp, bears affinities to the hybrid 'thirdspace' of Homi Bhabha (1994), which has been elaborated through Lefebvre in the work of Ed Soja (1996). His thirdspace is:

the space where all places are capable of being seen from every angle [see note 5], each standing clear; but also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood, an 'unimaginable universe.' (Soja 1996: 56)

Like Rose, Soja offers a space of "all-inclusive simultaneity" that "opens up endless worlds to explore and, at the same time, presents daunting challenges" (1996: 57).

From this theorization of the ways in which spaces are already invested with epistemology, we can proceed to rethink one of cultural geography's traditional objects of inquiry, the landscape. Whereas previous theorizations understood landscapes to be the imprint of a culture (Sauer 1963, originally 1925) or the effect of a social process such as capitalism (Cosgrove 1983; Knox 1984), poststructuralism has pointed to their status as a complex assemblage of significations and discourses that are intertextually bound with a host of other landscapes and discourses (e.g. Schein 1997). The landscape-as-text metaphor thus sees place as intersecting with an infinite number of other texts and contexts, such that we cannot demarcate where one starts and another begins. What is more, these multiple sites of discursive propagation open a circuit that is beyond landscapes, seeping into other representational media such as film, television, cyberspace, the body, political discourse and other forms of speech, and written texts of all kinds, including maps.[9]

Deconstruction as Poststructuralist Methodology

In this section we introduce – theoretically but with an eye towards 'doing' – the poststructuralist methodology of deconstruction. The term has entered the lexicon of many areas of the academy, from geography and comparative literature to architecture and anthropology. It has also received wide purchase in popular culture (witness, for example, "deconstructive fashion"). Though in popular usage "deconstruction" usually refers to any attempt at critiquing an established order of one form or another (as in the bumper sticker entreating us to "subvert the dominant

paradigm"), in this section we provide a narrower, analytic understanding of this research method, one that maintains a close association with the theoretical tenets laid out above. We do this not to put tight constraints around deconstruction as a research strategy, for even Derrida, the archetypal deconstructor, resists defining it, arguing that to do so is not only contrary to deconstruction itself but also might limit and tame the methodology's political potential. We do, however, want to give sufficient guidelines so that readers can see how deconstruction might be "applied" in geographic research.

For something to be de-constructed, it clearly must have been constructed in the first instance, and it is in this sense that we can identify an entry point to this form of analysis. Deconstruction begins by focusing attention on centers, defined in an earlier section of this chapter as the organizing principles of structures. Centers carry with them a number of qualities consistent with the structuralist enterprise, including an either/or epistemology, an apparently noncontingent, natural, and enduring nature, and a seemingly independent, self-positing and self-defining, presence. To deconstruct one must therefore first recognize the existence of a center, and with it, both a marginalized periphery (the "other") and a boundary that produces and maintains – as opposed to merely "indicates" – the difference.

Now, as described above, the binaries comprising centers and peripheries do not simply re-present the world, but are instead socially defined representations of it. This means that the process of constituting a center and a periphery will never be a neutral one. Indeed, at stake in the naming of centers and the drawing of boundaries is social capital of many forms, since these representations influence the thoughts and actions of people. For example, inasmuch as centers and peripheries are dependent upon a binary epistemology, we might first note that those who stand to gain from this epistemology are often the same persons who can, in political discourse, mark the difference between the feasible and the impossible, or the realistic and the fantastic (to mention just two common either/or categorizations). And these will usually be the same persons who find utility in defining centers as stable, natural, and enduring, and who stand to gain from their seemingly self-evident qualities.

In this view, it is reasonable to expect that poststructuralists might look to forms of ideology, political persuasion, or coercion as sites of centering and marginalization. One might look, for example, in the languages and assumptions of formal institutions such as the state, in the discourses and practices of economic enterprises, and in the cultivated trappings of influential social groups, such as men, whites, religious leaders, scientists, and so on. It is through the rules, regulations, practices, and discourses of such institutions and groups of persons that centers and margins are reproduced and policed, and become available for the further exercise of social power.

To help illustrate the process of centering and the deconstructive response to it, let us consider as an example the structure of racism, which in some forms posits a "white" center and a racialized "other" comprised of those grouped as blacks, Indians, Hispanics, and so on, as well as those who do not easily fit into any of these categories. Now, one powerful yet pre-deconstructive form of critique of this system involves an assessment of the unequal distribution of the social surplus by, for example, demonstrating that racialized persons have lower income, poorer housing, inadequate healthcare, and inferior education (see Bonnett 1997). By con-

trast, a classically deconstructive approach is to focus on the relational character of race and on the centering processes that enable the designations of "white" and "other." This form of analysis would critique "white" as a self-sufficient category, one beyond social construction. The goal of inquiry of this approach would be to make the category visible to analysis by pointing to the ways in which "whiteness" is itself dependent upon marginalized races, such that it becomes the foundational race – ahistorical and invariant – against which all other races are compared and contrasted (Dwyer & Jones 2002). The aim of identifying a center such as whiteness would be to disclose and undermine the grounds by which it, and therefore white privilege, is asserted and maintained. One might, for example, examine everyday political language, which is replete with claims both about the benefits of majoritarianism, a discourse that works to maintain "white" as a center, and about the need for racialized groups to "bootstrap" themselves rather than rely upon "mainstream" society. It is in these ways, and countless others (in, for example, the popular media), that an "us/them" system of race is maintained and reproduced, serving ultimately to protect whiteness and white privilege.

This example points us to a second step in deconstruction, wherein having identified a center, one conducts research on the processes that both maintain it and permit its subversion. These inquiries are directed toward the discourses through which centers are constructed from margins (Derrida's "constitutive outside," 1988) and buttressed through discursive sites from which those centers are propagated. Thus in deconstructing whiteness a poststructuralist might investigate, first, when and how "white" emerged as the organizing principle of the structure of race. Such research involves analysis of the emergence of the concept in particular times and places, thereby pointing not only to its arbitrary sociohistorical character, but also to the context within which it became defined and asserted. A second and related task involves tracing the interrelations and limits of a center by examining the discourse associated with it. Here one seeks to determine which discourses have been associated with whiteness, and how they work to reproduce it. For example, one might examine how discourses of orderliness, sanitation, purity, and beatification link whiteness with a host of positive connotations. Or one might trace the conflation of whiteness with other central constructs such as masculinity or sexuality. In these cases, one might ask: what are the discourses that link these constructs? For example, how does a subject position such as white-heterosexual-male become the organizing principle against which all "other" subject positions are defined as "other"?

These sorts of analyses can be grounded through an assessment of particular discursive sites, the "locations" from which discourses emanate. They include, first, sites of linguistic and visual representation, such as speech-acts, written communication, paintings, photographs, and electronic media. Even bodies are categorized as linguistic and visual sites, since how one speaks and looks conveys meanings that tap into larger discourses (about, for example, race or masculinity). Second, institutional positions are discursive sites, ones that are independent of the particular individual occupying the site. Such positions include, for example, those held by politicians and judges, religious and secular leaders, and business persons and public intellectuals. In such sites are vested particular forms of power that circulate through the enunciations and practices of the individuals occupying the positions. Third, and

of particular significance to cultural geographers, are built environments, which, like institutional positions, are vested with power by virtue of the meanings people associate with particular places. These include not only sites obviously invested with sociopolitical meaning, such as churches, courthouses, and monuments and memorials, but also those more everyday sites that likewise reproduce meanings in society, such as stadiums, shopping centers, highways, gated communities and more.

A research project that seeks to deconstruct whiteness, then, would make use of the following questions: What are the discursive locations from which whiteness is centralized and propagated? Which linguistic and visual representations support skin color – as opposed to eye color (Morrison 1993) – as the defining principle of the structure of race? How do racialized bodies convey meanings in political discourse, textbooks, and popular culture? How and with what effect do institutions such as the census bureau propound "race" as a category through the practice of naming the racialized origins of persons, and how, even, do such categories as "multiracial" work within, rather than confront, the centrality of whiteness? And, finally, how is the structure of race reproduced through daily practices within and through built environments? How are certain places normalized as the home of particular racialized groups, from gated communities to "ghettos" (Natter & Jones 1997)?[10]

As this example shows, deconstructive analysis is far from stripped of political potential. This is because centers, though they circulate within diverse and oftentimes conflated sets of discourses operating throughout society, typically serve to maintain the dominant social powers and institutions with that society. Yet, in assessing the politics of deconstruction, one must recognize that it not only animates, but also qualifies, the study of the transgressive potential located in peripheries (also see Sharp et al. 2000, esp. ch. 1). On the one hand, deconstruction provides the basis for examining the transgressions and transgressive potential of peripheries. In making visible centers and contesting their effrontery, deconstruction taps the always-existing power within marginality, a power to disclose the constitutive trace of the periphery within the center. In this view, discourse and discursive sites can be conceptualized just as much as sites of contestation as of domination. On the other hand, it must also be emphasized that the goal of deconstruction is not to reverse a binary mode of thinking by asserting the centrality of peripheries, for this would merely reinscribe a structuralist mode of thinking about the world. Nor is the goal simply to undermine the certainties of those social powers and institutions. Rather, by prying apart the stability of centers, deconstruction serves to open up new ways of naming and relating meanings, ones that are deliberated upon rather than taken for granted. In this view, deliberation does not mean the abolition of categories and centers, for this would be an impossible project, but rather implies that attention be directed both toward the sociohistorical context within which any category is deployed and the ramifications of its deployment.

Future Articulations between Poststructuralism and Cultural Geography

As we have shown, poststructuralism unsettles routine modes of social inquiry relying on handed-down concepts that purport to contain either essential truths (e.g., progress, reason) or worldly objects and events (e.g., nature, resistance). These

concepts and the centering effects they produce are taken as significant objects of inquiry in and of themselves; accordingly, deconstructive analysis asks how, and with what effect, such concepts operate, and to whose benefit.

Significantly, poststructuralism has been helpful in rethinking the subfield of cultural geography, both in terms of its constitutive elements and its development over time. Consider the nodding acquiescence we give to the repetitive invocation of scores of normalized cultural categories, and their denotative and connotative associations, such as: community, nature, public, identity, scale, territory, experience, attachment, rhetoric, individual, landscape, animals, periphery, development, place, history, justice, family, agency, locality, authenticity, values, region, environment, borders, citizen, habituation, the everyday, gender, race, transgression, memory, nation, spectacle – even "culture" and "post" do not escape normalization. Poststructuralism unhinges these concepts from their securities, tossing them into a differential 'space' of relational meanings buttressed by wide socio-spatial-historical contexts and everyday social articulations; peering into that space we can examine their stabilizations and destabilizations, their inexact certitude and their exacting uncertainties. Under poststructuralism, all our POEMs are porous, more likely to hemorrhage than to contain and capture. Space too is "affected" (in both senses of the term): it is pulsing, vibrating, crumpled and folded, rather than stable, transparent, flat, and dimensional (Doel 2000). To undertake such analyses, cultural geographers have had to adopt a new set of analytic metaphors necessary to the task, including: mobility (as opposed to rootedness); networks of connection and disconnection (as opposed to centers and margins); and fluidities and flows (as opposed to cause→effect).

Importantly, this reworking of phenomena has entailed an appreciation of the constructed, partial, and always contextualized figure of the researched and the researcher. We are differentially and continually entangled in a host of social relations that constitute what it means to be a subject. Our own embeddedness in discourse, within which we perform in a process of self-construction by means of reiteration (Butler 1990), extends much further than was previously thought; as Hinchcliffe (2003) points out, many of the terms traditionally used within cultural geography, such as landscape, place, and inhabitation, rest upon a binary that arbitrarily demarcates between human and nonhuman, such that our analyses of culture, as traditionally conceived, is thoroughly anthropocentric and nonrelational. The haunting 'traces' of this particular mode of centering – the bestial and the technologic – have since been brought to light (Haraway 1991; Philo & Wilbert 2000; Whatmore 2001; Wolch 1996; Wolch & Emel 1998).

Poststructuralism has also had an impact upon how we think about the history of, and the histories within, cultural geography. Poststructuralism rejects the notion that there is an ordered trajectory to the emergence and development of the subfield based around the unlocking of concepts such as landscape and place. It also shows that historical writing is not a recovery of a place and period but a form of writing from the perspective of the present. Following Foucault's theory of history, these imply that we recognize our present situatedness in our attempts to write the past; that we pay attention not to the essential agent behind actions and more to the effects and affects that subjects generate through discursive practices; and that we reject any notion of continuity or order in historical analysis.

This reassessment of cultural geography – for example, in how we construct places in our writings – puts poststructuralism in an antithetical position *vis-à-vis* those theoretical approaches that lay claim to an objective analysis of an ordered world and orderly subjects, namely spatial science, humanism, and critical realism. And though this 'difference of opinion' appears to confirm their distinct approaches, each peering through their own particular lens, this would be, under poststructuralism, a misleading understanding. Certainly each draws differently, through affirmation and repudiation, upon a complex and dynamic field of meanings concerning the character of social life and its investigation. Yet, as we have argued elsewhere (Dixon & Jones 1996), none of these paradigms can escape this fully relational field of knowledge, within the discipline and beyond. Accordingly, poststructuralism would suggest that the peripheries of our epistemological concepts are lodged into their respective centers and hence – importantly – into each paradigm's "others." We should not be too surprised, then, to discover shared assumptions and practices, even in repudiation. This is why we can, for example, track concepts such as scale and relationality across poststructuralism (via the notion of context), through Marxism (via internal and external relations), and on to humanism (via the notion of intersubjectivity) and spatial science (via the identification of autocorrelation). We can equally track ontological concepts, such as 'community' (Joseph 2002), across different paradigms. And, we can follow the twists and turns of a material–discourse binary within all manner of research, regardless of theoretical allegiances. In sum, the bodies of work that comprise cultural geography are very much embedded in a web of differential and relational understandings. If nothing else, this should put an end to the hubris that underwrites the affirmation of one particular framework over another. And yet curiously, it was through poststructuralism, which we should add *already carries structuralism within it*, that this understanding became clear.

NOTES

1. Paradigms have traditionally been held to denote "the working assumptions, procedures, and findings routinely accepted by a group of scholars, which together define a stable pattern of scientific activity" (Gregory 2000: 571). The term 'paradigm' gained currency with the publication of Kuhn's 1962 book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. It was adopted by spatial scientists to describe their quantitative and theoretical 'revolution' (Berry & Marble 1968). This maneuver has not been without controversy in the field of geography (e.g., Mair 1986; Johnston 1991; see Gregory 2000 for an excellent short review and critique). Notwithstanding these criticisms, we employ the term here with the following understanding: (i) they are metatheoretical clusters of thought defined by the historically congealed incorporation and repudiation of the elements of binary relations that exist at the ontological and epistemological levels (e.g., objectivity–subjectivity, order–chaos, materialist–idealist, determinacy–uncertainty, discrete–relational; rational–emotional); (ii) they are, as Gregory's definition indicates, widely accepted in practice, guiding research programs by suggesting appropriate objects of analysis and their theorization, and informing the research strategies brought to bear on those objects; and (iii) in spite of their congealed and commonly agreed-upon character, they are not static, undifferentiated, mutually exclusive, or hegemonic: the

objects they define, the concepts they help to generate, and the procedures they inform are always open and in negotiation – this is the result of the multiply situated agencies that individuals bring to the research process (see Dixon & Jones 1996).

2. Many cultural geographers also turned to postmodernism, a diffuse set of ideas and practices that have been associated in diverse ways with poststructuralism. In brief, post-modernism can be conceived of as a significant object of study as well as an epistemo-logical stance with respect to modernist forms of knowledge and practice. As an object of study, postmodernism has been understood as an emergent social condition; that is, the economic changes wrought under late capitalism have, it is argued, led to a trans-formation in the way in which we experience the world (see Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991). These include changes in the way we experience space and place (Ley 1989; Soja 1989), the built environment (Ellin 1996; Sorkin 1992; Zukin 1991) and urban culture (Chambers 1986, 1988). As an epistemological stance, postmodernism has much in common with poststructuralism, in that there is a suspicion of modernist 'grand theory' that purports to comprehensively explain the social and physical realms (Lyotard 1985). In contrast, postmodernism assumes a plurality of knowledges, and offers an attention to difference and diversity, such that previously marginalized understandings can be brought to light. For some, geography is uniquely placed to make these argu-ments, in that a traditional hallmark of the discipline has been sensitivity to differenti-ation (Gregory 1989a, 1989b; Philo 1991; Soja 1987; Strohmayer & Hannah 1992). An entry into these debates can be found in Benko 1997. An overview of the interfil-iations between postmodernism and poststructuralism can be found in Best and Kellner's (1991) *Postmodern Theory*.

3. For students interested in reading further, Selden 1989 and Sarup 1993 provide good introductions to structuralism (and poststructuralism) in literary theory, while Lechte 1994 offers useful, reference-like synopses of the work of a wide range of associated theorists. Students can follow up on many of the thinkers found in Selden and Lechte by reading the selections of original writings in Lemert's authoritative collection (1999). Likewise, Leach 1997 offers well-chosen excerpts with an eye to architecture and space. In cultural geography, structuralism largely came through the door of semiotics – the study of signs – by way of the work of A. J. Greimas, Charles Peirce, and the early writ-ings of Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard (see note 6, below). Structuralist semiotics influenced the work of some of the essayists in Cosgrove and Daniels (1988), while Barnes and Duncan's 1991 collection marks an effort to shift to poststructuralism. Other important texts to compare are Cosgrove 1984, Duncan 1990, and Gottdiener 1994 on landscapes, and Jackson 1994 and Cresswell 1996 on cultural politics. Barnes and Duncan 1991 (ch. 1), Duncan and Duncan 1988, Natter and Jones 1993, and Olsson 1996 explicitly take up the relationship between literary theory and geography.

4. Derrida's many translated writings include *Of Grammatology* (1976), *Writing and Difference* (1978), *Limited Inc* (1988), the collection *A Derrida Reader* (1991), and *Specters of Marx* (1994). A good introduction to Derrida's thought can be found in Caputo's (ed.) *Deconstruction in a Nutshell* (1998). An excellent advanced analysis is found in *The Tain of the Mirror* (Gasché 1988). Marcus Doel has written more on Derrida than any other geographer; see his *Poststructuralist Geographies* (1999).

5. Foucault's translated works on the writing of history include *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1973a) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1974). His genealogical analyses include *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insan-ity in the Age of Reason* (1973b), *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception* (1975), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977), and the *History of Sexuality*, vols. 1 (1979), 2 (1985) and 3 (1986). Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982 offers a serious book-length treatment. Interviews and shorter essays can be found in

Power/Knowledge (1980), *The Foucault Reader* (1984), and *Politics, Philosophy, Culture* (1988), and in Foucault (1997). Within geography, the importance of Foucault's ideas is discussed in works by Felix Driver (1985, 1997), Matt Hannah (1993), David Matless (1991), and Chris Philo (1992).

6. Though we do not address their work in-depth in this chapter, both Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard have had a tremendous impact on the analysis of representations. For example, while Barthes's earlier work (1953, 1957, 1964, 1967) had much in common with the semiotic analyses of Saussure, he went on to critique the retention of a structuralist emphasis on surface (re-presentation) and depth (reality). Barthes's initial impulse was to target the "bourgeois norm" via an interrogation of the social production of the "falsely obvious," an impulse best encapsulated in his *Mythologies* (1957). In understanding how such norms have reached the unquestioned status of myth, Barthes expanded upon Saussure's categorization of language into signifiers (words/ practices), signifieds (intent/meaning), and signs (the combination of the two in a particular system of communication), via the addition of what he termed a primary signifier and a secondary signifier. The former relates to the initial association of an inscription with a mental image. The second relates to the way in which this initial signifier can then become the signified in a second process. The word 'cat,' for example, is the signifier for the mental image of a feline. This signifier can then be used as a descriptor for a human being, such that the word cat is now the signified. The primary signifier can be termed the level of denotation, the secondary the level of connotation. Myth ensues from the fixing of the secondary connotations of terms, such that the resulting associations can be considered the dominant, or hegemonic, mode of thinking. Myth does not 'hide' meaning, as in some understandings of ideology, but rather celebrates the 'givenness' of a particular construction of reality. In his later work, however, Barthes (1973, 1978, 1985) retreated from this structuralist stance toward meaning, arguing that signifiers do not reference underlying signifieds, but rather other signifiers, such that meaning is always in process – a temporary stop in a continuing flow of interpretations of interpretations – and as such cannot be held up as the originary moment for any explanation. Meanings, therefore, cannot be demarcated according to the intent behind their production, their mode of dissemination, or the perspectives of the reader, precisely because each of these three contexts cannot be considered autonomous from other contexts, or indeed from each other. In sum, for Barthes, meanings are *polysemic* in character.

Baudrillard's early work (1968, 1970, 1972) is similarly embedded in semiotics. It addresses the ways in which objects within a capitalist society are afforded meaning and value. Baudrillard adds sign value, which is the differentiation of objects from one another, and symbolic exchange (the gift), to the Marxist concepts of use value (utility) and exchange value (commodification). In his *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976), however, Baudrillard explicitly takes on the issue of representation, arguing that we can no longer talk of the mere copying of an 'original.' This is because there is no longer an analytic distinction to be made between representation and reality. In his later works, Baudrillard (1981, 1986, 1990) expands on the idea that representational processes have undergone a profound transformation: whereas in the Renaissance one could talk of counterfeit, and in the Industrial era of production, in the current 'hyperreal' era we deal primarily with simulation, in the form of virtual reality, global media, and fashion. The focus of attention lies not on the process by which reality is mediated, but rather on the mechanisms by which a continuous flow of simulacra are generated. And, in the face of such a totalizing system, whereby simulacra re-represent simulacra, we should eschew 'banal' theories that seek to judge and rationalize in favor of 'fatal' theories that entail fascination, ironic amusement, and even ecstasy before the image itself.

7. Derrida has perhaps the broadest understanding of context: "the entire real history of the world" (1988: 136). This is why his aphoristic phrasing, "there's nothing outside the text" (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*) is not, as is sometimes alleged, idealist, for in Derrida's work, all texts are in context. Deconstruction, the poststructuralist methodology we describe below, animates from this understanding. Derrida describes it as the effort "to take this limitless context into account, to pay the sharpest attention possible to context, and thus to an incessant movement of recontextualization" (1988: 136). This view of the macrocosm embedded within the microcosm has parallels to Jorge Luis Borges's story, 'The Aleph,' described as a "sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere . . . one of the points in space that contains all other points" – in other words, a structure without a center (1979: 23, 26; see Soja 1996).

8. Such a position entails what Barthes (1978) referred to as the "death of the author." Meaning cannot originate from the author because this 'person' is a socially and historically constituted subject, and hence does not exist prior to or outside of language. For Barthes, this is a liberating stance, in that each reader can add to, alter, or simply edit a text through the act of reading, and, further, can move through a text in an aleatory, nonlinear fashion, thereby 'writing' the text anew. Importantly, the reader does not then become the 'authority,' but rather each subject is understood to contribute to the stabilization and destabilization of a field of meanings (see discussion of context and intertext, above). Analyses of the flow of meanings though texts can be found throughout media studies of film (De Lauretis 1984; Mulvey 1989), television (Allen 1992), and literature (Fish 1982; Jauss 1982).

9. Marcus Doel (1999, 2000, 2003) goes even further, providing a new theory of space drawn from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1972, 1987). They were known for proliferating a large number of spatiophilosophical in(ter)ventions, including such distinctions as: striated vs. smooth space; mapping vs. tracing; trees vs. rhizomes; points vs. flows; and the dynamic spatial processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization (see Doel 2000). Deleuze and Guattari are resolutely materialist *and* poststructuralist – for them the world exists in the spacing of difference – and they reject that their concepts are in any way metaphors (1987). Doel puts it this way: "*As fanatical materialists, we are struck by everything* – nothing will be set aside from the play of force; nothing will be spirited away onto a higher plane or exorcised into a netherworld. . . . It is true that we take up signs, words, images, quantities, figures, maps, photographs, money, hypertext, gardening advice, lipstick traces, the exquisite corpse, and so on and so forth – but we take them up as force: as strikes and counter-strikes; as blows and counter-blows" (2003, in press, emphasis in the original). This effort to wrest materialism from the materialists (e.g. Peet 1998) is the latest poststructuralist reversal, one that overturns the valences of the real vs. representation opposition within geography.

10. Students looking for methodological assistance should consult Hall 1997 (ch. 1) and Rose 2001. Both give clear accounts of the differences between structuralist semiotics and poststructuralist discourse analysis. Another useful work, particularly for a Derridian reading of texts, is provided by Denzin 1994.

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