

Emotional Geographies. Edited by Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith. Hampshire, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate. 2005. 256 pages. £60.00 (Hardback) £25.00 (Paperback).

The book consists of 17 chapters, dealing with various topics. The contributors are largely from social science backgrounds, with geographers and health-related researchers being particularly well represented. *Emotional Geographies* is split into three sections, 'Locating emotion', 'Relating emotion' and 'Representing emotion'. The different sections are not always easy to tell apart thematically, a fact that points to the book's aim of critiquing artificial divisions between emotions, bodies, places, self and other. Nonetheless, each of the three sections presents a reasonably diverse set of engagements with emotional geographies. 'Locating emotion' is primarily concerned with bodies, places and the emotions experienced through them. 'Relating emotion' takes a more straightforwardly relational approach, with much material concerning boundaries and their breaching. The final section, 'Representing emotion', considers how emotions are represented in various situations and imaginaries. Many of the chapters in this section are not just about representation but also deliberately stage their own representations as well. This is an appropriate methodology but the results are hit and miss, with some representational moments feeling too anecdotal or failing to strike in the emotional registers they aim towards, and others succeeding nicely.

The book's relevance to studies of the urban is open to debate. It is certain that recognition of the emotional character of everyday life is a necessary component of a useful, critical, engaging and rigorous urban studies. *Emotional Geographies* explores many intimate geographies of emotion: those geographies and relations between a few people in small scale circumstances, such as private homes or therapeutic settings. Only two chapters are explicitly urban in their focus. Phil Hubbard's chapter, "The Geographies of 'Going Out': Emotion and Embodiment in the Evening Economy" constructs differential narratives of security and risk, pleasure and exposure between going out in the city centre and going out in an out-of-town leisure park. The chapter's focus is squarely on younger people. Milligan, Bingley and Chatrell's chapter, " 'Healing and Feeling': The Place of Emotions in Later Life", also has an urban context, dealing with older people's emotional engagements with place and the changes that occur in those engagements associated with age. Both of these chapters are welcome additions to our knowledge about spaces of the urban and the roles of emotions and bodies in producing those spaces. The book also has a recurrent theme of memory and place, though this focuses on the spaces of the home and on spaces of nature. Whilst an extended engagement with memory and the urban would have increased the book's relevance to urban studies, in view of the plethora of such works already available (going back at least to the work of Walter Benjamin on cities he knew and lived in) this was not really necessary. To my mind, *Emotional Geographies* serves to remind us of the importance of considering the intimate, the private, the bodily, ageing and gendering in our academic work. The book itself would have benefited from a wider selection of chapters engaging with the (public) urban, and with workplaces, if only because these are the settings of so

many people's everyday lives. I am not seeking to reify the distinction between, for example, public and private here. What I am suggesting, rather, is that the book would possess a greater relevance to urban studies if it better reflected the interaction between and mutual constitution of the public and private in city life.

This brings me on to my main point of critique concerning *Emotional Geographies*, which is that many of the book's chapters fail to link up intimate and wider scales in order to consider emotional geographies 'systematically' (especially as regards the effects of power relations). That is to say, there is some but perhaps not enough consideration of an overall socio-spatial view of the constitution, performance and so on of emotional life. This is not an argument for a return to a positivist approach to geography. Qualitative geographies and intimate geographies are hugely important and we should not flinch from them or be squeamish about them. Rather, and particularly from the point of view of the book's relevance to urban studies, this is an argument that in order to understand embodied, performed and lived emotional geographies, we must also understand the socio-spatial systems which frame and help produce those geographies. All the scales involved in emotional geographies would seem to be equally important, and some of the chapters in the book do consider emotions on 'larger' empirical or theoretical scales. John Urry, Liz Bondi, Phil Hubbard, Colleen Heenan in particular are notable for this. It could perhaps be argued that the book leaves us to draw our own scalar links between its chapters, in effect not attempting to force the reader into particular interpretations. The main example of this is found in the theme of 'home' that runs through many of the chapters. Between these chapters, 'home' crosses scales, bodies, ideas, and so on, and all of us interested in this theme should gain interesting insights from reading *Emotional Geographies*. Overall what the book tends towards is detailed studies at small scales, and by and large it does these well. The argument here is not that the entire book should have been 'about' power or social systems, but that these issues are under-represented in the book, as are meso and macro scale emotional geographies in general. This is an edited collection that reflects the strengths and weaknesses of its format, it seems: few chapters feel like they had quite enough space to say it all, but the breadth of topics is engaging and useful.

Indeed, one of the main strengths of the book is in the way that it considers a much wider range of emotions than we are normally encouraged to consider. Bondi's final chapter on "The Place of Emotions in Research" notes that calmness, distancing, and the like are forms of emotional work as important as the anxieties or other negative emotions that we more commonly encounter in accounts of research. Paterson's chapter on affect and touch also hinges upon a consideration of a range of 'positive' and 'negative' emotions, and the role of affect in conducting touched relations between people. Thinking through examples such as these in an urban context would encourage us to pay attention to the whole range of emotions in urban places and in urban research. Such a view helps us to avoid thinking that a rational approach is one that discounts emotions, and would certainly be relevant to a critique of 'rational' planning. Indeed, as Bondi argues and as the rest of the book implies, it is only rational to consider and *use* our emotions in research.

To conclude, then, we can say that *Emotional Geographies* says some interesting things about the emotionality of our lives, and about many of the geographies that go to make up that emotionality. There can be no such thing as a complete guide to the geographies of emotions, and we should not read this book expecting such a guide. The range of emotions encountered in the book is refreshing, and the encouragement to engage with our own and others' emotions in our research is one worth taking to heart.

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