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*Geographies of Compulsive Bodies: Reimagining the nature of Tourette syndrome*

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Abstract

In understanding 'human being', in the past decade human geographers have sought to understand human conditions and their alternative ways of being with the world (Hansen & Philo, 2007). However, neurosciences that have been dominant in investigating these conditions have contributed to their largely disembodied and despatialised depiction. This paper contributes to and expands on work mainly in geographies and sociologies of health and disability that problematizes this, by reimagining the nature of one such condition; Tourette syndrome (TS). TS' distinctly spatial nature is not recognised as contributing to its understanding, despite its articulation in both the heightened sensitivity produced by the unique brain tissues, and the compulsive behaviours that evoke physical interactions with affective environments. In the strong entanglement of the Tourette body with its environment, this paper reimagines TS as a forceful desire that articulates extracorporeal affects through the hypersensitive body, by its compulsive acts with the socio-materiality that constitutes place. Because of the co-emergence of human sensibilities with affective materiality that is produced by and reproduces this desire, this alternative imagination decentres the human and emphasises the precognitive nature of this sensitive embodiment. Herewith, the paper aims to help advance understandings of affective interactions with the more-than-human through the concept of compulsivity. Subsequently, it suggests new pathways to researching alternative human conditions with unique sensory capacities that can help understand how human beings relate to their life worlds.

References:

Hansen & Philo (2007) The normalcy of doing things differently: bodies, spaces and disability geography. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 98 (4): 493–506.