

Conference “Spaces of Desire: Remembrance and Civic Power”

www.spacesofdesire.com

Compulsive geographies and desire

Diana Beljaars
School of Planning and Geography
Cardiff University

Abstract

In order to understand ‘human being’, human geographers have engaged with the spatialities and geographies of the human body in how it constitutes the ways humans engage with place. They have done so by situating the corporeal as affected by a multiplicity of extracorporealities producing a conceptualisation of engagements with place as intentional and reflective in nature. Whilst this captures the vast majority of human engagement with place, vital elements that tend to occur beyond our immediate attention seem to escape these conceptualisations, because they happen in-between more charismatic gestures. These bodily engagements with place are to a large extent less or even unintentional, not goal-oriented, involuntary and pre-reflexive. This renders the body agential in the production of geographies in ways this paper engages with through the notion of compulsivity. It does so by examining a particular kind of body that has strong compulsive tendencies; a body affected by Tourette syndrome. This phenomenon urges the body into physical interactions (e.g. compulsive touching, ordering) with affective environments. By reimagining Tourette syndrome through the Deleuzian rhetoric of desire, this paper aims to explore how the human body produces a geography of compulsivity, and what this means for human enmeshment with the more-than-human world. Additionally, it contributes to ways of ‘alternative’ engagements with the world (Hansen & Philo, 2007) through human conditions that potentially through their medicalisation have been marginalised.

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.