
Bodily contours: geography, metaphor and pregnancy

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Fertile beginnings

'If our children ever read this (and who knows what will happen either to our words or to our children) we want them to know that we have loved carrying each of them in our bodies, and we love all of them literally more than it is possible to say. Being pregnant and being a mother are experiences that have changed our lives in multiple ways, bringing unambiguous joys and literally sublime ways of understanding the world and our place within it. In no way whatsoever would we want our children or the experience of pregnancy that they have given us to be different.'

'The academy and my pregnant body clashed and collided, and both were strong and challenging, and both were overwhelming and hard. The first time my pregnant body came, the sheer weight of the vomiting and exhaustion sapped all the strength from my PhD research and slowed it down to a crawl. It was only after I crossed the line and hit my head against the base of the ivory tower that I realised that entrance to the academy demanded that I make piles of publications to climb up rather than babies. Eventually, after much searching, I found a crack just wide enough to allow me to slip into a temporary lectureship. But my pregnant body came a second time, and it vomited this lectureship out. This time, when I tried to come back, the drip, drip of years since my PhD, the lack of suitable publications and the gaps in my CV formed a gulf that separated me from an academic career. In the enchanted forest of hugs and fevers and milky drinks, I could not find the space or time to work out how to get over it. The third time my pregnant body came, it threatened to kill me, and writing and reading both disappeared behind high blood pressure and wide toddler smiles. Finally, I found a temporary research post to stretch out like a thin, thin web across the gulf between home and work. Like Anansi the spider, I am building a thread of published words, hoping to catch a breeze that will carry me through a crack in the ivory tower before the web breaks. If my pregnant body should come again, will this thread support it, or will there be no crack in the tower wide enough to allow me inside?'

'For me, pregnancy was a profoundly geographical experience. As my own body grew beyond its limits, living with/in/as a pregnant body disrupted notions of space as a fixed entity. My body space grew, grew and grew and then deflated, as the blood and milk flowed out. Pregnancy opened up 'space' to transformation. The dichotomy of inside/outside was also disrupted and boundaries became blurred and fuzzy as my babies were both a part of me and apart from me. As the subject dissolved, so did the borders. But yet in a material sense my pregnant body could carry on in the academy as before. It is only now, after having had several years 'break' caring for my children, and now working on a fractional contract, that the academy serves to exclude me more: an academy structured so the most 'productive' academic season also coincides with the school summer holiday; an academy that speaks to male experience as the norm and continues to undermine and undervalue part-time work patterns; an academy that valorises (certain) masculine expression and ways of being. And I see now how many brilliant women's ideas, praxis and skills have been lost along the way. Imagine how different the academy could be: a pregnant possibility indeed.'

'Having moved to England in the second trimester of my first pregnancy, my re-collections of pregnancy are inseparably tied to becoming a foreigner for I, like Ashima, a character in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel see being a foreigner as a 'life-long pregnancy - a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a

parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding' (p. 49-50). And in its best version, the physicality and the mentality of pregnancy, like foreignness, makes us confront our 'comfort zones', our taken-for granted body, the terms of our participation in the world and forces us to see the complications in the 'ordinariness' that we took for granted. And it is this complex intersection of motherhood and foreignness that conditions and often contains my participation in the academy.'

Conception: the seeds are sown

Gender differences in participation in geography Higher Education in Britain are marked: in 2002/3 only 30 percent of geography academics were women. These gender disparities become particularly apparent as one progresses up the academic hierarchy: in 2002/3 women represented 49 per cent of full-time undergraduate and sandwich course geography students in British universities, 47 per cent of full-time postgraduates, 40 per cent of researchers, 31 percent of lecturers, 23 per cent of senior lecturers and only 14 per cent of professors (Higher Education Statistical Agency, Individualised Staff Returns and Student Returns 2003, personal communication)ⁱ. The pervasive and more subtle structural, institutional and patriarchal forces which mitigate against the inclusion of women within the geographical community are now well documented (Crang, 2003; Dunmayne-Peaty and Wellens, 1998; Hall *et al.*, 2002; McDowell, 1990; McDowell and Peake, 1990; McKendrick, 1996; Madge and Bee, 1999; Monk *et al.*, 2004). This gendered structural composition of the geography academy has implications for the construction of geographical knowledge. However unintentional, male dominance results in male bias in the selection of what is deemed worthy of geographical enquiry. Geography has therefore developed a masculinistⁱⁱ scholarship in which geographical research has focused predominately on white, middle-class men's experiences and has ignored the experiences of many women (Domosh, 1991; Tivers, 1978). Although it may not be fashionable to reiterate in the new millennium, it is clear that women, their experiences and their ways of knowing have been, and still are, marginalised as geographical knowledge producers.

In this paper, our main aim is to challenge the intellectual and institutional exclusivity that marks geography in the academyⁱⁱⁱ. Geographers have for some time been critiquing the ways in which the metaphors we use in geography marginalise and exclude the experiences of many people around the globe, yet the project of thinking through alternative metaphors has yet to be undertaken. In this paper we want to (rather playfully) explore the potential of the pregnant body as a metaphor for a reconstructed geography, a geography that interrogates marginality and exclusion in academic practice. We want to 'try out' pregnancy as a central metaphor in geography, to see how such a project might render geography unrecognisable; how the boundaries of geography might be disrupted and transgressed; and whether this would enable us to place the female firmly within the genealogy of geography? We want to see what generative potential might emerge from using the pregnant body as a metaphor for geography.

Robyn Longhurst (2001a; 2001b) argues that the pregnant body could function as a metaphor that challenges geography's disciplinary boundaries, emphasising their fluidity and challenging their exclusions: 'The pregnant body acts as a useful motif for geography's disciplinary body. Both the pregnant body and the disciplinary body possess insecure boundaries. Filtrations and flows of fluids and ideas cannot be stopped. Seepage occurs across the boundaries of both pregnant bodies and bodies of knowledge. Pregnant bodies and bodies of knowledge are spaces of self and other, embodied subjectivity, and politics' (Longhurst, 2001b, 65). Extending her argument, we want to suggest that employing the pregnant body as a metaphor in terms of making that pregnant body insistently present within our academic practice is one way of challenging the boundaries of that practice.

Our concern, however, is not so much with the flow and seepage of ideas between academic disciplines, but with the relative *lack* of flow and seepage of women beyond the margins of the academy. Despite the increasing presence of some female geographers we argue that certain forms of femininity are simply not incorporated into geography and it is at the juncture when the corporeal body is manifestly female, in its pregnant form, that it is most excluded from geography. Thus, we want to use the pregnant body as a metaphor that invites comparison, interrogating and denaturalising the boundedness of the academy,

not only in relation to pregnant women, but also in relation to all women and, by extension, to all marginalised groups. In this sense, we are not *advocating* pregnancy as a metaphor, but *playing* with it as a disruptive metaphor, using it to challenge and dispute both the discursive boundaries and some of the masculinist practices inherent in geography. In this paper we therefore aim to 'discover a language... which accompanies bodily experience, clothing it in words that do not erase the body but speak the body' (Irigaray, 1993b, 19).

The rest of the paper is divided into three sections, or trimesters. The first section/trimester explores the importance of metaphor as an object of inquiry, its immanence and its power in academic work. In particular, we look at two aspects of metaphors: the ways in which metaphors place discursive limits to geographical thought and the potential for broadening the scope of geographical knowledge by using metaphors as pedagogic tools. In the second section/trimester we explore the types of geographies that might be produced and reproduced by using the pregnant body as a metaphor in geography. We end this section/trimester by examining some of the problems that such an approach involves, particularly its potential for exclusion of many women's experiences around pregnancy and childbirth (e.g. infertility, disability, rape). The third section/trimester offers a case study in the use of pregnancy as a metaphor in rethinking geography as academic practice, particularly in relation to a critical feminist pedagogy. This section/trimester is based on alternative readings of two photographs of our pregnant bodies. We use these images to make a case for pregnant bodies as 'matter in place' (Longhurst, 2001b, 5) in geography. We ask readers how these photos can be used and read in order to come to a critical understanding of geographical thought and praxis and ultimately to contribute to a rethinking of the intellectual and institutional boundaries of geography. This is vital for the feminist project, for Longhurst (2001b, 2) claims: 'The leaky, messy and awkward zones of the inside/outside of bodies and their resultant spatial relationships remain largely unexamined in human geography. This is no accident but rather is linked to a particular politics of masculinist knowledge production.' The use of the pregnant body as a metaphor in teaching is a means of challenging this masculinist knowledge production to enable a revisioning of geographical thought from a feminist perspective.

However, we would not wish to present an over valorised view of the pregnant body. From the outset we wish to acknowledge that (pregnant) women themselves have sometimes played an active role in geography's exclusivity and have often materially benefited from their position in the academy. Further than that, we recognize that the pregnant body (both figuratively and materially) is not always subjugated: women can be aggressors too. Moreover, although pregnancy leaves a trace through our life course, pregnancy in itself is a temporary experience, occurring at a particular point in the life course, experienced by particular groups of women. Pregnancy is not a universal condition and it can often be a painful experience for many women involving loss, violence or unachieved potential. The exclusions that may be felt when reading this paper by some women and some men are significant and acknowledged. However, the aim of the paper is not simply to celebrate pregnancy as a state of being but rather to use the pregnant body as a metaphor that urges a reworking of geographical practice based on a more inclusive sense of the academic body. We argue that thinking through (and about) the pregnant body may be one way in which feminist geographers, and others, can move beyond deconstruction towards reconstruction and take a step towards reconstituting the intellectual and institutional boundaries of geography. But first, we must ground the use of metaphors more generally in academic practice.

First trimester: conceiving metaphor

Metaphors are linguistic tools, but as poststructuralist writing reminds us, language always defines worldviews. Ngugi (1995), for example, argues that the language of a particular group of people 'is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history' (Ngugi, 1995, 289), it carries their cultural values and understandings. Culture, through the imagery and references of a particular language, is the 'spiritual eyeglass' of a group of people, making possible the 'genesis, growth, banking, articulation and ... transmission from one generation to the next...' of a particular set of cultural norms and assumptions

(Ngugi, 1995, 289). The metaphors we use in our languages reflect our practices, our hopes and often our desires.

Disciplines too make sense of themselves and are understood through their metaphors (Price-Chalita, 1994). Thus, the metaphors we use in geography help us to understand geography, what we want to study as geography, how we view geography, how we want to teach geography. Understanding metaphors, and in particular the metaphors used in geography, can be a route into understanding geographical projects themselves.

The relationship between metaphors and disciplines can be complex. Metaphors have a normative function. They are used to identify what is appropriate to be studied in the discipline. They discipline the discipline. Critical researchers have used deconstructive methods in order to understand how metaphors construct disciplines, the structures of power this involves, and the in/exclusions this necessarily involves (Bhabha, 1994; Foucault, 1980). In geography, for instance, the use of space as a central metaphor has been critiqued for some years, particularly when space is conceptualised in an uncritical flat way (see Smith and Katz, 1993 and Pratt, 1997) and in economic geography the masculinist construction of metaphors of the 'penetration' of the capitalist global economy has been challenged (e.g. Cameron and Gibson-Graham, 2003). Feminist writers have been at the forefront of this critique of geographical metaphors, resulting in a rethinking of disciplinary boundaries and in expanding the scope and range of the categories that we study in geography.

Through the metaphors that we use (as well as those we don't) we also decide who *does* geography. Metaphors here serve as 'instruments of power' (Chase, 2001, 184) to displace, silence and marginalize women (and other groups). Exploring the often long and complicated histories of metaphors can be a particularly useful tool in understanding the construction and legitimation of power relations within geography as a discipline, particularly in terms of race and gender (Said, 1994; Mohanty, 1991). So a transformative feminist geography will highlight not only the ways in which metaphors such as landscape and nature define geography in particular ways, but also the genealogies of geography that arise from such definitions. Challenging masculinist definitions of such metaphors helps to make sense of the ways in which women are marginalised in geographical thought and practice (see for instance Rose, 1993; Nash, 1996) as well as to highlight the possibility of multiple genealogies in geography.

Although metaphors definitely outline disciplinary (disciplining) procedures and frameworks we are interested here not only in what they exclude but also in their generative potential. Metaphor, Cresswell (1997, 333) argues, is 'not a "poetic flourish" but a deeply engrained way of comprehending the world'. Here metaphor is an act or practice, not simply a way of speech. It speaks of lived experience. It also permits and gives license to practices. So sometimes metaphors may make acceptable practices that would be considered unacceptable outside the frameworks that the metaphor evokes. For instance, derogatory metaphors around immigrants can enable and permit racist practices. But to understand the power of such metaphors, we have to recognise that these metaphors also carry within them the images and the power hierarchies that were inherent in empire, arguably the 'seeds' of another era. In a similar manner, feminised metaphors of landscape also contributed to colonial domination, nation-building and constructions of empire (Rose, 1995; Nash, 1996) and served to 'permit excesses and atrocities in the name of the figurative women' (McClintock, cited in Chase, 2001, 185). And these imaginaries are persistent and carry through into discourses of race and migration today.

A reconstitutive project in geography could seek to understand these limitations, the ways in which power relations are played out through the geographical metaphors we use, but also explore new generative metaphors that open up geography to those who have so far been marginalised. Rethinking the metaphors that we use can be part of a revisioning of how, and by whom, geographical work is done.

One way into that project is by thinking of metaphors as pedagogic tools, tools that are particularly useful in making sense of experiences, in making the world more knowable, reducing the relatively 'known' to fit the same conceptual framework as the relatively 'unknown'. In this mode, metaphors can be useful for bridging the gap between geographers and those who are currently marginal to geographical projects. For example,

the knowledge of subordinated groups can be understood through the metaphors that they use in constructing their world (see Chase, 2001) because metaphors are deeply rooted in cultures, in the broadest sense of the term, and also therefore in the power hierarchies inherent in each culture. In this sense then, metaphors can act as cultural translators. By trying to make sense of metaphors that have local currency we can identify with the knowledge of those who use the metaphors. We may even be able to identify common knowledges that we could share with them. As such metaphors can be a useful hermeneutic devise.

The cultures that give rise to metaphors are not inherently linked to place. Cultures of knowledge may also be part of one's training and shared across a disciplinary group. For instance, Donna Haraway in an interview with Thyrza-Nichols Goodeve outlines the ways in which she draws on biological metaphors to make sense of broader feminist questions (Haraway and Goodeve, 2001), and this reflects her particular scientific training and the paradigms she shares with her interviewer. In fact, metaphors can be particularly useful in the age of interdisciplinarity, as they can assist in bringing together insights from different disciplines such as economics, sociology, geography.

Thus, metaphors can enable conceptual leaps across disciplinary boundaries or across different domains of experience (such as the pregnant body and the academy). They provide a way of understanding one concept through the use of another concept that resonates with the first, has significant parallels with it, but does not mimic it. It enables a multiperspectival approach because using metaphors that resonate across different geographical traditions, across different knowledge systems, may facilitate sense-making in different discursive contexts. Boyd (1979) has shown that the 'open-endedness or inexplicitness' (Boyd, 1979, 357) of metaphors (in which the points of similarity are not necessarily specified, and sometimes, we would add, even the identity of the person or concept to which the metaphor is referring is left open to interpretation) can be useful in introducing entirely new insights or changing established ways of thinking about well-known things. This is not only because metaphors can allow the expression (or at least intimation) of concepts that are not fully comprehended and for which a literal set of terms is not available, it is also because they make that which is new or strange a little less intimidating by providing familiar concepts as bridges or steps.

One way in which metaphors can act as 'stepping stones' is by linking usually dissonant concepts through the visual realm. While we commonly evoke visual images in literary metaphors (for example, she raged like a hurricane, as wily as a snake etc), it is less common to use visual images to evoke metaphorical statements. Closing the barrier between language and image is precisely what we attempt in this paper. But before we can do this we must first explore the potentials and problems of using pregnancy as a metaphor in geography.

Second trimester: pregnancy - a fertile metaphor?

Inserting the pregnant body into the frame and genealogy of geography forces us to rethink geography's limit(at)ion(s) and boundaries. We want to push at these boundaries by placing pregnancy as a central metaphor in geography; but first we want to explore what kinds of geographies we may reproduce in this venture, who does or does not belong within the frame. In other words, we want to use the pregnant body as a metaphor for the contingency of inclusion and exclusion in the academic space.

The pregnant body as flesh and bone, and geography as a discipline are perhaps ontologically different entities; however the metaphor 'Geography is a pregnant body' does throw up some interesting points about the discipline inasmuch as it is a dynamic and deeply heterogeneous space. The discipline has been deeply embedded in (masculinised) colonial practices, and accordingly women, black, colonised and indigenous people have been utterly marginalised within it. In a postcolonial, globalised world, the 'privatised' geographies of marginalised people can/should no longer be ignored. The discipline is pregnant with their geographies, pushing and kicking at disciplinary boundaries: is it not time for them to come out?

But what exclusions might this birthing involve? The first issue that emerges for us is whether pregnancy is only useful as a metaphor for those who have experienced pregnancy? It opens up the vexed and difficult question of individual experience and its relationship to intersubjective 'truth', which has a long history in feminist writing (see for example Lazreg, 1994). The portrayal in this paper is clearly partial. There is no one unitary body (Longhurst, 2001b, 141). The notion of one body is an illusion as bodies are reconstructed and experienced in culturally and historically specific times and places. Each body is unique but also socially positioned - bodies are always sexed and racialised for example. We use the pregnant body in this paper to challenge the idea of a unitary body but also to work through differences between pregnant bodies themselves. However, part of our advocacy of using the pregnant body as a metaphor for the academy as an exclusionary space is an insistence that experience, and the extent to which it can/should be shared, is not an issue that will, or can be allowed to, go away – it must continue to be explored. Toril Moi (1999) for instance, offers a useful reminder about the importance of experience in constructions of knowledge, arguing that the body encompasses both the objective and subjective aspects of experience. The bodies of women are 'a historical sedimentation of our way of living in the world, and of the world's way of living with us' (Moi, 1999, 68). In fact, the relevance of experience as an issue that emphasises the differences between women and the power relations that sustain them – differences of race, wealth/class, global location etc., - is more, not less relevant in an age of increased militarism and unequal globalisation than it was years ago when black and third world women began to write about difference and power within the feminist movement (hooks, 1982; Mohanty, 1991). Using specific experiences as a means of understanding more generalised theoretical and empirical realities bears (down?) directly on these issues, as we push and labour towards some form of reconciliation.

All the authors of this paper have had multiple experience of pregnancy. We all have two or more children and despite some similarities (we all have both boys and girls, gave birth in the UK, are academics in geography departments in the UK and therefore have some similarities in our social class positions) our experiences of pregnancy were not uniform. Pregnancy was different for each one of us, and different every time we experienced it. This is why we began the paper with some very personal writing that frames us as three very different people, pursuing academic careers in the context of pregnancy, childbirth and children. We recognise our many privileges, in that we are women living in a rich country with good health facilities and good education – and this privilege affects both our experiences of pregnancy and the academy. At the same time though, we, as women, and particularly as women who have been pregnant, have been marginalised in the academy. And this is an important exclusion, because, in a knowledge-based economy, the academy is a site of power that supports the exclusion and domination of people and their viewpoints in many different sectors of the economy and in many different parts of the world (see Cairncross, 1997).

Secondly, metaphors as metaconcepts are ultimately a mix of ideas that together offer a unified imagery of reality. But there are a number of local variations in the ideas that are mixed. They can reduce the complexities and the differences that are inherent in the ideas that are being drawn together under the umbrella of a metaphor. For instance, Çağlar (2001) has shown the way in which the concept of ghetto is a root metaphor in Germany that collapses a number of distinct ideas about immigrants. Metaphors enable one to make links across different concepts but the precise concepts that are linked in different places and spaces will vary and because metaphors operate by allowing imaginary links and conceptual leaps, the precise concepts that are involved in these leaps are not usually fleshed out. It can really limit the ability of the metaphor to 'travel'.

The pregnant body overcomes this inability to travel to a certain extent, because although it is an experiential event that does not relate to every woman's experience, it does take place in almost every social, economic and cultural condition in which women live globally. It is an experience that has significant global and historical continuities but which paradoxically, because of its fundamental universality, highlights the enormous differences in social, economic and political conditions surrounding and shaping it as an experience. The pregnant body, seen as a snapshot, is replete and complete, but taken as an experience is above all dynamic, subject to constant change and leakage (Longhurst, 2001a). The pregnant body is a very specific experience with a global ability to connote. However, although pregnancy probably means something to everyone, as a consequence

of its very familiarity it may not always mean anything like the same thing in different places. The ability even to talk about pregnancy, much less to picture it, may be severely restricted in some places, whereas the commoditisation and fetishisation of pregnancy in other places may place a raft of unintended connotations on images of the pregnant body when used in distance teaching for example. This does not necessarily outlaw the use of pregnancy in this way (after all the same is true for many other images commonly used in teaching, landscapes for example or any human body). What it does mean is that the diverse connotations and sometimes problematic meanings behind images need to be carefully thought and talked through. We illustrate this in our final section/trimester.

Our third caveat about the use of the pregnant body as metaphor concerns the propensity of metaphor to suppress difference. The force of metaphor is what McCloskey describes, tellingly for this paper, as its 'pregnant quality' (McCloskey, 1985, 77), the way a small phrase can store a huge number of far-reaching and often unintended revelations and implications through the mutual exchange between two seemingly entirely different discourses. The danger of metaphor is this very 'force': the connotational and emotional intensity that a metaphor, like a giant wormhole, can suck from one discourse into another ostensibly light years away. The very familiarity of the emotions and values so transferred makes their new discursive location seem 'natural' to them rather than 'forced'. Metaphors can force rather than enable comparisons because of their partiality. Partly it is this power to bring comparisons between two domains that have been seen as incommensurable that we argue may be their emancipatory potential. However, the oppressive potential of any metaphor is that it can invite the reader to 'suppress incongruities' (McCloskey, 1985, 77), disallowing incommensurable difference, and to falsely (sometimes endlessly) extend the list of similarities between two dissimilar groups, particularly in terms of value judgements. Although the reproductive potential of pregnancy as metaphor can never be controlled we have to be aware of the possibilities and problems of using such a metaphor.

Finally, for feminists the practice of drawing metaphors from biological sources can also be problematic as it subjects women to the power hierarchies within biological professions. It holds particular fears for First World women, who have struggled to wrest control over their pregnancies from the intense scrutiny and intervention of scientific professionals. Biological control over pregnancy, the biologism that has crept into reproduction, the regulative practices around reproduction, male contribution to reproduction, male control over women's bodies and the ways in which this intensifies during pregnancy, differential controls over pregnancy in different places are all themes that have exercised feminists for a long time (see for instance Petchesky and Judd, 1998). But using pregnancy as a metaphor is not without risk for Third World women too. For example, for many South Asians (both in the subcontinent and those in the diaspora) these concerns have sedimented around sex selection during pregnancy (Purewal, 2003).

Moreover, this biologism can also serve to simplify or make natural what are often complex social and cultural processes. As Chase (2001, 184-5) suggests 'some of the conservative ways in which we hear gendered metaphors are in the description of landscape, nature, epic migrations and political territory. Female landscape metaphors enabled a double exploitation which included naturalizing women and their bodies and using nature in ways which are similar to the exploitative use of women's bodies' (Merchant, 1983; Haste, 1994; Grosz, 1995). As many feminist writers have shown, pregnant bodies have been subjected to these kinds of surveillance in a multitude of very specific ways, read as medicalised conduits or as precultural naturalised wombs (see for example Book, 1999; Longhurst, 2001b). It is more effective if the metaphor itself can be questioned, so that for instance, the 'biological' can be shown to be socially and culturally mediated.

Bearing these caveats in mind, we would like to argue that the pregnant body might be a useful metaphor for feminist geographers if it is used with care. Metaphors can have a materiality (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Cresswell, 1997; Chase, 2001) and can be generative. The symbiotic relationship that exists between language and the embodiment of it means that certain metaphors have greater liberatory and space-clearing possibilities than others do. We would like to argue that the pregnant body is one such metaphor that can help to rework geography as a professional academic space. In particular we suggest that the power of metaphor can be used strategically to support change in existing relations of domination. The final section/trimester offers a case study in the use of

pregnancy as a metaphor in rethinking the institutional and intellectual boundaries of geography, particularly in the context of teaching and learning in human geography.

Third trimester: reproducing geographers

This section/trimester is based on possible readings of two photographs, accompanied by questions and activities that might be used to incite students to think through ways in which the pregnant body can destabilise key masculinist geographies and speak to transformational feminist geographies. Its aim is to enable a revisioning of geographical thought from a feminist perspective by showing how an examination of the pregnant body may provide a critique of the deep-seated masculinism of the geography discipline.

Impetus for researching the body as the 'geography closest in' (Longhurst, 1994) has come from feminist geographers whose concern with everyday worlds at a variety of scales has promoted an interest in corporeality. This curiosity in the body has both resulted in, and been a product of, the profound critique that feminist geography has made of masculinist rationality based on the assumption that the pursuer of knowledge can separate themselves from the pursuit of knowledge to produce objective and context-free research and that the rational mind can be disassociated from the passionate body, emotions and thoughts (Rose, 1993). An interest in the body has therefore been one way of challenging and disrupting masculinist dualistic notions based on the researcher/researched and mind/body dichotomies which are so often equated with a hierarchical gender ordering (Massey, 1992). Through an inquiry into the interconnections between, and instabilities of, the researcher/researched and mind/body split an interest in the body therefore holds potential for dislocating masculinist claims to universal knowledge.

Leonard (2002), in her discussion of the use of metaphor in organizational texts, argues that metaphors involving the sexualised body tend to frame gender in terms of hierarchical and aggressive difference within the workplace. She suggests that thinking about the body differently (as a less fixed, more fluid site) might change these metaphors, even as they appear in mainstream texts. As Gayatri Spivak (1992) argues reading as translation will allow those marginalised by mainstream texts to make pragmatic and strategic use of these texts by using different terms of reference. The pregnant body provides a site in which the female body is sexualised very ambiguously, and which is seen quite rarely in public imagery of the female body, and of the academic body. Its presence in academic spaces can therefore allow a re-reading of dominant discourses of both the body and academic practices.

The aim of the images in this section/trimester is therefore specific. They seek to confront, undermine and displace the 'so frequently, so unimaginatively, patriarchal' nature of geography (Massey, 1991, 31). In becoming an integral part of the process of knowledge creation as both the object and subject of the research, this section/trimester will make explicit how the pursuer of knowledge cannot separate themselves from the pursuit of knowledge. Additionally, the images highlight how the so-called passionate body cannot be isolated from the rational mind and how the so-called rational mind is also passionate, creative and illusory. To some readers these photographs may therefore be interpreted as 'irrational' and 'subjective' based on 'hysterical' behaviour stemming from reproductive biology. To the authors, however, the section/trimester is written as a celebration of the body, mind and emotions, based on research which is both theoretically informed and grounded in corporeal realities. The goal is therefore to reclaim the rational through acknowledgement of the links and the fuzzy ideological boundaries between knowledge and its creator and between the mind and body in an attempt to appropriate a space for the feminine (Rose, 1996, 56).

Although Bale (1996, 289) has suggested that photography can turn people into objects that are symbolically possessed, photographs are used in this paper as a means of validating the pregnant body, refusing to see it as the (m)other, as ugly, as something to be feared, commodified, consumed. Photographs have been used to make explicitly visible, to celebrate, to transgress the private reproductive realm, so often hidden in geographical discourse. The photographs display the authors performing certain facets of geography, freezing different moments of being a geographer. As such, these photographs are masquerades or disguises that have no objective reality, and therefore the images (and the

authors) balk at appropriation and possession, opening up the possibility that the performance can act as a site of resistance (Lewis and Pile, 1996). The images, however, act as cultural documents which can be read as a visual language. Clearly there will be multiple readings of these pictures, these fictions, these stories involved in performing geography (Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988). Various interpretations of the photographs are inevitable as readers of the paper will project their social identity, personal psychology and academic character on to them to produce 'fictive constructs' of the narrative imagination (Kong and Goh, 1995). Interpretation is, after all, a process of culturally-mediated, context-related creation rather than a static procedure of knowledge discovery. Despite the multi-faceted and rather messy nature of interpretation, the authors' intention underlying the selected images is clarified through the theoretically informed 'academic' account. As such, this section/trimester combines a detached, analytical construction of geographical knowledge with a more creative, disruptive, critical feminist stance which, through a set of questions following each photograph, throws back the gaze to ask the audience 'how about you?; who are you?; how do you interpret this performance, and why?' (c.f. Rose, 1996, 73)

In terms of academic practice, this section/trimester highlights university teaching as a form of intervention that can reproduce geographers who are critical in relation to their own discipline, and in relation to the world around them. This means that, not only should students be presented with images that problematise rather than try to simply represent reality, they should also be equipped with the skills to problematise representations of reality for themselves. As Rose (2003, 219) has recently argued: 'The truth of the slide, the vision of the projector and the refusal by the geographer to problematise either, collaborate to position the geographer and their vision as authoritative... I think that the particularity of slides needs to be acknowledged and discussed... their constructedness needs to be opened up.' Emphatically, this is not an argument against the use of images in teaching – words make images as surely as colours do, and whether or not you provide representations of reality, students will bring their own and lay their own 'transparencies' over everything you say. This is an argument for making 'transparencies' (both yours and the students') critically visible, for seeing teaching as an opportunity for political intervention for the creation of an increasingly inclusive academic space.

Photo 1: To boldly go where no woman has gone before



In Photo 1 an image of our pregnant body is placed next to a photograph of a Moroccan desert landscape. The original photograph is somewhat contradictory. The picture contrasts the 'explorers' jeep, representative of geography's colonial exploratory tradition, with the silhouette of an unnamed Berber, of ambiguous gender, the 'subaltern subject'. Other paradoxes too are apparent: inserted into the 'barren' desert landscape is a small patch of

vegetation, suggestive of an underlying potential fertility. The resultant representation seeks to make a critical comment on the exclusionary nature of the geography academy in three main ways. First, the image invites questions about who can be a geographer, and why/not? Can the unnamed Berber? Can the unnamed pregnant woman? A salutary thought bearing in mind the majority of women were excluded from becoming members of the Royal Geographical Society until 1913, and the knowledges of colonised people were excluded long after 1913. Geography remains a discipline that still marginalises both the majority world and black people in the minority world (see for example Pulido, 2002, and Potter, 2001).

Secondly, through the selection of an image in which the 'remote' space of 'uninhabited' barren land is waiting to be explored by the geographer and the apparent incongruity that this geographer might not only be female, but also might be pregnant, leads to questions about 'acceptable' spaces for pregnant bodies to inhabit and the bodily images which are permissible for performing geography. Placing the pregnant body next to the picture disrupts the publicness of the spaces being viewed and highlights the problematic distinction between the public and the private. Adding pregnant bodies to the landscape brings attention to the ways in which the private is present in the public: to the private spaces inhabited by the women and colonised people who reproduce and support masculine explorers of public places; to the alternative discourses around such landscapes, which might, for example, be seen by indigenous people as very private places. This floating of the private into the public in its turn raises questions about the assumptions behind all kinds of geographical fieldwork, and about the acquisitive element of exploration and (colonial) 'penetration' of new lands.

Third, the gazing pregnant body is surveying the surveyors, disciplining the discipline. The gaze, which is so central to definitions of geography as the study of landscapes, is also almost always a 'male gaze' whereby the land is desired, objectified, feared and mastered^{iv}. The vehicle in the picture is symbol of this mastery, of 'masculinist modalities of power' (Sparke, 1996, 216), as it can ride over the mounds of sand that dominate the landscape. This pregnant body is both a part of, and apart from, the image (and by extension the geography academy) and this distinctness is suggestive of the fuzzy boundaries, fragile borders and nested power relations of the discipline. And the photo seeks to disrupt these relations by offering the pregnant female body the power of the gaze. It threatens the norm of active male as viewer/passive female as object and seeks to ask, are you looking at me or am I looking at you? Who is performing geography now? Should this pregnant body be included in the picture that she surveys from outside the frame? How might her inclusion within the frame change the 'story'? Might some pregnant bodies (white bodies, minority world bodies, middle class bodies, elite bodies) be less disruptive of this bounded space than others?

Overall then, this juxtaposition of two contrasting images forces us to make connections and identify discontinuities between them. The metaphor of the pregnant body can indeed be a useful metaphor for rethinking geography's disciplinary body: it puts the female firmly into the genealogy of geography. As Longhurst (2001b, 65) argues, both the pregnant body and geography's disciplinary body possess insecure boundaries, are subject to discursive reiteration in an attempt to secure their boundaries and flows of ideas occur across both pregnant bodies and bodies of knowledge. 'A defensive line between the inside and the outside of the discipline is continually being (re) drawn. This is an issue not just about what counts as geographical knowledge but also about who counts as a bearer of geographical knowledge' (Longhurst, 2001b, 25). So using the idea of a flowing, growing and fertile geographical space speaks to the potential for change. It speaks to an academy of inclusion, where in material and concrete terms, the possibility exists for ALL of our voices, ideas and practices to be realised. It speaks to a geographical thought and praxis that seeks to understand the absence of colour, seeks to unlearn privilege as loss and seeks to think through the implications of transformational spaces- or geographies in phases of becoming.

The pictures above can be a useful resource in thinking through the processes we adopt while reproducing geography institutionally and pedagogically, in our teaching and learning practices. And the questions we ask ourselves might run something like this:

1. *If the framed picture alone is used for advertising a course of study in a geography department, what kinds of geography might we expect to study there? Who do we*

think will or can do geography? And how does adding the pregnant body, surveying the frame alter the responses to these questions?

2. *What does the framed picture tell us about geography itself? What might be some of the topics that are studied in a reworked geography? What might be some of the possible experiences evoked? If we think of some of the objects/subjects within the photographs as metaphors, then what kinds of emotional, conceptual and symbolic geographies are made possible, and what are erased? And how does this vary with our own gendered subjectivities?*
3. *And finally, how can the subjects/objects in the picture be altered or manipulated in order to make geography more meaningful, more inclusive for each of us? Can the pregnant body evoke different questions in geography, expand geography, and change geography?*

Photo 2 Reclaiming vision (Nash, 1996)



The first photo places the pregnant body outside the frame of geography and makes us think through what is inside the frame while the second photo is in many ways more transgressive. Here, the pregnant body presses itself insistently into the geographical landscape, blotting the vista of fertile land from view. The flowers in the background are blocked out by the flowers on the dress worn by this pregnant body. It occupies centre stage in the picture and draws attention to itself, the 'contours of pregnancy' dominating the flat landscape beyond. As such it seeks to rewrite the geography of landscape.

Photo 2 seeks to turn around this masculine interpretation of landscape, to look beyond dominant hegemonic masculinity (Jackson, 1994) through the blatant and unashamed feminisation of the landscape. This is a landscape that is discursively encoded and represented as feminine. The photo offers an alternative to classical images of landscape art in which an 'ideal' non-threatening, in reality non-feminine, non-pregnant male view of the female body is often presented. Through a celebration of the 'landscape of intimacy and emotion' (Ford, 1991, 151), the photo questions the objectification and control so often apparent in traditional landscape artistry and thus strives to examine the possibility of a feminist politics of visual pleasure (Nash, 1996, 149). As such it challenge geography's discursive boundaries by focusing on aesthetic geographies and their transformational potentials.

The selection of the background land in the image is specific: this is an area of rural set-aside land, which has become a popular 'rambling' location. The photo raises questions about the politics of land use and control by (often white, middle-upper class) landowners in twentieth century in Britain through the imposition of the pregnant body 'demanding' access and a 'right of way' in that landscape.

Despite these noble intentions, however, the inclusion of Photo 2 raises numerous troublesome questions for the authors. These include, first, the uncertainty of using a disembodied body image which is clearly pregnant, yet simultaneously non-racialised. This may be seen to be ignoring the racial politics of land ownership and colonisation of landscapes. The pregnant body in the forefront might be thought to suggest the kind of link between land and lineage, blood and soil that has underpinned war propaganda for centuries. It may also be interpreted as unquestioningly reproducing an image of dominant heterosexuality. A second query concerns whether looking at landscapes can ever involve a critique, a subversion of dominant ways of looking or whether it always inevitably involves some degree of voyeurism and exoticism and thus replication of a masculinist vision? The choice of clothing in the photographs, for example, flowery and 'natural' supports the hegemonic view of woman-as-nature rather than producing an image that disrupts the gendered equation of vision and power. A third perplexing hesitation in using the photo is that there is no guarantee of how the image will be consumed and received and thus no guarantee of challenging dominant power relations. Despite these reservations, we decided to include Photo 2 because instinctively we like it, it makes us laugh and it feels subversive in its humour and potential to subvert cultural norms through self-representation. Moreover, having to think about the photo and the complexities and ambiguities of its image shows that there is no one way of seeing but rather multiple ways of viewing the body and objectification of/with that body. Pregnancy is indeed a contested terrain. The pregnant body in the landscape can therefore become a metaphor for a reconstructed feminist geography.

And in the geographies that we want to reproduce, the questions we ask ourselves may run thus:

1. *What would an environmental campaign that made use of such an image look like? What kinds of slogans might it use and what text would it incorporate?*
2. *How can the analysis of the photo we offer above be complemented, challenged, extended by juxtaposing it with other writings on the meanings of landscape? The work of Vandana Shiva may be one route into this question. What would be the result of juxtaposing the photograph with the works of famous (male) landscape artists such as Constable or Gainsborough?*
3. *What are the different ways that the photo might be interpreted by different social groups? In what ways is the involuntary complicity of some women in the subjugation of other men and women played out in this photo? How might the image be manipulated to feed into masculinist hegemonic ideas about the female body? What, then are some of the 'risks' associated with the display of the photo and are these risks strategically 'worth it'?*

These are questions that usefully push the boundaries of geographical thinking and therefore of geography. However, in the analysis above we are still placing the landscape as the central metaphor in geography. If we were to read pregnancy as the key metaphor of the discipline, and to challenge ourselves to actually imagine a culture for geography where such a metaphor becomes central, perhaps a whole host of new questions would be opened up, a new vision into geography obtained. Below, we initiate a discussion as to what such a geography might look like.

Pregnancy evokes questions of reproduction first and foremost and focusing on reproduction could reconfigure a whole host of topics for geographical study: emotive geographies, geographies of care, geographies of life course, to name but a few. A geography that recognises reproduction in all its forms, biological, social, ideological would also force us to recognise most intimately the connections between race, class, gender and geographical location and the ways in which power is reproduced at the intersections of these axes, often simply by birth. The placenta marks 'a sort of negotiation between the mother's self and the other that is the embryo.... On the contrary, there has to be a recognition of the other, of the non-self, by the mother, and therefore an initial reaction from her, in order for

placental factors to be produced. The difference between the "self" and the other is, so to speak, continuously negotiated' (Irigaray, 1993a, 41). It is this form of relational politics that pushing pregnant bodies to the forefront of geography may enable.

A metaphor that validates reproductive labour could also be transgressive helping us to think beyond capitalist relations, forcing us to see the other forms of labour that are always going on. It is the form of economic geography that some poststructuralist geographers have been urging us towards (see for instance, Gibson-Graham, 1996).

If the pregnant figure in the landscape becomes a central figure for geography, the questions we ask of the pictures could be very different. For instance, in photo 1, it could be the clump of vegetation, the fecundity even of desert land, that becomes the focus of attention. And in photo 2, reproduction becomes much more central to the pictures than production and the politics of set-aside land. Here, it may not necessarily be the heterosexuality of pregnancy that we would identify, but the creativity of femininities that we would forefront as pregnant bodies force the creativity of femininities on to the landscape. As Luce Irigaray (1993b, 18) has argued, we 'bring many things into the world apart from children, we give birth to many other things apart from children: love, desire, language, art, social things, political things, religious things, but this kind of creativity has been forbidden to us for centuries.' We would agree with her that we must take back this creative dimension, though we would be more cautious about the celebration of femininity as such, because both femininities and masculinities can create and reproduce oppression. But we could ask ourselves what roles femininities have played in the creation of the geography discipline, and what might full acknowledgement of their presence bring about? This could possibly provide a route into producing feminist genealogies of geography. Overall, the photographs of pregnant bodies on the landscape force us to rethink the rules of signification, 'the rules concerning our genealogical relationship, our social, linguistic and cultural order' (Irigaray, 1993a/b?, 56). It can help us to think about the order of geography, and perhaps even open up a space for what such a feminine genealogy may look like in another order.

The absences we would read into the photos too would differ. Pregnancy most clearly signals the absence of virginity. The analysis of exploration of virgin lands would be turned on its head, because pregnancy as metaphor would highlight the fact that land is always already appropriated and that the language of 'discovery', 'virginity' and 'new territories' requires the negation of the rights of the other.

Undoubtedly, our location in the British academy has meant that our readings of pregnant bodies in the landscape are influenced by the histories of British geography and by our own histories. Yet these are not the only orders, the only conceptual, emotional and symbolic landscapes that can be opened by the metaphor of pregnancy in geography. Our readings are only one of many. But using pregnancy as a metaphor we hope will provide a route into thinking other landscapes for geography.

Ultimately, pregnancy as metaphor also pushes through and makes way for different subjectivities in geography. But it insists that our entry into geography should not be in our 'desubjectivized social role, the role of mother, which is dictated by an order subject to the division of labor - he produces, she reproduces - that walls us up in the ghetto of a single function. When did society ever ask fathers to choose between being men or citizens? We don't have to give up being women to be mothers' (Irigaray, 1993b, 18). Nor should we have to give up being mothers to be geographers.

Transition: geographies of transformation

Winchester *et al.* (2003, 161) argue that pregnant bodies have 'found little place and voice in the discipline of geography.' In this paper we explore the possibilities that are opened by giving the pregnant body a place, by allowing it to challenge geography. We do this as a strategy of resistance and as a step towards including women in both the practice and possibilities of geography. Here we make a claim for including the pregnant female body in geography, placing it centre stage and claiming it to be appropriate and normal 'matter in place' (Longhurst, 2001b, 5) in the discipline of geography. We attempt then to discipline the discipline to insist that it includes the pregnant body. Carving out a space for the pregnant body in geography disrupts conventional notions of what geography is, and should

be about. Including the pregnant body in the genealogy of geography enables a rethinking of the landscape of geography itself.

So in this paper we are making a case for the pregnant body as matter in place, being important for understanding the intellectual and institutional exclusivity that marks geography but also being important for challenging and changing that exclusivity. The paper has attempted to disrupt the masculinity of geography and through the embodied performance of the photos it attempts to appropriate a 'space for the feminine' (Rose, 1996, 56), to include women in the production of geographical knowledge in their own, unapologetically feminine terms. This femininity is not fixed but contested, fractured and multiple. There are many different ways of being a female geographer and there are many different versions of feminist geography. And by bringing the pregnant body to the centre of geography the paper seeks to blaspheme against the rules and rites of what to study, how, when and where (Sparke, 1996, 221). Ultimately the paper gives birth to the pregnant possibilities of geographies of transformation.

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Notes

ⁱ Many thanks to Denise Bamford of the Higher Education Statistical Agency for access to data and help in calculating percentages.

ⁱⁱ Masculinist refers to work which, while claiming to be exhaustive, forgets about women's existence and concerns itself only with the position of men (Le Doeuff 1991, 42, quoted in Rose 1993, 4).

ⁱⁱⁱ Although these issues may take different forms in Geography, the discipline, and geography, an intellectual approach, in this paper we have focused on the flows and interconnections between the two and therefore used the generic term 'geography'.

^{iv} This 'male gaze' is so inherent in most geographical viewing positions that it is likely many women also view with a 'male gaze'.