

***Creativity*. By Harriet Hawkins. London: Routledge. 2017. 394 pp. 32 B/W ill. £28.99 (paperback) ISBN: 9781138813441**

As one of the titles in the Routledge Key Ideas in Geography series, this book is tasked with introducing readers (academics and students) to the ways creativity has been thought in the discipline. To do this, the substantive chapters of the book are organised around nine sites that examine different aspects of creativity: namely the body; studios and galleries; the home; clusters and colonies; community; the city; the margins; the nation; landscape and environment. *Creativity* provides a comprehensive and extremely useful overview of the many appearances of the term in human geography. I address here two related questions raised by the book pertinent to the shifting sub-disciplinary contours of cultural geography.

The first concerns the relationship between creativity and culture. Hawkins' framing could be read as posing creativity as a synonym for culture. This is apparent in her interrogation of the conceptual boundaries of creativity that revolve around four 'queries' with each structured as a binary (p. 23). Creativity might be understood as: (i) product or process; (ii) personal (and agentive) or social (and determined); (iii) common or rare; and (iv) a domain-general (i.e. universal) or domain-specific (i.e. particular) activity. Each of these tensions can be found in definitions of culture, and have been key lines of debate in cultural studies and (less frequently) cultural geography. For example, culture as common, as 'working class', rather than the love and 'study of perfection' (c.f. Arnold 1987, 184), is a founding move of British cultural studies (Hall 2016, 13).

This raises the second question. If we take from Hawkins a sense of creativity as cultural, we might reasonably ask what is this conception of culture, and by extension, what are the implications of creativity as a (conceptual, empirical, methodological) focal point for cultural geography? As Hall (*ibid.*) demonstrated, cultural studies is itself a production of culture. That is, culture as scholarly subject matter becomes visible via the traditions through which it is read. Hawkins' picture of creativity, though, is one without singular tradition. The book jumps between quite different scholarly lineages, for example post-phenomenological thought on the body (p.65), Marxist inflected urban studies (p. 213), and postcolonial critiques of representation (p. 286). For Hawkins this intellectual pluralism is a strength as 'such diversity forms the basis for the promise and possibilities of creativity' (p. 338).

In relation to cultural geography then, given these diverse traditions, creativity seems to provide no single focal point nor theoretical trajectory. However, this diversity does point to an interesting ongoing tension concerning the figure of 'the human' in scholarship in cultural geography. Broadly invested in conceptualising, and challenging any centrality of 'the human' vis-a-vis 'nature', recent cultural geography might be problematically shoe-horned into two (certainly not distinct) strands: posthumanities and geohumanities. Where the former has emphasised non-representational agencies beyond human subject matter, the latter has retained a focus on the human through artistic practices. Creativity captures something of this tension. Thus Hawkins notes, although creativity might be understood through non-sovereign processes of emergence, 'it is hard though to conceive of these [...] outside [...] of forms of more conscious and planned [...] creative living' (p. 51). Hawkins does not resolve this tension (one that extends across contemporary humanities scholarship), but rather does an important job in opening it out for human geographers.

## References

- Arnold, Matthew (1987) *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Hall, Stuart (2016) *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History*. Durham: Duke University Press.

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