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14 **Paper title: Geographies of architecture: the multiple lives of buildings**

15

16 **Abstract**

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18 Arguably, cultural geography began with the study of architectural forms. The first half of
19 this article traces the geographical study of buildings as a relatively small but significant sub-
20 field of cultural geography. It summarises three approaches that characterise this work. First,
21 the study of everyday, vernacular buildings, found especially (but not exclusively) in North
22 American cultural geography. Second, radical critiques of the political-economic imperatives,
23 organisation and consequences of particular architectural forms such as the skyscraper and
24 the related interpretation of buildings as signs, symbols or referents for dominant socio-
25 cultural discourses or moralities. Third, most recently, what can broadly (but not
26 unproblematically) be termed nonrepresentational or 'critical' methods that stress practice,
27 materiality and affect.

28

29 The second, shorter, part of the article highlights outlines recent research on the geographies
30 of architecture that has adopted elements of each approach to make a number of contributions
31 to the study of cultural geography. Two key themes are considered: movement/stasis; the
32 politics of architectural design and practice. Consideration of these themes anticipates a
33 conclusion with some broad suggestions for future geographical research on architecture.
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50 economic imperatives that are built into particular architectural forms such as the skyscraper

51 and the related interpretation of buildings as signs, symbols or referents for dominant socio-

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Introduction: why study buildings?

One of the principal reasons for studying geography is that its disciplinary techniques force us to engage with the world around us. Those techniques make us look, look again, measure, listen, feel, even smell and taste in ways that we might not do in the course of our everyday lives. A geographical sensibility – a constant attention to boundaries, relations, networks, flows, distributions – can render the most familiar places unfamiliar. Nowhere is this observation truer than in the geographical study of architecture. Almost regardless of where we live, many of us spend many hours of each day in buildings – in pieces of architecture. Whether our home, our workplace, our school or university, most of us have cause to visit, use, move through/around or take shelter within a building every day of our lives. Yet we do not necessarily spend much time pondering the significance of those buildings.

Immediately, this observation raises a number of critical questions. The first concerns the *definition* of architecture as a professional or social practice. Whilst the definition of 'architecture' is highly contested (Ballantyne 2002), this article takes a rather more pragmatic approach. It takes the practice of architecture as, more-or-less, the creation of *individual* buildings by both professionally-trained, named 'architects' and untrained builders. Examples will include skyscrapers, airports, schools and hospitals. For reasons of coherency, the related practices of urban design, town planning and landscape architecture are not explicitly included here. This is not to say that this article – or indeed the geographical study of architecture – has been singularly concerned with the local-scale production of individual buildings at particular street addresses. Nor have geographers ignored the question of what exactly architecture *is* and *does* (see especially Jacobs 2006), a concern that we return to later on. Rather, geographers have, since the 1920s, attempted to place individual buildings into wider contexts – whether in terms of the global circulation of architectural styles, national

93 ideological imperatives, or the immediate material, political and economic environs

94 surrounding a building. Yet – in accordance with many extant geographies of architecture –

95 this article pays particular attention to the production, inhabitation and materiality of

96 *individual* buildings (Domosh 1989; Lees 2001).

97   A second question centres around the precise *significance* of buildings within our

98 everyday lives. For the most part, buildings recede into the background – 'framing places', as

99 Dovey (1999), has it. Yet Dovey's seemingly simple term conveys the complexity and

100 contestability of architecture. As Lees (2001) shows, some buildings become the focus for

101 intense public debate – take the much-maligned Millennium Dome in London, for instance.

102 In other cases, buildings can – however temporarily – have profound effects on our daily

103 lives. Perhaps this might be because, as Dovey (1999) argues, in combination with

104 technologies and practices of surveillance, particular social groups are excluded from using

105 them (Mike Davis' [1990, 2006] dystopian depictions of impenetrable hotels, mega-structures

106 and shopping malls in Los Angeles and Dubai would be seminal examples). Or perhaps this

107 might be because certain buildings evoke powerful emotional reactions, proffering something

108 a little different from the 'ordinary' buildings that are folded into our daily routines (Kraftl

109 2009).

110   Buildings are also significant because of the vast amounts of energy, materials, money

111 and technical/organisational/regulatory detail that are invested in them and enable them to

112 stay erect (Jacobs et al. 2007). Consider, for instance, a rather startling figure that is often

113 repeated in texts on 'sustainable' architecture: globally, buildings are responsible for roughly

114 50% of all human-produced CO_2 emissions and virtually as much fossil fuel consumption

115 (Wines 2000; Low et al. 2005). And, finally, on the simplest, most fundamental level,

116 buildings are significant because they embody the literal act of place-making. It can be

117 forcefully argued that, whilst not bounded containers for human action, buildings are a

118   fundamental geographical setting at and through which *spaces* are made, negotiated,

119   experienced and contested. Expanding on these themes, this article shows how geographers

120   of architecture have contributed to – and have the potential to extend – cutting-edge debates

121   in cultural geography and beyond.

122   A third question relates to the cultural *assumptions* that it is all-too-easy to make

123   about architecture. Immediately one makes generalisations such as that above – that we all, in

124   some way, experience or inhabit buildings – one glosses to a certain extent the power

125   relations and contingent spatial practices that articulate the meanings we attach to buildings.

126   At its simplest level, physical access to a building (or part thereof) to call one's own is bound

127   up in a series of predominantly Minority World assumptions about property ownership,

128   domesticity (i.e. the nuclear family) and having a home (vis-à-vis being home-less), as many

129   geographers have indicated (Cloke et al. 2003; Jacobs & Smith 2008). As iconic images of

130   shanty towns remind us, the possibilities of permanent shelter are tenuous at best in many

131   Majority World cities; meanwhile, the global economic downturn occurring at the time of

132   writing this article, arguably stimulated in part by exuberant mortgage-lending in the United

133   States and elsewhere, has thrown into sharp relief longstanding assumptions about the

134   compunction to 'own one's home' in many Minority World countries. These significant

135   issues do not necessarily centre around questions of architecture and building *per se*. Yet they

136   indicate how buildings can be a point of articulation for complex contestations over the

137   meaning of and access to certain places. This observation is perhaps most poignantly realised

138   where the most rudimentary architectural forms serve as moral, political and religious

139   barriers in space-times of conflict – exemplified in the past by the Berlin Wall, and more

140   recently by the construction of the West Bank Wall between Israel and Palestine (Piquard

141   2007). Some of these political points of articulation are considered later on.

142   This article, then, reviews two kinds of architectural geographies. First, it considers

143   how geographers have attempted to study buildings *as* spaces. In this light, the next section of

144   the paper presents a history and perfunctory classification of three geographical

145   methodologies for studying buildings. It begins with early attempts to map *everyday*,

146   vernacular buildings and to relate these to the cultural groups that produced them. Second, it

147   outlines radical/Marxist critiques of the *political-economic* imperatives inherent to the

148   production of architectural forms, before explaining how buildings can be *interpreted* as

149   signs, symbols or referents for dominant socio-cultural discourses or moralities. Finally, it

150   discusses recent, so-called *nonrepresentational* or 'critical' methods that stress inhabitation,

151   materiality and affect.

152   The second section of the paper outlines (relatively briefly) two recent themes in the

153   geographical study of architecture: one – movement/stasis – is an emergent aspect of this

154   study; the second – politics of architectural design and practice – constitutes a renewed

155   interest in the politics of architectural spaces that begins to flesh out some of the critical

156   implications of a recent interest in 'nonrepresentational' thinking. Finally, in conclusion, the

157   paper critically evaluates the value of architectural geographies as points of articulation for

158   the kinds of wider conceptual debates that have characterised disciplinary geography in the

159   last decade, in anticipation of possible future directions for study.

160

161   **Three geographies of architecture: from the Berkeley School to nonrepresentational**

162   **theories**

163   *The Berkeley School: mapping architectural styles*

164   The story of the sub-discipline of 'cultural geography' begins, for many

165   commentators, with the so-called 'Berkeley School', in the United States, in the 1920s. Its

166   principal protagonist, Carl Sauer (1925), instituted a long-standing concern with landscapes

167 and those material features that made particular landscapes unique. Although the heritage of

168 landscape studies (and indeed cultural geography) is more complex than this (Wylie 2007),

169 Sauer's methodology for studying landscapes has obtained enduring significance. Using

170 methods of observation, field-note-taking and mapping – which Sauer pithily asserted were

171 the indispensible skills of the professional geographer's repertoire – Sauer and his colleagues

172 observed the expression of cultural traits within landscapes.

173   Within this work, buildings held a special significance. Indeed, architectural styles –

174 from houses to barns – exemplified the approach that Sauer promoted. For the Berkeley

175 School, a building's form, construction and style was a clear expression of a 'way of life' – of

176 the "level of technological development and the values of a culture" (Goss 1988, p. 393).

177 Once viewed in this way, the seemingly simple premise of the Berkeley School's work was to

178 map how different architectural styles were distributed across the American landscape. The

179 Berkeley School's approach reminds us, then, of the significance – if not centrality – of

180 architectural forms to the early years of cultural geography, and of the significance of

181 'everyday' built forms in the midst of a later preference for more 'spectacular' kinds of case

182 study (Kraftl 2009; Merriman forthcoming).

183

184 *Political-economy, symbolism and iconography: architecture as a referent*

185   The Berkeley School's approach to cultural geography, landscape, and by extension

186 architecture, has received fierce criticism. In particular, later (especially British) cultural

187 geographers argued that the Berkeley School approach tended to describe rather than explain

188 the patterns of distribution that they mapped. Critics argued that buildings were produced

189 within broader and more contested fields of social, political and economic relations, whilst

190 they were also the product of individual human agency – and especially those of architects

191 and powerful clients (Mitchell 2000; Lees 2001). It was also suggested that the Berkeley

192   School downplayed the role of systems of representation that are an important part of what

193   buildings mean – systems including the symbolism of buildings themselves and

194   representations of buildings in photographs, news media and paintings (Goss 1988; Crang

195   1998).

196   This set of critiques led to deeply-felt debates about the direction of cultural

197   geography during the 1980s. A little more productively, it was a stimulus for a range of

198   cultural geographies that were informed by contemporary theorising and attempted to be

199   more evaluative than earlier approaches. These 'new' cultural approaches to geography

200   tended towards one of two camps: either studying structural (society-wide) processes,

201   informed by marxian theories of political economy; or focussing on human agency, informed

202   by phenomenological theories about individual experiences of and impacts upon places; on

203   some occasions, geographers combined both structure and agency. The theoretical detail of

204   these approaches is less significant here than their profound impact upon the study of

205   architecture, which continues to be felt today (although readers interested in original sources

206   may wish to consult, for instance, Tuan 1974; Cosgrove & Jackson 1987; Barnes & Duncan

207   1992; Cosgrove & Daniels 1993; W.J.T. Mitchell 2002).

208   We can distil one key argument from 'new' cultural geographies of landscape in

209   general, and of the many individual buildings that formed case studies for this work. That is,

210   that architecture be taken as a *referent*. In other words, buildings refer to – or symbolise –

211   diverse systems, intentions, histories, meanings and cultural assumptions. Buildings are not

212   simply coherent, individual edifices that stand rather blankly, waiting to be used. Rather, they

213   are afforded both meaning and value by processes happening external to them – from the

214   political machinations of city planning to the influences of historical architectural styles

215   (Gruffudd 2003).

216   This is an important observation, and one which continues to inform some excellent

217   work by architectural geographers. Inspired by David Harvey's (1978) Marxist critique of

218   capitalism, Goss (1988, p. 396) suggested that a "crucial question […] is how the look of the

219   city and the suburbs, the spatial variation in architectural form and style, is determined by

220   economic processes and by the conflict or cooperation of different political-economic

221   groups". In one sense, this means re-interpreting a building as commodity: an object that has

222   (and refers to) a fiscal value, is marketable, and which is entrained in one or more systems of

223   buying, selling, letting and exchange. The simple locational association between particular

224   building types (such as skyscrapers) with specific areas of the city (the central business

225   district of the world's biggest cities) is one well-known outcome of such systems (McNeill,

226   2005).

227   Yet, as Goss (1988) goes on to suggest, neither built forms, nor contemporary neo-

228   liberalism, can be reduced to 'pure' economic explanations – buildings, like other

229   commodities are far from simple objects and have complex, often contested histories (King

230   2004; Cook & Harrison, 2007). Rather, the appearance of buildings "is not reducible to a

231   price, for each building conveys a meaning as a sign, a function which confers upon it a sign

232   value – its value as a message of social difference or of status" (Goss 1988, p. 397). It is this

233   observation which highlights how economic systems surrounding buildings are nearly always

234   accompanied by something *more*, and how cultural processes are co-opted into those systems

235   in order to augment the value of a building. In the case of shopping malls, for instance,

236   architects use meticulously-planned design features (trees, architectural styles, street

237   furniture, shop frontages) in order to evoke senses of nostalgia, community, or other places

238   (Hopkins, 1990). Hence the contemporary shopping mall can appear to be a Victorian arcade,

239   a historical waterfront, or a Mexican hillside village (Goss, 1993). Like other contemporary

240   built forms, both the symbolism and the security of such buildings is tightly regulated in

9

241 order to facilitate consumption by those with the financial means to make purchases or pay

242 the rent (Lees, 1997; Soja 2000).

243   Mona Domosh's (1989) study of the New York World Building – like Harvey's

244 (1979) earlier work – explicitly outlines a geographical method and rationale for studying

245 individual buildings. Her work places the World Building in the political-economic context

246 of late nineteenth century New York, which had become the national economic centre of the

247 United States (Domosh 1989). Simultaneously, she demonstrates how the city's economic

248 elite used architectural size, form and symbolism to demonstrate their own commercial

249 wealth *and* to display a sense of civic duty – for instance by including Renaissance arches at

250 the World Building. Domosh's is one of many studies that stress not only how buildings are

251 produced within particular political-economic contexts, but how, with a little care, we can

252 'read' their facades to understand the personal influences, intentions and cultural assumptions

253 that architects and owners try to portray through their buildings (Lees 2001).

254   Despite a recent turn away from representation in cultural geography, such a concern

255 with what Swenarton et al. (2007) term the 'politics of making' *has* – rightfully – endured

256 both within the narrow confines of architectural geography and beyond, in the sub-discipline

257 of architectural history (Bondi 1992; Borden & Rendell 2000; Cuthbert 2003). Indeed, earlier

258 critiques of architectural symbolism demonstrated how architectural forms and facades were

259 complicit in the production of highly uneven power relations in ways which the same authors

260 can claim are relevant today (see, for instance, Harvey 2007). Perhaps the most important

261 advance of this work has been to place individual buildings within the political, social,

262 cultural and, indeed, personal contexts that are fundamental to their making. This impetus has

263 inspired some of the best critical work in cultural geography as a whole (see, for instance,

264 Ley 1993; Mitchell 2000) which has successfully exposed how buildings are complicit in the

265 production of contested social relationships between and within different identity groups.

266

'Nonrepresentational' architectural geographies: practice, materiality, affect

Readers familiar with the output of (predominantly British) cultural geography over the past ten years will no doubt have encountered nonrepresentational theory (see Thrift 2000; Nash 2000). The conceptual and now empirical diversity of work in this oeuvre – if indeed it can be called such – is significant, and cannot be reviewed here (see, instead, Lorimer 2008). Rather – and some of the authors included below may well rightfully disagree with this move – nonrepresentational theory is a useful catch-all term for naming three recent advances in the geographical study of architecture. These centre around two concerns of Nigel Thrift's (2000) exposition of the term. First, that large swathes of human life are irreducible either to cognitive thought or re-presentation (i.e. writing, drawing, speaking) because they happen too fast for cognitive processes such as memory and intention. Second, that, assuming the first concern holds, geographical research had hitherto ignored those dimensions of life that were not reducible to words, numbers, or other forms of cognitive evaluation and representation. Three of those dimensions concern us here: the kinds of bodily practices whose complexity evades traditional forms of writing (McCormack 2008); non-human 'agents' in social life – such as technologies, animals, plants and material objects – whose uncertain status often complicates what it means to be 'human'; emotions and affects whose impacts exceed representation (as we all know if we try to write about how we feel) and which may be shared between individuals, not just felt *by* them (see Anderson 2006). It is possible to briefly identify architectural geographies that typify each of these three dimensions. Each takes as part of its inspiration a critique of 'architecture as referent', based upon an acknowledgment that the multiple technologies and inhabitants that make up buildings elude and exceed representational strategies.

290   First, we turn to bodily *practices*. A number of studies have sought to destabilise the

291   idea that the meaning of built space can be simply read from its facades (Lerup 1977; Bondi

292   1992; Borden & Rendell 2000). Rather (indeed for many years), geographers have been

293   interested in the meanings that inhabitants attach to places and especially buildings such as

294   the home (Tuan 1974; Mugerauer 1994; Blunt & Dowling 2006). Such a view picks apart the

295   idea that the production of architectural meaning ends when the plaque is unveiled on another

296   shiny new building. It allows geographers to "explore the way that the built environment is

297   shaped and given meaning through the active and embodied practices by which it is

298   produced, appropriated and inhabited" (Lees 2001, p. 56; also Llewellyn 2003; Kraftl 2006a;

299   Adey 2008). This is a call to focus not just upon what people *think* about buildings but what

300   they *do* in them: how everyday practices such as sitting, walking-through, playing, interacting

301   with others give life to a building – however temporarily – and, commonsensically, how they

302   exceed concepts such as 'symbolic meaning' or 'value'. Lees (2001), for instance, uses

303   notebooks and 'vignettes' to capture moments of action at a public library in Vancouver,

304   successfully dislocating the public life of the building from involved debates about the

305   symbolism of its façade.

306   Second, geographers have sought to understand how starting with the *materiality* of

307   buildings can instigate new architectural geographies. Jane Jacobs' (2006) work challenges

308   geographers of architecture – indeed cultural geographers more widely – to consider the

309   component technologies, practices and ideas that allow built forms to cohere. If this sounds

310   like a rather uncomfortable phrase, this belies the elegant simplicity of her approach.

311   Drawing on King's (2004) seminal work on the varied, hybrid forms of the humble bungalow

312   in different global localities, she is concerned with "the ways in which certain architectural

313   forms come to be in certain places […providing] critical accounts of a wider field of

314   'construction' (sometimes material, professional and technical, but also discursive), and

model suggestive trajectories for how we might reconceive the making and movement of built forms in space and time" (Jacobs 2006, p. 3). Hence Jacobs' question: what *makes* the objects we come to call 'architecture', in a particular time and space (also Gieryn 2002)? Jenkins (earlier, 2002) answer is to go beyond the traditional, assumed 'boundaries' that designate a building as a coherent object. Both Jenkins and Jacobs employ 'Actor-Network Theory', which proposes a far more active role for non-human materials and technologies in social spaces (again see Thrift 2000 for more). Rather than view objects (like buildings) as fixed, one can interrogate the conjoined technologies (pipes, bricks, cabling), practices (construction, inhabitation, even demolition) and regulations (laws, building codes, health and safety legislations) that ensure they stand up over time. The relations between those many, diverse technologies, practices and regulations change over time – buildings are renovated, bricks weather, occupancy changes, and so on. So, as Jenkins (2002, p. 230) has it: "instead of traditional accounts in which technology and society are separated falsely as different realms, there is a heterogeneous mixing of human and nonhuman elements between which, in everyday life, there is a constant negotiation". In architectural terms, when this negotiation works out in particular ways, the outcome is a particular (type of) building, such as that we commonly call 'the high-rise' (Jacobs 2006).

A third strand of work has stressed how architectural spaces provoke particular emotions or *affects*. Following Thrift's (2004) claim that urban landscapes are increasingly being engineered to foster or channel particular kinds of affective states (such as hope, fear or passivity), geographers have sought to understand how buildings may be designed to act in similar ways upon their users (Kraftl & Adey 2008; Adey 2008). This is far from an environmental determinism that sees use follow form in a strict causal way; in fact this kind of explanation has far more in common with Jacobs' and Jenkins' insistence upon the ever-changing mixture of human and nonhuman elements that make up a building. Some

340 buildings, for instance, instil in us a pervasive feeling of homely comfort, even if they are not

341 actually 'homes' (Kraftl 2006b). Herein, affective states *may* be created by architects through

342 the use of specific materials, colours and shapes; yet the point is that the precise effects of

343 these rather generic design frames upon inhabitants' feelings – and upon a sense of a 'homely

344 atmosphere' in a building – are the unpredictable, ongoing result of how people are using,

345 moving through, maintaining, refurbishing, adorning and interpreting architectural spaces.

346 The crux here, then, is to follow the kinds of affective states evoked by buildings in an

347 ongoing sense. Indeed, as Shove (2003) has shown, the recursive everyday practices and

348 technologies that inhabit a 'house' are constantly working together to engender the arguably

349 affective experience of what it means to dwell – to make home.

350

351 **Recent themes in architectural geography: mobility/stasis; the politics of architecture**

352 Whilst the approaches in the previous section provide a set of relatively clear

353 methodologies for the geographical study of buildings, the substantive outputs of such work

354 present a more muddled picture. In reality, geographers' work tends to combine two or more

355 of these approaches; more significantly, nonrepresentational thinking has far from displaced

356 earlier conceptual models. Indeed, some of this work demonstrates how it is difficult to

357 separate the architecture of individual buildings from other kinds of built spaces – from

358 landscape architectures, urban design and town planning, for instance. Some brief examples

359 of recent research illuminate this point, where two of many key themes stand out.

360

361 *Mobility/stasis*

362 Echoing interest in the study of mobility (Cresswell 2006), geographers have shown

363 how architectural spaces may enable, channel or constrain particular kinds of movements –

364 both by humans and nonhumans. Merriman's (forthcoming) work on Lawrence Halprin (a

365 twentieth century architect and environmental planner) demonstrates how architecture can be

366 viewed as a kind of 'choreographing' endeavour, combining the design *and* use of built

367 spaces. Halprin attempted to 'sculpt' freeways in order to facilitate kinds of movement

368 through city landscapes (whether walking or driving) that would produce particular kinds of

369 flows, vistas and emotions (also Merriman 2006, 2007; Borden 2007). Whilst others have

370 stressed the creativity and almost utopian euphoria associated with the movement of bodies

371 through architectural spaces (Saville 2008), Merriman's key contribution is to insist on the

372 attachment of movement to radical politics that would democratise planning and foster a

373 more inclusive experience of built (city) spaces. Adey (2008) similarly calls for the emotions

374 that impinge upon travellers' experience of airport spaces to be thoroughly connected to the

375 seemingly more powerful forces at play there. Hence, he argues (2008, p. 439) that "feelings,

376 motions and emotions are predicated by a form of airport control; bodies, both physically and

377 emotionally, are opened up to power" – from biometric technologies to the corridors and

378 walls that channel passenger flow (also Adey 2004a, 2004b). Conversley, van Hoven and

379 Sibley (2008) ably demonstrate how the experience of institutional *confinement* – through

380 inmates' understanding of prison spaces – is structured and negotiated via different regimes

381 of surveillance. Like Adey (and also Lees 1997), their work enables geographers to

382 understand the disciplinary and exclusionary techniques of the powerful, often complemented

383 by the assumptions of professional architectural practice (also Imrie 2003). However, it also

384 serves "to establish the role of vision in the *day-to-day coping strategies* of inmates,

385 considering the prison as a site of resistance […] and one for forming social relations" (van

386 Hoven & Sibley 2008, p. 1015, emphasis added).

387

388 *The politics of architecture*

389 The politics (and ethics) of im/mobility suggested by the work above indicates a

390 second strand of recent research that has refreshed what is really a longer-standing interest in

391 the ways in which buildings refer to or produce broader politics of cultures and economies.

392 Here, geographers have combined political-economic 'readings' of building with one or more

393 of the 'nonrepresentational' approaches outlined above. For instance, Kraftl (2006b) shows

394 how the affective regimes of a Steiner School produce idea(l)s of childhood that both

395 complement and resist notions of childhood in more 'mainstream' contexts. Llewellyn's

396 (2003, 2004) 'critical historical geographies' of architecture combine archival work and life-

397 history interviews to consider how the gendered assumptions of architects were negotiated by

398 women living in inter-war social housing. Set in the same period, Gruffudd (2001)

399 demonstrates how a symbolic reading of modernist health centres in 1930s London *also*

400 requires an attention to the kinds of bodies and practices that 'modern' design would produce.

401 As Gruffudd shows, such centres were at the vanguard of attempts to rejuvenate the 'slums'

402 of London and to create forward-looking, hygienic British citizens (also Gold 1997; Worpole

403 2000). The implicit utopianism evident in Gruffudd's reading is formalised elsewhere as part

404 of a recent turn to geographies of utopia – for instance in Pinder's (2005) scholarly analysis

405 of radical utopian architecture and Kraftl's (2007) mixing of the utopian effects/affects of

406 architectural ruin (also Grosz 2001; Jenkins 2006). Elsewhere, Hagen and Ostergren (2006)

407 combine an analysis of architecture-as-symbol with one of architecture-as-stage for human

408 performance. They highlight how the arguably utopian imperatives of Hitler's National

409 Socialist party were, in the city of Nuremberg, channelled into "a carefully calculated use of

410 space and architecture [to create] a world of ritual ceremony and rhetoric capable of

411 generating an almost phantasmal sense of mass fascination and awe among participants and

412 observers" (Hagen & Ostergren 2006, p. 158). Without saying as much, their approach also

413 evokes how architectures of movement and affect are mobilised to explicit political ends.

Conclusions

The remainder of this article briefly assesses the contribution of architectural geographies to the wider cultural geographical endeavour, forwarding some critical points about the direction of the former. The first set of criticisms is broadly methodological; the second, broadly political.

Perhaps the major contribution of architectural geographies – since the Berkeley School, in fact – has been to foster critical debate about which elements of the landscape geographers are interested in, why, how those elements refer to broader political/economic/cultural process, and, indeed, what makes them what (we think, in our daily lives) they are. Whilst not a huge sub-field of cultural geography, architectural geographers have inaugurated, refined and deployed some of the key methodologies for studying landscapes, exemplified by geographers as diverse as Sauer, Harvey, Goss, Lees and Jacobs. They have also (perhaps implicitly) demonstrated that the methodological complexity attendant to studying buildings makes them such fascinating and provocative objects for study: it is precisely because architecture is constituted by such diverse fields of politics, practice and passion that buildings become the locus for ardent contestation (Jacobs et al. 2007) and sometimes extraordinary levels of popular fascination (Kraftl 2009).

Yet, despite these accomplishments, the potential of architectural geographies to challenge and extend (rather than deploy) wider nonrepresentational approaches in geography has remained largely unrealised. Taking embodied practices of inhabitation as an example, it could be argued that there exist *more* critical and *more* performance-based geographies of architecture which are, for better or worse, not explicitly *about* architecture *per se*. Here, one can cite Laurier and Philo's (2006) involving exposition of daily practices and interactions in cafes using video stills, or McCormack's (2004, 2005) evocative diagramming of eurythmic

439 dance movements within the spaces of a corridor, or Paterson's (2006) insistence on

440 acknowledging haptic registers of touch might move 'nonrepresentational' approaches firmly

441 beyond a latent reliance on the visual (also Merriman forthcoming). Cross-fertilisation

442 between these approaches and the geographies of architecture is clearly beginning[i], yet,

443 arguably, architectural geographers could have a greater role to play in instituting

444 methodological innovation by cultural geographers.

445 More controversially, and despite the above comments, a second critique (or

446 provocation) is that many contemporary architectural geographers remain disproportionately

447 concerned with the methodological import of their work. This is certainly *not* to say that their

448 work has no further, substantive contribution, nor, as indicated above, that the political

449 imperatives of the 'new' cultural geography have been lost – for, those imperatives still

450 inform some of the most groundbreaking work in this area (Lees 2001; Jacobs 2006). Indeed,

451 arguably, some of the examples in the previous section provide a sturdy riposte to the charge

452 that nonrepresentational geographies require a sharpened critical edge (see Lorimer 2008).

453 Yet – and I include my own work here – an emphasis upon methodology dilutes the broader

454 political-economic, cultural, social (and even environmental) messages that architectural

455 geographers might offer to both academics and their wider publics.

456 The previous point might provoke three ways in which to sharpen the 'critical' edge

457 that architectural geographers have been seeking for the past decade. Firstly, there is an

458 implicit but real danger of demonising architectural practitioners with constant criticism

459 about the insidious ways in which they frame spaces to exclude disadvantaged social groups,

460 or ignore the diverse exigencies of daily inhabitation. If Swenarton et al.'s (2007) collection

461 is anything to go by, architects themselves are beginning to consider (indeed some have

462 considered for many years) the complex ethical and/or political decisions they make when

463 working in contested cultural contexts (Alread 2007; Harisson 2007; also Lerup 1977;

464 Hughes & Sadler 2000; Thomas 2005). Meanwhile, recent research has acknowledged that

465 architects and local authority practitioners *are* personally, politically driven to foster the

466 participation of users in design but often lack the expertise, time and finance to do so (den

467 Besten et al. 2008). Amidst recent calls to open the 'black box' of architectural practice, it

468 could be acknowledged that architects themselves engage in their own processes of self-

469 reflection, and that further collaborative work with architectural practitioners might inform

470 this process.

471   Secondly, in terms of the relevance of architectural geographies to wider publics,

472 academics might more *clearly articulate* how they might inform and/or evaluate activism

473 around contested architectural spaces (Jacobs et al. 2007), or instigate critical policy readings

474 of *existing* – as well as historical – architectural programmes such as current, nationwide

475 hospital, school and 'sustainable community' projects in the UK (Gesler et al. 2004; den

476 Besten et al. forthcoming). Such an articulation might well be informed by the radical politics

477 of the 'new' cultural approach to architecture; yet it might well also be achieved by cross-

478 fertilising recent, nonrepresentational, architectural geographies with recent attempts by other

479 geographers to engage with their wider publics in more diverse ways (Ward 2007). It is of

480 course likely that at least some architectural geographers already do engage diverse publics;

481 however, the methods, benefits and challenges of doing so have not yet been discussed in an

482 academic context.

483   Thirdly, it could be quite accurately argued that two omissions characterise

484 geographical research on architecture. On the one hand, architectural geographers have

485 predominantly focussed upon case studies found in the Minority Global North, although the

486 globally-inflected nature of King's (2004) work and a handful of case studies from South and

487 South-East Asia (Olds 1997; Bunnell 1999) run against this trend. In particular, architectural

488 geographies might inform temporal and spatial analyses of housing, 'slum' clearance and

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489   architectural process (O'Hare et al. 1998; O'Hare & Barke 2002) in far more diverse contexts

490   than they do at present. On the other hand, critical geographies of sustainability and Low-

491   Impact Development recognise work on the geographies of architecture, yet – in line with the

492   above critiques – make the charge that "much of it avoids making the clear political claims

493   that are so needed in this age of ecological modernisation" (Pickerill & Maxey 2009 p. 3).

494   Interestingly, this charge can equally be aimed at sustainable architects and critics themselves

495   – only recently have they begun to move away from a concern with technology and aesthetics

496   to consider broader questions about the assumptions, beliefs and political goals that underpin

497   sustainable architecture (Guy 2002; Ole-Jensen 2002; Bennetts et al. 2002; Kraftl

498   forthcoming). There is a diverse but gathering emphasis upon environmentally-sound design

499   in architecture; equally, there has been a groundswell of interest in radical political ecologies

500   and social-environmental transitions within human geography (Swyngedouw & Heynen

501   2003; Loftus 2009) that might offer complementary conceptual support. Julie Cidell's (2009,

502   forthcoming) recent work on the political ecologies and professional practices of 'green'

503   building in the United States offer some examples of how this work might proceed. Hence,

504   the intersection of these practical and conceptual trajectories would appear to be just one

505   potential starting-point for substantive future research on the geographies of architecture.

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[i] One example of such advances emerged in a diverse and engaging session organised by Peter Merriman and Jane Jacobs at the *Association of American Geographers* conference, Boston, 2008. Their session, 'Practiced Architectures', included papers that involved the use of diagramming, mapping and video.