ROUTLEDGE

Introducing Human Geographies

Third Edition

Edited by Paul Cloke, Philip Crang and Mark Goodwin

INTRODUCING HUMAN GEOGRAPHIES

Introducing Human Geographies is the leading guide to Human Geography for undergraduate students, explaining new thinking on essential topics and discussing exciting developments in the field.

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Paul Cloke, Philip Crang and Mark Goodwin

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Introducing Human Geographies: a guide

Introducing Human Geographies is a 'travel guide' into the academic subject of Human Geography and the things that it studies. Now in an updated and much extended third edition, the book is designed especially for students new to university degree courses. In guiding you through the subject, *Introducing Human Geographies* maps out the big, foundational ideas that have shaped the discipline past and present (in Part 1); explores key research themes being pursued in Human Geography's various sub-disciplines (in Part 2); and identifies some of the current research foci that are shaping the horizons of the subject (in Part 3).

Engaging with research literatures through academic journals and books is an important part of degree level study. The debates going on within them are exciting, challenging us not only to think about new subjects but also to think in new ways. However, it can take some time to get to grips with that published research. It is huge and diverse. It is dynamic, so that as a new student you can feel like you are coming into conversations halfway through, trying to figure out what people are talking about, why they are interested in it, and how come they are so animated about things. Academic publications are also by and large addressed to other researchers, deploying what may feel like rather arcane vocabularies as communicational shorthand. So not only has the conversation already begun, but it can also sound like it is in a foreign language. The ethos of *Introducing Human Geographies* is to make that cutting edge of contemporary Human Geography accessible; to map out key areas of study and debate; to guide you on forays into its somewhat daunting collections of ideas and interests; and to help you, as students of the subject, to participate in its conversations.

The Human Geography you will be introduced into here feels very different to some of the popular images of the subject. It is not a dry compendium of facts about the world, its countries, capital cities, and so on. Apologies in advance if this book is of limited help in getting the geography questions right in a quiz or television game show. Of course, knowing geographical facts and information is useful and important in all kinds of ways. But it is not enough. Human Geography today casts information in the service of two larger goals. On the one hand, it seeks out the realities of people's lives, places and environments in all their complexity. Geography is a subject that lives outside the classroom, the statistical dataset or the abstract model, gaining strength from its encounters with what (somewhat comically) we academics have a tendency to call 'the world out there'. On the other hand, Human Geographers are also acutely aware that this worldly reality is not easy to discern. The nature of the world is not laid out before our eyes, waiting for us to venture out blinking from the dark lecture theatre or library so that we can see it. 'Reality' only emerges through the carefully considered ways of thinking and investigating that we sometimes call 'theory'. As the contributions to this book show, Human Geography is characterized by a refusal to oppose 'reality' and 'theory', worldly

engagement and contemplative, creative thought. Both are needed if we are to describe, explain, understand, question and maybe even improve the world's human geographies.

As you may have noticed (when putting your back out trying to pick it up . . .), this third edition of *Introducing Human Geographies* is a large book. It has a lot in it. Its contents are diverse. In this general introduction we therefore want to do three things. First, we focus on what unites this variety by addressing head on the question 'What is Human Geography?'. Second, we expand on the kinds of approaches and styles of thought that characterize Human Geography today across its range of substantive fields. Finally, we briefly map out the layout of the book itself, both in terms of structure and presentational style, offering some advice on how you might navigate around it.

What is Human Geography?

A common exercise for an initial Human Geography tutorial or seminar is a request to mine a week's news coverage and to come back with an example of something that seems to you to be 'human geography'. Have a go at doing this now. Think about the last week's news. Draw up a shortlist of two or three stories that strike you as the kinds of things that Human Geographers would study or that you think are 'human geography'. Then reflect on how you decided on these and what you thought was 'geographical' about them. What does your selection tell you about what human geography means to you?

The word 'geography' can be traced back to ancient Greece over 2,200 years ago. Specifically, it was Eratosthenes of Kyrene (ca. 288–205 BC), Librarian at Alexandria, who wrote the first scholarly treatise that established Geography as an intellectual field, the three-volume *Geographika* (Roller, 2010). In Greek, Geography means 'earth (*geo*) writing (*graphy*)'. Writing the earth was what Geographers did two millennia ago, and it still describes what Geographers do today. In all kinds of ways, it is a wonderful definition of the subject. It speaks to Geography as a fundamental intellectual endeavour concerned with understanding the world in which we live and upon which our lives depend. It expresses how Geography is all around us, a part of our everyday lives. It suggests that Geography is not confined to academic study but includes a host of more popular forms of knowledge through which we come to understand and describe our world. But it also raises questions, in particular about breadth and coherence. To return to that exercise of reviewing the week's news for examples of Human Geography, if what we were looking for were cases of 'earth writing' then an awful lot of stuff could fit that brief in some way. Most of the news is about things happening on the earth.

How do we deal with that breadth, with that seeming absence of specialization in Geography? We would suggest there are three sorts of responses: to recognize the underpinning intellectual commitments built into the very notion of geography; to embrace the diverse topics and events to which these relate; and to recognize the ways in which different areas of Geography are defined and organized. Let us take these in turn.

First, then, we need to think a little more directly about the 'geo' in geo-graphy, about what we mean by the *earth* in earth writing. This word is not just a general designation of everything around us but signals two interconnected cores to Human Geography's interests (Cosgrove, 1994): what we might call an 'earthiness' and a 'worldliness'; or, to use

more current academic vocabulary, the relations between society and nature and between society and space (see Figure I). In terms of 'earthiness', the 'geo' in geography signifies 'the living planet Earth', the biophysical environments composed of land, sea, air, plants and animals that we live in and with. These are central concerns for Geographers. The relations between human beings and the 'nature' we are also part of have been a consistent preoccupation of Human Geography. There is a second meaning to 'geo' as well, though, that is equally central, one we use when we talk about 'the whole Earth' or 'the world'. Here, to write the earth means to explore its extents, to describe its areas, places and people, and to consider how and why these may have distinctive qualities. Human Geographers have long been fascinated with how various parts of the Earth's surface differ, with the relations between different areas, and with ways of knowing this (such as mapping and exploring). Geography endeavours to know the world and its varied features, both near to home and far away. The 'geo' in Geography designates this commitment to world knowledge.

The precise forms such concerns with 'earth' and 'world' have taken in Geography have varied over time of course, but both are central to the project of Human Geography today. Thus, Human Geographers lead debates over what are now often called the relations between society and nature, on environmental understandings and values, on the causes and responses to environmental change. They do so at a variety of scales, from global concerns with climate change to local debates over particular environments and landscapes. Human Geographers are also concerned with how human lives, and our relations to nature, vary across the surface of the Earth. Everything happens somewhere and Human Geographers argue that this matters. A variety of central geographical notions reflect this: space, place, region, location, territory, distance, scale, for example, all try to express something about the 'where-ness' of things in the world. In contemporary parlance, Human Geographers emphasize the relations between society and space or what can be called **spatiality**. They argue both that human life is shaped by 'where it happens' and that 'where it happens' is socially shaped. The world and its differences are not innate; they are made. Human Geographers study that making.

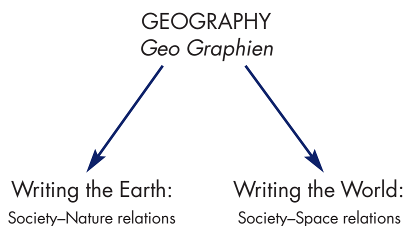

Figure I Human Geography: writing the earth and writing the world

Our argument, then, is that Human Geography today still lives up to the original meaning of its name, revolving around both 'writing the earth' (in contemporary academic parlance the relations between society and nature) and 'writing the world' (the relations between society and space). However, and this is the second point we want to develop, these core concerns are developed through a vast range of substantive topics. In this book you will find subject matters that range from the meanings of development and modernity to how we relate to plants when gardening, from the international financial system to tourism, from the post-9/11 'war on terror' to urban gentrification, from global climate change to shopping. And, for very good reasons, you'll also find a chapter largely devoted to a discussion of oven-ready chickens. It is quite common to have mixed feelings about

Figure II Which of these photographs of work look more like it should be in a Human Geography textbook to you? Why? Credit: (left) Jose Luis Palez, Inc./Corbis; (right) Brownie Harris/Corbis

this range. Many people choose to study Geography because of it, appreciating the wider understanding of human life such breadth seems to offer in comparison to many academic disciplines. In contrast, some react against it, worrying that Geographers seem to be 'jacks of all trades' and 'masters of none', complaining that Human Geography today seems to study things that 'aren't really Geography'.

In our view, the diversity of Human Geography is a strength not a weakness, for at least two reasons. First, it reflects how Geography existed well before, and exists well beyond, the kinds of specialization promoted by academic institutions over the last century or so (Bonnett, 2008). Geography is notable for how it challenges the divisions that have come to characterize academic organizations, spanning as it does the natural sciences, the social sciences and the arts and humanities. The world doesn't present itself to us in those categories and Geography resists being confined within them. As an academic discipline Geography has a healthy scepticism towards the disciplining of knowledge. Its diversity embodies that. Second, we would also encourage you to embrace the diversity of Human Geography in the spirit of being open to what might matter in the world. It is important that our thinking, and our academic disciplines, are not defined by inertia, pursuing topics simply because those are the subjects that we have traditionally pursued. Convention is not a good way to define and delimit what counts as Human Geography. You may find some of the subjects discussed in *Introducing Human Geographies* more familiar to you – for example, economic globalization – some less so – the idea of 'emotional geographies', perhaps – but all of them represent how Human Geography today is pursuing its tasks of 'writing the earth and the world'. Knowing the traditions of Human Geography is enormously valuable, but one of the crucial lessons we learn from that history is that what counts as Human Geography has always been subject both to change and to contestation (see Livingstone (1992) for an excellent, sustained analysis of this). For instance, shaped by the social worlds in which it was being produced, for much of its history Human Geography largely ignored over half the world's human beings. It reduced human to man. Even well into the latter half of the twentieth century,

Economic Geographers largely ignored the domestic work done by women at home; Development Geographers paid too little attention to the gendered nature of both development problems and practice; issues and understandings that were seen as feminine were routinely trivialized and cast as less worthy of academic attention. Human Geography was **masculinist** (Women and Geography Study Group, 1997; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Countering this involved introducing into Geography many novel topics and ideas. The issue for us, then, is not whether a topic is familiar as Geography but whether attending to it is part of 'writing the earth' in ways that have value.

Let's go back to the example of the oven-ready chicken that we mentioned earlier. We are assuming that if you told friends or family you were studying the Human Geography of chickens they might raise a quizzical eyebrow. But in fact, as Michael Watts explains in Chapter 27, the lives and deaths of chickens speak profoundly to how human societies today relate both to our living Earth and to the spatial organization of the world. An oven-ready chicken such as that pictured in Figure III embodies very particular ways for human beings to relate to nature, based on logics and practices of domestication, industrialized production, purposive modification and commodity consumption that reach well beyond this one member of the animal kingdom. The oven-ready chicken is also an embodiment of forms of spatiality that are very common in the world today. Different people and places are all connected together through the economic systems of the chicken world – the consumers eating it, the farmers raising it, the large companies controlling its production and its distribution, the scientists genetically modifying it – but at the same time these connections are forgotten or hidden through a distancing of places of chicken production and consumption – even avid meat eaters would be unlikely to want to see video footage of broiler production and death as they tuck into their roast bird. An oven-ready chicken presents us with the geography of the modern world on our plates. It is Geography.

Figure III Human Geography? Credit: British Chicken Information Service

Generally, then, *Introducing Human Geographies* presents a diverse and dynamic subject, and poses questions for you about what might count as valuable forms of geographical knowledge. There is, however, also a third response to the diversity inherent in Geography's intellectual remit: to organize it into various 'sub-disciplines' and research specialisms. The very idea of Human Geography already manifests this response, reflecting the widespread division between Physical Geography (placed in the natural sciences) and Human Geography (located in the social sciences and humanities). Contemporary research literatures and curricula take the process of dividing and specializing much further, organizing

Human Geography itself into the kind of sub-disciplines we present in Part 2 of this book (biogeographies, cartographies, cultural geographies, development geographies, historical geographies, political geographies and so on). These each possess their own research literatures (via their specialist journals) and, indeed, their own introductory textbooks. Quite often these sub-disciplinary designations form the basis of how Human Geography is taught within universities. Sub-disciplines are helpful in a number of ways. They map out the diversity of Geography into recognizable areas of work. They promote the development of expertise. They focus Geographers' engagements with other academic disciplines (Political Geographers engaging with Political Science and International Relations, Historical Geographers with History, and so on). But they can also be problematic. If one gets too hung up on sub-disciplines one can lose the anti-disciplinary holism that is one of the strengths of the subject. The much discussed 'divide' between Physical and Human Geography is a case in point. Furthermore, sub-disciplinary labels bear the imprint of university bureaucracy and job titling; we academics are very used to them but outside of universities they don't much help people relate to the Geography that we do. So, the useful foci provided by the various sub-divisions of Geography need to be accompanied by an ongoing commitment to seeing the distinctively geographical contribution that they make to understanding our worlds. At its best, Human Geography has a strong intellectual coherence, but applies it with an invigorating catholicism.

SUMMARY

- Geography means 'earth writing'. As a subject with that aim, Geography is notable for its wide-ranging concerns and interests.
- The first meaning of the 'geo' in Geography is 'the Earth'. The first of Human Geography's main intellectual contributions is to understand the relations between human beings and the natural world of which we are a part.
- The second meaning of the 'geo' in Geography is 'the world'. The second of Human Geography's main intellectual contributions is to understand the world both near and far. More abstractly, this means recognizing how all facets of human societies – the economic, the environmental, the political and so forth – are bound up with questions of 'spatiality'.
- These fundamental concerns of Human Geography are pursued across diverse and changing subject matters. We would encourage you to be open to that diversity and change; resist restricting your Human Geography to topics and approaches with which you are already familiar.

Approaching Human Geography today

Up to this point we have been outlining what Human Geography is about, emphasizing its foci on both 'the earth' (society–nature relations) and 'the world' (society–space relations). Now we turn to how Human Geographers approach these issues and the kinds of knowledge that they try to create. Our interest is not in well-defined schools of thought or even intellectual paradigms but in the looser sensibilities that shape how Human Geography is done today.

At the outset, it is important to note that the approaches of Human Geography have changed over time and differ from place to place. Human Geography in the 1920s or 1960s was different to Human Geography today. The approaches to Human Geography in Germany, Brazil or China are not identical to those in Britain. Even individual university departments can have distinctive research cultures. In fact the situation is more complex still; as you may find in your courses, at any one time and in any one place there are likely to be different kinds of Human Geography being done. There is not a single agreed view on what kinds of knowledge Human Geography should produce. *Introducing Human Geographies* contains some of that variety; it does not present a single version of the subject. But it does reflect and support some recurrent emphases that, in our view, characterize much of Human Geography today. We see these as commitments to five kinds of knowledge: *description*, *experience*, *interpretation*, *explanation* and *critique* (see Table I). Not all of these are equally endorsed by all Human Geographers, indeed they are often argued over; but they are commitments you will find frequently evidenced both in this book and in the course of your studies. Let us elaborate on each in turn.

First, then, Human Geography looks to describe the world. Sometimes dismissed with the epithet 'mere', in fact *description* has a very special value. Geographical description is not synonymous with dry compendia of information about a region or place. It involves attending to the world unusually carefully. The nature of that attention can vary. It might mean, for example, fashioning and mapping forms of statistical data (perhaps via a Geographical Information System (GIS)) that allow us to describe things that we can't fully see with our own eyes – spatial differences in wealth or access to services perhaps. It might involve tracing out the often hidden networks of connections linking people and places, as when Human Geographers 'follow' the things that people routinely consume (our food or clothes, for example) to see how they came to be, where they come from, and what kinds of trade govern their movements (e.g. Cook, 2004). Or it might mean being peculiarly observant in person. Think, for example, about how we normally move around the world, head often down, taking our surroundings somewhat for granted. Now contrast that to a more geographical engagement with place, perhaps a public square, where we look to document the details of the built environment, its history, the people who are present and absent, the kinds of action going on. Here, to describe a place geographically is to bear witness to its material textures and the forms of life that unfold through it. Our argument, then, is that Human Geography is an attentive discipline. It describes in order to reveal what we might otherwise overlook and to bring into focus what we might otherwise only vaguely perceive. It crafts ways of presenting the fruits of this attention, using forms of description that range from maps to statistics, prose, photography and film/video-making.

Second, Human Geography also commits to understand the world through *experience*. In

part we see this in the discipline's commitment to fieldwork. Geography places a value on trying to understand issues not just from afar but through actually being there, in a place, amongst the action, conversing with people, getting a feel for things. The status of this kind of first-hand field knowledge is philosophically complex, but Human Geography tends to view understanding gained only from more 'remote' sorts of sensing with some suspicion. It is not a subject that is comfortable with being confined to the lab or library. Important here too are the people-centred approaches trumpeted initially under the label **humanistic geography** (for exemplary collections, see Ley and Samuels (1978) and Meinig (1979); for a more recent revisiting of such humanistic work see Holloway and Hubbard (2000)). Humanistic Geography emphasizes engaging with people's real lives, their values and beliefs, their daily preoccupations, their hopes and dreams, their loves and hates, what they think about things,

Type of knowledge	Approach	Illustrative examples
Description	Paying close attention to, and finding ways to represent, geographies that we normally struggle to perceive.	Statistical descriptions, GIS visualizations and maps; tracings of spatial networks and associations; detailed evocations of particular places.
Experience	Understanding geographies as part of human experience.	The emphasis placed on the experiential knowledge generated by fieldwork; humanistic concerns with understanding other people's diverse experiences of the world.
Interpretation	Recognizing and engaging with the meanings of the world's geographies.	Work focusing on geographical representations and on the discourses of which they are a part. Often associated with the so-called 'cultural turn'.
Explanation	Explaining why the world's geographies exhibit the forms and processes that they do.	Geographical explanations range from spatial science's search for spatial laws to (more commonly today) socio-spatial analyses of causal processes.
Critique	Rigorously evaluating and judging the world's geographies, as well as one's own and others' understandings of them.	Critique can be understood as a broad stance to geographical knowledge. It has also come to be associated with bodies of work that explicitly designate themselves as forms of 'critical geography'.

Table I Approaches to Human Geography today: a schema

the ways they feel about and sense their surroundings. Human Geographers are thus not only interested in experiencing places for themselves; they want to understand other people's geographical experiences and thoughts in all their variety.

A commitment to interpreting the meaningful nature of the world is apparent here too. Geographies are not just brute realities; it is fundamentally human to invest the world with meaning. We don't only sense the world, we make sense of it. Human Geography is concerned with *interpretation* insofar as it recognizes the importance of the meanings of things. Think, for example, about the interest Geography has in 'the Earth' and society–nature relations. The things we call 'natural', indeed the very notion of the 'natural', are deeply imbued with meanings. Reflect for a few seconds on geographical notions like 'wilderness' or 'rainforest' or 'the tropics'. These words are not narrowly factual; they come with a host of (often complex and even conflicting) meanings and connotations. The same is true of how we describe the world's different spaces. Consider what geographical designations such as 'urban', 'suburban' and 'rural' might mean to you and others; or the continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, Antarctica . . .); or a seemingly simple geographical label like 'The West' or 'The Western World'. All these terms are, to use a colloquialism, 'heavily loaded'. Human Geography's approaches here are informed by wider bodies of thought in the humanities on interpretation and meaning (with great names like 'hermeneutics', 'semiotics' and 'iconography'). They are also often identified with what has been called 'the cultural turn' taken within the discipline since the 1990s (Barnes and Duncan, 1992). Prominent is a focus on **representation**, with research teasing out the meanings given to geographies in forms both obviously imaginative (literature, the arts, film and television drama and so on) and less obviously so (maps, documentaries, news reports, policy documents, etc.). Interpreting these representations is important because they are not just an imaginative gloss that we humans add to our worlds, a subjective filter that obscures objective reality. Representations shape how we see things, think about them and act with and upon them. They partly make our worlds. They are part of reality. In academic terminology, by interpreting what things mean we engage with the **discourses** that produce the world as we know it. As an interpretive endeavour, Human Geography both looks to understand those discourses and to present other ways of ways of seeing, describing and acting upon our geographies.

So far we have outlined that when Human Geographers undertake their 'earth writing' (geo-graphy) they look to describe, experience and interpret. A fourth commitment has flickered in and out of these discussions: to *explanation*. Human Geography is not only concerned with what the geographies of the world are, but also with how they came to be. The nature of geographical explanation has varied over time and is subject to much debate. Divergent views are underpinned by different understandings of both the world 'out there' and the sorts of knowledge required to grasp it. For some, Human Geography should be a **spatial science**, formulating and testing theories of spatial organization, interaction and distribution in order to establish universal spatial laws about why geographical objects are located where they are and how they relate to each other. Emerging in the 1960s, spatial science distinguished itself from earlier regional geographies, criticizing them for being overly descriptive and lacking the explanatory power of scientific analysis. However, other approaches in Human Geography resist the equation of explanation with spatial science.

They are wary of its kind of 'social physics'. Historical Geographers, for instance, emphasize how forms of historical narrative can have explanatory power. To put it crudely, a historical approach explains the world today by understanding past events and processes. More generally, most Human Geography is wary of explaining things via reference only to spatial factors (what is called 'spatial reductionism'), emphasizing instead the two-way relations between 'space and society'. Aspects of society – the modern nation-state, for example, or the capitalist economy – are seen both to shape the nature of space and themselves to have spatial dimensions. Thus, there are no universal spatial laws that can explain our geographies; any explanation must recognize the socially produced nature of spatiality. There is also a concern about seeking universal laws as explanations; instead, a range of theories – most visibly represented by an approach known as 'critical realism' (Sayer, 2000) – have sought to understand causality in relation both to more abstract powers and more concrete, contingent, contextual factors. As you have probably gathered by now, it is hard to do justice to these sorts of complex debates in a brief introduction (sorry!). But, in essence, our view is that Human Geography today widely exhibits a commitment to explain the geographical phenomena it studies, but generally undertakes that explanation through nuanced accounts that weave together underlying tendencies/forces with more contextually specific factors.

Fifth, and finally, contemporary Human Geography is concerned with *critique*. It is easy to misunderstand this word. In everyday speech, when we say someone is being critical what we often mean is that they are being negative or finding fault. But that is not what we have in mind here. True critical thought is as much about seeing strengths as weaknesses. Critique, then, means exercising judgement. For Human Geography, a commitment to critique means that the subject not only describes, experiences, interprets and explains but also rigorously evaluates the world's geographies. A general consequence of this commitment is that the 'rightness' of our answers to geographical questions is not given. There is room for debate and argument. Critique is not just a matter of expressing one's opinion, but its reasoned judgement involves values, beliefs and perspectives. For all of us, as students of Human Geography, there are not often agreed correct answers that we simply have to remember. Doing Human Geography involves developing rigorous analyses of issues, evaluating both information and arguments, and thereby figuring out not only what the answers are but also what the most important questions might be. This means not taking things for granted, questioning the assumptions held by others and, crucially, ourselves. Critical thought – and this is a tricky balance – combines a determined, questioning scepticism with a profound openness to unfamiliar ideas and voices. It seeks to evaluate present and past conditions and to disclose future possibilities and alternatives.

More narrowly, these general critical attitudes have shaped distinctive bodies of philosophy, theory and practice that take them forward. Within Human Geography, 'critical geography' has emerged as a designation that folds in earlier appeals to radicality – as seen in the foundation in the 1970s of the 'radical journal of geography', *Antipode* – and the 'dissident geographies' of **feminist**, **Marxist** and **post-colonial** writers (Blunt and Wills, 2000). The words of *ACME*, an open access online journal of 'critical geography', give a sense of this; for this journal, 'analyses that are critical are understood to be part of the praxis of social and political change aimed at challenging,

dismantling and transforming prevalent relations, systems and structures of exploitation, oppression, imperialism, neoliberalism, national aggression and environmental destruction' (ACME, 2012). A range of work discussed in this third edition of *Introducing Human Geographies* would fit that definition in some part, but critical thinking in the more general sense is not necessarily signed up to particular political colours. It spans, too, both cerebral philosophical thought and the kinds of work more directly invested in practical change. Critique, then, can be taken as a more general stance, committed to questioning, reasoned judgement, and a hopeful search for possible better futures. That stance can be usefully adopted within your own studies and writing of Human Geography.

Above, we have outlined various commitments that shape Human Geography today – to description, experience, interpretation, explanation and critique. Whilst keyed into wider debates over forms of knowledge and the interests they pursue, these five categories are, inevitably, something of a heuristic device. They are not exhaustive. They are also not mutually exclusive; many kinds of geographical description might also see themselves as interpreting and/or explaining and vice versa, for example. But, with those caveats, we believe that this schema conveys some of the principal rationales for why Human Geography undertakes its 'earth writing' and a sense of what you can achieve by studying it.

SUMMARY

- Human Geography undertakes its 'earth writing' for a number of reasons. It is helpful to reflect on these reasons as you develop your own geographical imagination.
- We have suggested five undertakings that shape Human Geography today. We termed these: description, experience, interpretation, explanation and critique.
- This is not an exhaustive list of all the rationales that underpin Human Geography but one, some or all of these commitments shape a great deal of the scholarship that you will be introduced to in this book.

Introducing Human Geographies: finding your way around

We have used the metaphor of a travel guide to describe this book. Guidebooks are not designed to be read from front to back in one go. They set scenes, provide contexts, and then as a reader we dip into them, dependent on our interests and our travel schedules. This new edition of *Introducing Human Geographies* is the same. It is designed to accompany and guide you as you find your way around Human Geography. Exactly how you read it, which parts you spend most time in and so on, will depend on your own intellectual itinerary and your programme of studies. The format we have created for the book, with a large number of comparatively short chapters organized into

parts and sections, supports that kind of tailored reading 'on the go'.

Nonetheless, it may be helpful to explain the book's structure. The fifty-nine main chapters are organized into three parts – Foundations, Themes and Horizons. The nine chapters in Foundations (Part 1) give you the latest thinking on some of the 'big questions' that have long shaped the thinking of Human Geographers. An introduction to Part 1 says more about the individual chapters, but let us a say a little here about their remit. In setting out our foundations we have eschewed two common approaches: on the one hand, a narrative or episodic history of the subject; and on the other, abstract summaries of key theoretical approaches or '-isms'. (Often these are offered in combination; a chronology of different theoretical schools, dated on the basis of when they became influential within Human Geography.) There are excellent books that adopt variants of such approaches (for example Cresswell (2013), Livingstone (1992) and Nayak and Jeffrey (2011)) that we would encourage you to read, but for our purposes here we wanted to avoid a division of theoretical foundations from the geographies we live with every day. The foundations presented here therefore weave together conceptual ideas with examples and illustrations. Each chapter is framed around a binary relationship that frames both the topics Human Geography focuses on (its 'geo-') and how it thinks about them (the nature of its '-graphy'). Binaries are often central to how we think; critically engaging with them provides a powerful window on key elements of geographical thought (see also Cloke and Johnston (2005)). The chapters in Part 1 may not match with particular, substantive lectures in a taught course, and don't always exist as easily locatable debates in the discipline's journals. They crop up everywhere because in many ways they deal with some of the most important questions to think about as a new Human Geography student. They give you a sense of why Human Geographers pursue more specific studies in the way they do and introduce you to ideas and ways of thinking that you will be able to use across a range of substantive topics.

Those substantive areas of the subject are turned to directly in the second and largest part of the book, Themes. It has thirty-nine chapters, divided into eleven sections addressing major thematic 'sub-disciplines' of Human Geography in alphabetical order: biogeographies, cartographies, cultural geographies, development geographies, economic geographies, environmental geographies, historical geographies, political geographies, population geographies, social geographies, and urban and rural geographies. Each of these sections has its own brief editorial introduction, setting out both the sub-disciplinary field and how the following chapters engage with it. This part of the book provides you with thought-provoking arguments on the key issues currently being debated within sub-disciplines, as well as giving you a feel for the distinctive kind of Human Geography undertaken within each.

As we noted above, thematic sub-disciplines are one of the major ways in which teaching curricula are organized and research activity structured, to the extent that geographers are often labelled according to these specialisms (as economic geographers, political geographers, and so on). However, the world we live in is (unsurprisingly) resistant to these neat classifications. Economy and politics and culture and environment (and so on) all interweave with each other. You can't go out and find something that is purely 'economic' (or purely political, cultural or environmental).

In fact, a lot of the most innovative work in Human Geography goes on in the border zones between these sub-disciplinary territories. For these reasons, the final part of the book, Horizons, comprises eleven chapters organized around four contemporary research themes that do not fit neatly in any one sub-discipline. The four foci – non-representational geographies, mobilities, securities and publics – each have their own brief editorial introduction, contextualizing the chapters that follow. Each highlights current agendas in the discipline that are influencing debates in a number of its sub-disciplines.

Stylistically, while every chapter has its own authorial signature all the contributions combine discussions of challenging ideas and issues with accessible presentation. Unfamiliar academic terminology is kept to a minimum, but where central to an argument and not explained fully at the time it is marked in bold type and defined in the Glossary at the back of the book. Chapters include periodic summaries of key points, enabling you to pull out the central lines of argument. Potential discussion points are given at the end of chapters, offering options for group debates or individual essay plan development. Generally, *Introducing Human Geographies* aims to make you think and to challenge you intellectually, but to do that through being lively and engaging. Scholarly knowledge doesn't have to be dry and self-obsessed. Chapters are deliberately short and punchy, but there is guidance for how to develop and deepen your knowledge via suggested further readings included at the end of chapters and the section introductions.

The mention of further readings marks an appropriate place for us to stop introducing. Like any guidebook, the intention of *Introducing Human Geographies* is to take you around the subject so you can experience it for yourself. We rarely read guidebooks without travelling; the book is a companion on a journey not a destination in and of itself. Likewise, you shouldn't read this book without moving on from it to experience more directly the areas of research and debate it guides you towards. If it helps to mix metaphors, think of this book as an introduction agency, setting you up for a relationship with Human Geography. Studying a subject means getting to know it, figuring out what you like about it and what you don't, and maybe even falling in love with some of what it does. It also means 'asking it out'. Let Human Geography get to know you; introduce it to your life, your enthusiasms; liberate it from the library, lecture or textbook. Take some of the geographical ideas in this book to your favourite haunts and see what they make of each other. In other words, see what happens when not only are you introduced to Human Geography but Human Geography is introduced to you. Use this book as a guide both to reading Human Geography and to doing it yourself by thinking geographically. Join in the age-old endeavour of 'earth writing'.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Look at a newspaper from the last week. Identify three stories that seem to you to address Human Geography topics. Explain your choices and why you think they are 'geographical'.
2. What makes Human Geography a distinctive subject?

3. 'Human Geography is a down-to-earth subject, concerned with facts not theories.' Discuss this assertion.
4. Outline your understanding of Human Geography's commitment to one of the following: description, experience, interpretation, explanation, critique.

FURTHER READING

There are a number of other texts that fulfill different functions to this book, but offer valuable complementary overviews and resources that help introduce Human Geography. These include:

Bonnett, A. (2008) *What is Geography?* London: Sage.

In this book Alastair Bonnett develops his personal response to the question 'what is geography?'. His answer is thoughtful and thought-provoking, casting geography not as just another academic subject but as 'one of humanity's big ideas'. The book covers the two central foci identified in this chapter (what we called 'writing the earth and the world'); geographical interests in cities and mobilities; the doing of geography in forms of exploration, mapping, connection and engagement; and the institutionalization of geography within and beyond universities.

Cloke, P., Cook, I., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Painter, J. and Philo, C. (2004) *Practising Human Geography*. London: Sage.

This book focuses on how research in Human Geography is done, covering both the production of geographical materials or 'data' and the production of varying kinds of geographical 'interpretations' of these data. This, and other books on geographical research methods, provide invaluable links between the kinds of materials introduced in this volume and the opportunities that exist for you to undertake your own geographical investigations in project work and independent dissertations.

Gregory, D., Johnston, R.J., Pratt, G., Watts, M.J. and Whatmore, S. (eds.) (2009) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th edn). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

This dictionary has concise but comprehensive definitions and explanations relevant to almost every aspect of Human Geography. As a reference tool it is invaluable and has no better. Human Geography can be hard to engage with because of the density of its specialist terms. This is a book you will be able to use throughout your time studying Human Geography as you look to master that specialist vocabulary.

Kneale, P. (2011) *Study Skills for Geography, Earth and Environmental Science Students* (3rd edn). London: Hodder Education.

A guide to the study skills that Geography students need and use at university level. A very useful book.

Livingstone, D. (1992) *The Geographical Tradition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

A scholarly rendition of the history of Human Geography, a topic we pay comparatively little attention to in this book. Livingstone concentrates on the longer-term history of the subject rather than on its recent developments. Throughout, one gets fascinating insights into how the concerns of Human Geographers have run in parallel with wider social currents.

PART ONE

FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Sometimes the start of Human Geography textbooks, and indeed courses, can be very daunting. This is because of the perception by some of the authors of the books and courses concerned that it is necessary to throw in a load of theoretical stuff at the beginning, before getting on with the more interesting stuff. While it may indeed be preferable that certain theoretical foundations are laid before dealing with systematic issues, the net result is likely to be that the reader/course-attender can either be bored to tears or bemused by the abstract nature of those foundations. Well, here's the bad news – we have also decided to begin this book with some theoretical dimensions. But, here's the good news – we utterly reject the false division between abstract theory and the substantive issues of everyday life. Indeed, we believe that our everyday lives are simply teeming with the kinds of issues and questions that are often pigeon-holed as theory. Much of the excitement and value in Human Geography lies in addressing these issues and questions by thinking through aspects of our own lives and of the world(s) in which we live.

As an illustration to get you thinking about Human Geography in terms of everyday life, here is a very short account of a typical journey to work for one of us – Paul Cloke. Neither the story nor the journey is in any way special; that is the point of narrating it. It could be any part of your everyday experience, whoever you are or wherever you live. What it does show is that different sets of Human Geography relationships crop up all over the place, and certainly not just in the abstract treatments of theory in books and lectures. So, imagine if you can a small hillside village in Devon, some 15 miles from the city of Exeter.

The alarm clock does its disturbing work and off we go. There's just the two of us now as our

Figure IV Bishopsteignton, south Devon. Source: Bishopsteignton Village Website

daughter lives in Horfield, Bristol and our son in Dalston, London. So we still get plenty of opportunities for city-time with them, but our home is distinctly rural. Throw open the curtains and there opening out before us is a familiar scene, described in a recent chapter on rural landscape:

> My gaze is drawn past landmark trees, across the tidal estuary of the River Teign, and up again to the valley side beyond. Rolling topography and ancient field enclosures – frequently re-patterned, re-coloured and re-lit with diurnal and seasonal change – are intersected by narrow lanes and straggly footpaths. The ebb and flow of the river continuously refresh the scene, imposing alternative senses of time on what can seem timelessly pastoral. A picture postcard? Yes, but so much more. This is where we walk our border collie, Ringo, where I ride my bike for exercise, where I am periodically enchanted by the affective capacity of bluebell woods, of the colour and texture of birch and rowan, of the persistence and beauty of goldfinch, blue tit and woodpecker, yet can remain relatively unaffected by the scenic presence of the view, or by the potential for hands-on

> proximity with nature in the performance of gardening.
>
> (Cloke, 2012: forthcoming)

Alongside its beautiful natural setting, though, rural life can be a place of tension and struggle. I struggle with political and religious conservatism; I struggle with social monoculturalism; I struggle with the vehemence of local opposition to new housing developments, especially from those who occupy the previous rounds of development. As I start the day, I reflect that this place that I call home is gazed on, lived in, performed and experienced in myriad different ways. The assemblage of human and non-human actors displayed out of that window is as diverse in its meaningful representation as it is it in its everyday life practices.

Away from the window, our home displays (consciously and unconsciously) all kinds of other geographies of connection. Paintings and photos provide constant reminders of other places that are precious to us – New Zealand, Khayelitsha in South Africa, Kenya – and there are other intentional reminders of ethical connections close to our heart, of fair trade, anti-slavery and anti-homelessness campaigns. And yes, glory of glories, the latest charitable craze from Cord and Tearfund of toilet twinning. Our toilet is proudly twinned with a latrine in Uganda, with a framed photo to mark the occasion. Charity must be regular . . . but there are uneasy relationships between private ethics and their public display. Of course we don't recognize other less progressive moral connections that will be evident to others in the exploitative relations entombed within our consumer goods, food miles, commuting and unsustainable lifestyles. No matter, to the background sound of music which can variously be drawn from Australia, Iceland and the USA as well as Britain, and with the foreground conversation of international news on the radio, we speed through breakfast. Food from all around the world, brought to us by multinational corporations via supermarkets. The global and the local come together at every turn.

Time marches on, so I begin my commute into Exeter. At first, my journey traverses farmland through tiny lanes, passing the local golf course; however early my commute, there is always earlier activity there. Then through Halden Forest to Telegraph Hill and on into the city. Halden represents a place of idyllic recreation and natural habitat for many, but its traverse is characterized by the modernism of a crowded dual-carriageway. In the winter its local microclimate renders it susceptible to heavy snowfall and ice which have in the past trapped unwary drivers for several hours. In many ways, then, natural, mechanical and human risk and hazard lie shallow beneath the surface of this kind of commuter journey. As I reach its outskirts, the city remains somewhat detached from the vantage point of the driver's seat, partly because of a necessary focus on traffic management and partly because the radio tends to fill in much of the 'thinking space' of the journey with national and international issues. Situated on the River Exe, Exeter snarls up at key bridging points during the rush hour, so along with many others I weave my way through the social geographies of housing estates and suburban lifescapes to avoid traffic on the way to the University. In so doing I bypass the centre of the city with its designer pubs and clubs, with Irishness here, and Walkabout there, interspersed with what are by now unremarkable Indian and Chinese restaurants. Designer-label beer and wine from all over the world is spilt here over designer T-shirts from all over the world. Where I used to work, in Bristol, the University was located in the heart of the city, and I would often encounter the heady contrast of financial

centres and homelessness, side by side on my journey in. Exeter, however, is a campus university on the edge of the city, and these disturbing downtown hybridities are temporarily avoided by geography. Finally, it is up to Geography, passing through the multinational, but somehow overwhelmingly middle-class, throng of students on campus. Once inside my office, the first move is to fetch a cup of (fairly traded) coffee, switch on the PC and check my e-mails, hardly noticing the rows of shelves loaded with the production of particular knowledges about governments, policies, plans and politics, and how the lives of real people in real places intersect with so much in the geographical world.

There is so much else that I could (and perhaps should) have mentioned, but this much suffices to invite parallels with many of the themes covered in this opening section of the book. Philip Crang, in Chapter 1, discusses the relations between the global and the local, and the sights, sounds, histories and commodities of the global crop up time and again in the local story of my journey to work. Local places get their distinctive character from their past and present connections to the rest of the world, and therefore we need a global sense of the local. Conversely, global flows of information, ideas, money, people and things are routed into local geographies. We therefore also need a local sense of the global. Crang's core message is that ideas about global and local are not one-dimensional inputs to our Human geographical understanding. Rather local and global are interrelated and each helps to shape the other.

The same can be said for relations between society and space. In travelling from home through villages, suburbs and estates, my narratives are jam-packed with references to how and where different social groups live, work and take their leisure. In Chapter 2, Jo Little shows how spatial patterns can reflect social structures, and how spatial processes can be used as an index of social relations. My journey seems to traverse particular social areas, but she warns that social categories cannot be taken for granted. Such categories are constructed socially, politically, culturally, and are mediated by the organization of space; in other words, society and space are co-constructed. Moreover, we can no longer rely on two-dimensional maps of society and space. Beyond the obvious, there is complexity, ambiguity and multi-dimensional identity. Whether in rural communities, spaces of the night-time economy, or in the hopeful thirdspaces of liminality and change, society and space both shape each other, and are shaped by each other.

Just as local–global and society–space have seemed like binary terms but have been investigated by Human Geographers in terms of their co-dependence, so the relationship between human and non-human has also come under scrutiny. As Hayden Lorimer writes in Chapter 3, geographers have taken a strong interest in how humans understand and value the lives of other living creatures, not only in terms of issues around food and clothing, but also focusing on the companionship of pets (such as Ringo the border collie) and the lifeworlds of 'wild' animals (such as the deer that run free in Halden Forest). In so doing we have moved away from geographies that focus only on humans, and instead have emphasized the relations between humans and non-human beings, materials and ideas. One significant outcome of this shift has been an interest in the appropriate ethical responses that arise from these inter-relationships.

Part of the intellectual climate that has allowed Human Geographers to begin to deconstruct some of these key binary terms has arrived on the coat-tails of postmodernity.

Mark Goodwin's account in Chapter 4 of the shift from 'modern' to 'postmodern' charts the way in which wider society has moved away from the austere and geometrically planned patterns of life and thought under modernity into a more postmodern emphasis on diversity, plurality and playfulness. Tracing the outcomes of this shift in terms of architecture, cultural style and philosophical approach, Goodwin outlines a transformation in Human Geography by which many researchers have begun to reject any kind of search for universal truth, and instead have recognized that all knowledge is socially produced. As with other such categories of knowledge however, the boundaries between modern and postmodern are contested, and elements of each are visible in contemporary cultural and physical landscapes.

In Chapter 5, Paul Cloke explores the importance of 'self' and 'other' in these contestations over socially produced knowledge. Being reflexive about the self is a vital part of understanding how our knowledge of Human Geographies is situated. Our experience, politics, spirituality, identities, and so on, can add to our stories about the world, and denying their importance in search of 'objectivity' could well be dishonest. My journey to work will not be the same as yours, even if it follows much the same route. However, there is also a danger that we only see the world in terms of ourselves and those who are the same as us, thus creating categories of 'otherness' according to the essential characteristics of our selves. What escapes us are other 'others' – those whom we cannot categorize or pigeonhole; those who surprise us and cannot be accommodated in our organization of knowledge.

Gender is a fundamentally important dimension of how Human Geography can present understandings of how knowledge about the world (for example the domestic world of the household and the employment world of the academic workplace) is constructed. Geraldine Pratt and Molly Kraft, in Chapter 6, discuss how differences between masculine and feminine ways of bodily comportment lead to variations in self-perception and cognitive ability (especially spatial awareness). So the capacity to explore and know our environment can be conditioned, for example, by gendered (as well as racialized) geographies of fear and safety that characterize some local places. They argue that much of women's experience has long been ignored by Human Geographers, with the result that different types of masculinities have been formative in the production of geographical knowledge. It is therefore crucial that we seek to situate knowledge (see Chapter 5) so as both to acknowledge the validity of a range of perspectives, and to develop a commitment to communicate across different perspectives and types of knowledge. In the context of this chapter situating knowledge is important not least because gender itself is interwoven with other social identities that render it unstable over time and space.

From Chapter 7 onwards, this introductory section dealing with *Foundations* turns specifically to address the diversity in the ways in which Human Geography is studied and approached. In Chapter 7, David Gilbert notes the potentially confusing range of 'hard' and 'soft' approaches, ranging from scientific objectivity to having an opinion that counts. For example, my journey to work could have been portrayed in terms of time–space data and cartography rather than as a loose personal narrative. Alongside the continuing energetic focus on geographical information systems (GIS – see Chapter 14), Human Geography has over recent years mostly emphasized a *critical* social scientific approach to the subject,

seeking to deal with issues of agency, meaningfulness, power and positionality. In parallel, however, there has also been a collaboration with the humanities – especially history, philosophy and literature – to investigate the importance of the creative imagination to places using analysis both of written texts (novels, travel writing and the like) and visual images (film, television, photography). Initially the focus here was on how these texts represented different places and people, but more recently Human Geographers have looked to the arts for inspiration about how we sense and move within the world in a more non-representational register (see Chapter 50).

The distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' approaches to Human Geography is often influential in how we develop conceptual frameworks, undertake research and interpret the findings. It is common to encounter significant divisions between quantitative and qualitative approaches – an expression of Human Geography identity according to methodological choice rather than substantive focus or theoretical viewpoint. Rob Kitchin in Chapter 8 explains that these methodological divisions of Human Geography identity are misleading; rather, it should be theory, philosophy and ideology that shape choices about methods. While quantitative research can produce explanation and prediction, and qualitative research can produce meaning and understanding, these methodological approaches should not be regarded as dualistic. Quantitative approaches fit the assumptions of some philosophies and qualitative approaches suit others. However, mixed methods including both quantification and qualification are often useful and even advisable.

A key part of the conceptual thinking through that Human Geographers have to engage in relates to how the truth of the world is variously represented in different circumstances. In Chapter 9, Mike Crang suggests that the relationship between representation and reality is more complex than a binary between truthful or deceptive depictions of places and people. Different people and organizations will understand different places and circumstances differently – living in a Devon village provokes many different portrayals, not all of which reflect idyllic rural life. It follows that all kinds of representations will contribute to ideas about and understandings of the world, and will help to shape the world rather than simply depict it. Human Geographers need to understand the selective angles from which representations are presented, not least because these representations are often subject to the power and control of the global political economy, which increasingly seems to trade on sign-values rather than 'truth'.

The nine chapters in this part of the book on 'Foundations', then, represent the very stuff of lively, interpretative, relevant and accessible Human Geographies. They help us to think through some of the recurring questions and issues involved in understanding the interconnections of people and places, and they help us to place ourselves in the picture as well. Far from being the 'boring theoretical stuff', they offer some keys with which to unlock thoughtful and nuanced accounts of the Human Geographies of everyday life. Enjoy!

CHAPTER 1
LOCAL–GLOBAL

Philip Crang

Introduction

My reasons for becoming a geographer were not particularly well considered or original, indeed they were pretty lame in some ways. Yet they still ring true to me today. I enjoyed Geography as a subject, and decided to do it for a degree at university, because through Geography I got to hear about, see pictures of, and maybe even go to a lot of different places. Geographers travel – both literally through an emphasis on fieldwork and various sorts of exploration, and more virtually in the form of slide shows and reportage. Why did I think that was a good thing? I valued the pleasures of getting to know particular, distinctive places, both familiar and unfamiliar. I enjoyed spending time in a place, getting a feel for it, finding out about it. A lot of my most powerful memories and attachments were with places of various sorts, from the house I grew up in, to the fields and moors I explored as a young runner, to the 'milk bar' where my grandmother took me for ice cream treats. But I also thought it was important to learn about areas of the world and people of which I would otherwise be largely ignorant. I was both moved and discomfited by how much of the world only came onto my TV screen when disasters struck, people died, and emergency problems needed responses. I knew my own life was parochial in the extreme, and while I enjoyed its confines, I also wanted to get beyond them.

Those feelings I had as a seventeen year old still animate my interest in Geography. I know much more about the subject now, but I still think my views then located something very close to its heart. They home in on a triumvirate of ideas that have long fostered Human Geography's understanding of itself as a distinctive intellectual endeavour. First, in the emphasis on the distinctive characters of particular places, they highlight the idea of the *local*. Second, bound up with a desire to broaden horizons and foster a greater 'world awareness' is the idea of the *global*. And third, central to this interest in both the local and global is an emphasis on *difference* (between places and people). This chapter examines the relations between these three ideas: the local, the global and difference. It will, I hope, give a sense of how productive they have been, and can still be, for geographers. However, it also argues for critical reflection. Notions of the local, the global and difference are not as simple and obvious as they might at first seem. It is important to think carefully about each of these ideas, and perhaps even more so about how they relate to each other. If we fail to do that, then we run the risk of unwittingly

reproducing conventional arguments about our world's geographies, closing off other possible ways of thinking and acting. We may end up learning rather less about places, their particularities and their differences than we should as thoughtful 'travellers'.

The chapter starts by briefly outlining how and why ideas of the local and the global have been so important to Human Geography. I then set out three takes on local–global relations. I call these *mosaic*, *system* and *network*.

Local matters, global visions

Human Geography has long combined attention to local matters with some sort of global vision. To start with the local, it, and associated notions such as place and region, have long had a particular centrality in geographical imaginations. Many academic geographers have spent whole careers trying to document, understand and explain the individual 'personality' of an area (Dunbar, 1974; Gilbert, 1960). So, why is the local deemed so important to Human Geography's research and teaching? In his thoughtful book *The Betweeness of Place*, Nick Entrikin (1991) argued that geographers have been interested in the local for three interrelated reasons. First, they have emphasized the actually existing variations in economy, society and culture between places; or what Entrikin terms the 'empirical significance of place'. Despite the homogenizing ambitions attributed to the likes of McDonald's, everywhere is not the same. Landscapes vary. Life chances are materially affected by the lottery of location. Whether you happen to be born in Lagos or London or Los Angeles, or indeed in Compton or Beverly Hills, has an impact on the kind, and even length, of life you can expect. And location is not just something we encounter and deal with. It is part of us. Where we are is part of who we are. Most obviously, this is the case through the spatial partitioning of the world into nationalities, imaginative constructions that are part of our identities, so powerful as to get people to kill and die in their name (see Chapter 37). So, places and the differences between them can be seen to exist and have real effects.

But the local also matters in a second way. Spatial variations do not only exist. They are valued, or seen as a good thing, not least by Human Geographers. There is, then, what Entrikin calls a 'normative significance to place'. Sometimes this is expressed as a celebration of difference: whether out of a suspicion of the power of global, homogenizing forces ('the media', 'American multinationals', and so on); or out of a pleasure gleaned from experiencing variety and the unexpected. Sometimes the local is cherished for its communal forms of social organization, for embodying an ideal of small and democratic organizations (for a critical and suggestive review see Young, 1990). And sometimes this social idealization goes hand in hand with an environmental utopia of self-supporting, environmentally sustainable livelihoods (Schumacher, 1973), or at least an appeal to the local as a way of living more lightly on the planet, as when calls are made to reduce 'food miles' by 're-localizing' supply networks and supporting local producers. But whether culturally, socially or environmentally framed, in all such arguments the local does not just matter. It matters because it is in some way 'good'.

The third importance attached to the local within Human Geography, according to Entrikin, involves a concern with the impact of the local on the kinds of understanding or knowledges that geographers themselves produce; what he calls the '**epistemological**

Figure 1.1 Four global visions. (a) The conversion of the spherical globe into a flat map is achieved here through a Mercator projection. Developed in the seventeenth century, the Mercator world map is ideal for exploration as a constant bearing appears as a straight line, but this is achieved by distorting sizes, which makes tropical regions look far smaller than they actually are. (b) The Peters projection, by contrast, is an equal area projection that distorts shape rather than size. First published in 1973, this projection was designed within development discourse to ensure the 'South' was given its proper global importance © Professor Arno Peters, Oxford Cartographers/Getty Images. (c) 'Spaceship earth' is an icon of contemporary environmentalism, portraying a living whole without apparent national boundaries or other political divisions. (d) The shrinking earth of 'globalization' and telecommunicational hype. Credit: (a) Royal Geographical Society, UK/www.bridgeman.co.uk; (b) © Oxford Cartographers and Huber Verlag; (c) NASA; (d) Courtesy of DHL

significance of place'. In part this involves a scepticism towards general theories that claim equal applicability everywhere. It also means a sensitivity to where knowledges come from (to their 'situatedness'). Geographers don't only know about localities, they produce local knowledges.

At the same time as having this local fixation, Human Geography is also determinedly global in its scope. Even as it values them, it also tries to break out of purely local knowledges through appeals to global awareness. Geographical interest in the global has been developed through a number of different emphases. Let me draw out four. Figure 1.1 displays a picture of the world that represents each.

First, we can identify a geographical concern with *exploration*, driven by a desire to 'know the world'. Exploration was central to geography's