

Disability and Rurality: Identity, Gender and Belonging

Karen Soldatic & Kelley Johnson

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This chapter will examine ways of engaging with rurality as it intersects with both disability and gender. It will do that by starting from some contemporary theories – mainly from across geography, anthropology, sociology, feminism and disability studies – that centre on examining everyday social and material practices. These approaches begin with the processes through which ‘unthought about’ ordinariness and ‘normality’ are made and re-made through what we *do*. Rather than focusing on identities (who we are) these newer conceptual frameworks engage with the performative interrelationships between different bodies, artifacts and spaces.

To investigate how useful such frameworks are to our understanding of rurality, disability and gender, I will first outline this way of thinking, and then go on to explore what it implies for ideas of intersectionality and for rurality, supported by examples of the kinds of analysis that can result. Finally I will draw out some of the issues raised, most particularly around how difference (and with it inequality and discrimination) is achieved – made concrete - through the very everyday ‘common sense’ of particular social and material practices in rural contexts; focusing on how ideas about, and perceptions and experiences of, the land and of remoteness act to *perform* at the intersections of disability and gender.

‘Doing’ and space

With what has been called the ‘cultural’ and ‘spatial’ or materialist turn, many theorists are re-thinking relationships between space - taken in its widest sense as simultaneously conceptual and material - and the activities that go on in it; using terms such as entanglements and meshworks (Latour 2005, Ingold 2000). This aims to open up what constitutes the ‘ordinary’ and ‘normal’ as a messy, complex, contested and – crucially – completely inter-connected process, where space, artifacts and humans are inherently inseparable in their encounters. This approach, with many disagreements (Elam 1991, Collins and Yearly 1992, Galis 2012, Whatmore 2012) and variations has mainly developed across science and

technology studies, actor-network theory, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, anthropology and geography (Garfinkel 1967, Sacks 1984, Callon 1987, Law and Hassard 1999, Law 2004, Ahmed 2006, Thrift 2008, Ingold 2011). There are several dimensions to this mode of analysis. First, it challenges the basic assumption that space and its inhabitants exist as pre-existing entities that then have 'relationships' with each other; that, for example, rurality per se has particular meanings or tends to create certain effects. Rather, spaces, artifacts and bodies can best be understood as completely interwoven and *dynamic practices*. Social and material effects (and their differential nature) happen in the *encounters between* particular inhabitants and specific situations. Second, this approach suggests that we make sense of, and survive in, the world through the continuous accumulation and negotiation of our embodied enactments with the most 'ordinary' of everyday social and material activities. It is the very mundanity of such activity that allows it to go unnoticed and unremarked upon, when in fact it is actually *work* – what has been called “problematic accomplishments” (Ryave and Schenkein 1974: 65-274)). It takes time and effort to *perform* everyday routines as obvious and natural and to re-adapt or 'breach' them (Garfinkel 1967: 37-8).

Third, and just as importantly, these everyday practices are completely entangled between humans and 'non-humans', that is, the artifacts and spaces through which they are performed (Latour 1988). Material places - their distances and densities, topographies, barriers and boundaries, layouts and facilities, etc., - are crucial ways (among others such as body language, discourse, rules and regulations etc.,) through which such on-going practices are both contested and become routinely 'normal', concrete and unnoticed. Both the material characteristics of different rural landscapes and their accumulated socially constructed meanings are integral to the work – the problematic accomplishments - of perpetuating, adapting or challenging particular social and material practices. Latour does not differentiate between human and non-human performances, arguing that what we need to do is discover the particular 'actants' in different circumstances. An actant is anything that “...modif[ies] other actors through a series of...actions” (Latour 2009: 75).

Fourth, everyday social and material practices are always situated. They will vary, dependent on place and time, across what have been called repertoires (Wenger 1998) meshworks (Ingold 2000) and assemblages (Latour 2005) - the particular patterns that become normalised (and normative) through the endless repetition and accumulation of enactments in different settings. This might be, for example, the

common sense assumptions and practices of what it is to be a country-woman in 18th century England, a black agricultural labourer in the contemporary American South, or a farmer's wife in the remote regions of 21st century Australia, This approach, then, both recognises and aims to unravel the specificities of history and geography. Fifth and finally, whilst this kind of research intends a detailed investigation of 'normal' social and material practices, it does not expect these to be congruent or complete, or to form neatly aligned coherent, comprehensive and stable understandings. Analysis goes beyond merely showing different perspectives on the same 'issue' from various subject positions, rather it tries to unpick multiple co-existing *worlds* (Mol 2002, Law 2004) and to open up the gaps, contestations and inherent contradictions between them. Any patterns that can be discerned are what Geertz (1973) famously called a 'thick description'; that is, it is a rich and layered account that accepts inconsistencies, and does not result in a 'solution' or conclusion:

This means suspending a need for explanation and resisting desires to seek clear patterns, solutions, singularities or other closure in the research. It is instead about noticing the strains, the uncanny, the difficult and the ill-fitting, allowing the messes of difference and tension to emerge alongside each other, rather than smoothing them into some kind of relation.

(Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 156)

I will next outline one example of such an approach before going on to explore its value for understanding aspects of rurality through 'the lived experience of impaired, gendered, [and] ethnic bodies interacting with the configuration of the built environment and its materiality' (Galis 2011: 827).

Science and technology studies, disability and gender

One central version of the approach outlined above is called science and technology studies (STS). How then, has STS intersected with disability theory and activism; and with investigations of the intersections between disability and gender? In fact, it has been fiercely contested and resisted in many places, partly because as Galis notes, 'the first generation of STS scholars appeared to attempt to understand, explain and effectively reinforce the hegemony of science and scientists, rather than to question their bias' (2011: 829), thus aligning all too directly with the medical model of disability. I will return to some of the problems of STS for thinking about disability and gender later, but here I want to illustrate some of the analytic effects it enables by moving 'the focus from interpretative approaches to what disability is and shift(ing) the

sociological analysis of how disability is created, through different interactive processes between the impaired body, the built environment and policy-making' (Galis 2011: 825), so as to offer 'a political account of the enactment of disability in material and semiotic practices' (829). Here Galis is interested in how disability experiences are articulated and come into being within specific practices, cultures, institutions and spaces, and on whose authority:

Thus, using [science and technology studies] does not involve the privileged study of either impaired bodies or socio-material constructions, but the analysis of situations where the interactions of bodies and materiality/culture produce action or inaction, ability or disability . . .

Different bodily forms, abilities and disabilities are not independent of architecture, but are mutually constitutive such that 'produced space' also forms 'social norms'.

(Galis 2011: 830–1)

Studying disability as enactment – 'to track down how we do disability' (831) – becomes the study of multiple (including gendered) bodies, artifacts and spaces. It starts from dis/ability but breaks with research centred on an assumed stable and already pre-existing disabled/abled divide, replacing this with a whole range of human to nonhuman relationships. This means engaging both with diverse human bodies and their encounters with, for instance, glasses, prescriptions, colostomy bags, hearing implants, governmental care policies, hospitals, workplace machinery, doors, steps, white canes, hip replacements, wheelchairs, toilets, reception desks, public transport, access statements and disability services.

What does such an analysis look like? Ingunn Moser uses her research into disability and gender mainly in sparsely populated regions of Norway to explore how differences such as disability, gender and class are made and unmade at the detailed level of everyday life, including in relation to the types of technical aid supplied to her study participants, and the types of spaces available to them. Like Galis, she believes that the intersections of difference are "complex, contradictory, unpredictable, and surprising, and defy simple conclusions about effects and practices" (2008: 537), arguing that although processes of differentiation may interact to support and reinforce each other, these can also challenge and undermine each

other. She gives the example of a young man with disabilities (following an motorcycle accident). As she writes:

When I arrived, Roger was just finishing the washing up. Having invited me in, he returned to the kitchen counter to clean a few more cups. (...) I was confronted with walls and cupboards plastered with posters showing motorbikes, MC-symbols and bikini-clad women lying on cars and motorbikes. (...) Suddenly Roger turned to me with a wink: "Now you can start by doing the dishwashing...!" I laughed at his joke, but was also taken off guard by the unexpected gendering of the situation and the unsettling of relations and position between us enacted by his move.

(Moser 2006: 538)

Throughout her article Moser reflects on how such everyday talk challenges the normative construction of this encounter as between a disabled recipient (of benefits and services) and a 'neutral' professional. By calling on a gender divide that still stereotypically marks masculinity as superior to femininity, Roger is able to remind the researcher of his personhood beyond his disability. Moser then juxtaposes Roger's negotiation of his disability *through* his gender, with other participants in her study. Siv, for instance, a disabled mother, appears more accepting of her impairment, of being relatively immobilised at home, and of receiving care from others. Moser proposes that for Siv norms of femininity (and class) align more easily with her situation because "as a mother staying at home and caring for her daughter as well as looking after the household [...] (she comes) out both less disabled than her fellow male accident victims and with her femininity intact." (2006: 553)

Here, though, as with Roger, such individual enactments do not float free, but are completely intertwined with societal attitudes and practices, and with relative degrees of privilege:

Power is not simply what works on subjects but what enables and makes them possible in the first instance (Foucault 1981). Siv is not only subjected but also emerges as a subject in the way of living that enacts her and to which she also actively contributes herself. In these practices, relations, and orderings of life, the differences are, however, positively revalued. In this sense, Siv's position and situation come out as relatively privileged. Others, for whom escape is more difficult, are measured endlessly against

supposedly neutral norms of activity, independence, self-support, and participation but with little or no chance of living up to the standards. As long as the standards are not problematized, they will continue to produce their deviating and lacking other—and so to produce disability. (2006: 556)

The *work* of enacting everyday 'normal' practices, then, is not centred on either individual human agency or on relationships of economic, social and cultural power, but operates in the spaces between them.

Interrogating intersectionality

Moser's research, coming to disability from a critical STS perspective, also explores how to think about intersectionality. She references West and Fenstermaker (1995a, 1995b) who argue that intersectionality between different identities has tended to be seen as additive and even hierarchical, starting with one oppression, to which others are then applied. But as Ervelles writes:

The point of intersectional analysis is not to "find several identities under one" [...] This would re-inscribe the fragmented, additive model of oppression and essentialise specific social identities. Instead the point is to analyse the differential ways by which social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other, and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities.

(2011: 96-97)

For Ervelles, then, intersectionality is about capturing the nuances that various identities produce in different situations. For Moser, because "material practices have to enact themselves and get themselves actualized, mobilized, repeated and re-enacted in situated interactions" (2006: 558), the effects of different identities may not align (either towards privilege or towards discrimination) in any kind of additive way but can also *interfere* with each other. There is thus a messy unevenness of effects as multiple individuals endlessly perform their own embodied engagements with their identity(s) as male/female, disabled/abled etc., within the enabling and disabling constraints and opportunities of each specific everyday life.

In tracing these patterns of interference in various embodied situations, Moser does not separate out social constructions (that is stereotypes of what a 'woman' or a 'disabled person' is like) from modes of perpetuation such as policies, regulations

and services that make concrete differential relationships; or from the variety of lived experiences in encountering and negotiating both societal attitudes and its everyday practices. However, there remains an underlying difficulty in Moser's work. Whilst she recognises differential power relationships (particularly in access to resources) all her participants have a degree of control and agency, however minor. Compare this relative agency with Nirmala Ervelle's recent account of her African-American husband's experience of a developing impairment. In her description, the combination of his disability, gender race and location (in the contemporary American south), put him at direct bodily risk:

Our terror, I knew, was shared by other black men who, because their disabilities included involuntary physical movements (e.g. cerebral palsy) and/or real/apparent cognitive differences (e.g. mental retardation or autism) were often thought to be drug addicts or drunks. To be perceived as a dangerous black man in the wrong place at the wrong time by a frightened person with a gun could result in death (2011: 4).

Here, whilst intersecting identities can be (and are) endlessly negotiated in everyday social and material practices, the real threat of violent force in this particular intersection undermines and limits the possibilities of individual agency. There is literally nothing Ervelles or her husband can do to mitigate the potential risks of his disability. For her, then, there is a problem when "most disability studies scholars theorise disability through the medium of experience and textuality/discourse" (2011: 5) of the kind outlined above. This is because, for her, identities are constituted "within the social relations of production and consumption of transnational capitalism" (2011: 7) which also need to be analysed so as to unravel the historical and geographical conditions that create class, disability, race and gender inequalities and discrimination. Ultimately, she argues, this is based on capitalism's need to normalize the bourgeois subject of late capitalism - the white, upper class, heterosexual, non-disabled male (Ervelles 2011: 38) thereby producing a subject "who is free to do what one wants, free to buy and sell, to accumulate wealth or live in poverty, to work or not, to be healthy or to be sick" (Navarro 1984). These particular economic and social structures are endlessly enacted and ultimately enforced through the differentiation between who is assumed fully human or less than human, based on a hierarchy of survival, linked to who is deserving of protection from harm and who is not (Ervelles 2011: 14).

This tension in disability studies is sometimes articulated as between the 'abstractions' of research focused on social constructions of difference and inequality and work that examines the 'realities' of discrimination as it is lived, and its underlying causes. But this, I suggest, is more about where and how inequality, discrimination and marginalisation is *kept in place* in different places and times. Everyday social and material practices are the unnoticed, unremarkable routines through which particular differentials are maintained or contested. Breaching these implicit routines and rules (Garfinkel 1967) can generate a perceived violation, expressed through concern about, and often aggression against, the 'breacher'. But it can also be underpinned by wider societal culture, policy and practices that legitimize – and thus multiply – individual actions; condoning and normalising explicit force against specific groups. The question thus becomes - *where* are disability and gender (or race, sexuality, class and caste) relatively unmarked and where are they central elements through which a society (or group in that society) enforces violently and viciously the perpetuation of particular sets of societal norms and practices? Whether through rape as a weapon in war, violence and abuse against people with disabilities in institutions, genocidal regimes against particular sections of a population, anti-gay polices that legitimize street attacks, or the high rate of incarceration of people of black and ethnic origin, *some* aspects of stereotyped identity in *some* situations are not amenable to a model of intersectionality as either the simply additive (or even interfering) negotiation of multiple and overlapping identities. This is because focusing on the inter-relationships of identity obscures the dynamic, messy and variable nature of agency, dependent on the particularities of a space and time. Instead investigating intersectionality - following Ervelles - becomes about unraveling the *differential ways by which social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other*. Whilst she sees this as relating to the political and subjective constructions of identities, I am here arguing that we need to start instead with everyday social and material practices *and their locations*. We need to explore how identities are performed singularly and in combination in specific situations –how these come to be more or less marked, the consequences of their intersections, and the types of work through which such marking is maintained and challenged. In this understanding there is not a divide between social constructions (perceptions) and lived realities (experiences); structural inequalities are made and re-made *through* everyday practices, enacted simultaneously across attitudes, policies and procedures, brute force, social roles and relations, academic writing, etc.

In such a framework, the underpinning enforcement of differential identities through both physical and psychic violence is not of a different order, separate from routine and everyday actions and encounters. Violent acts also work on, through and from individual bodies. Individuals are implicated in such acts - not just as perpetrators or victims, but as non-acting witnesses, through the acceptance of discriminatory policies and practices, and as unthinking holders of everyday beliefs that assume some sections of the population as less human (or deserving of humane treatment) than others. Violence is as much part of the 'work' of perpetuating (and contesting) specific everyday social and material practices as are speech acts and material conditions. Everyday talk, access to resources and enforcement are completely entangled. The crucial point here is that where identity differentiations are institutionally sanctioned, normalised and enforced – through capitalist modes of production and consumption or religious terror for example – these practices both intensify particular patterns of inequality and discrimination, and reduce individual agency and spaces of negotiation and challenge. In each case the effects of intersectionality between disability and gender (and other marked identities) may be different and particular.

As many authors have noted, such sanctioned forces themselves do not just act on and through disability but also produce it:

....treating impairment as 'natural' rather than, at least in part, as socially produced and universalizing experiences of disability based on research focused on minority lives in the Global North [...] needs to be challenged by rethinking how we do disability studies. There needs to be more attention, for example, paid to the production of impairment through war and conflict over resources, trade in arms and human organs, export of toxic waste from countries of the Global North to countries of the Global South, the hyper-exploitation of cheap labour in very unsafe working conditions and effects of poverty such as hunger and malnutrition.

(Chouinard 2015: 2)

The argument here is that engaging with identities and their intersectionality in specific situations as modes of *differentiating practices*, can enable analyses that cut across artificial divisions between 'abstract' and 'real-world' research approaches, or between investigations of everyday life, and of economic, political and social conditions. This is not to ignore the very important criticism of many authors

(Chouinard 1994, 1995, Mohanty 2003, Grech 2015a 2015b, Grech and Soldatic 2015) that both disability studies and feminist researchers from the global north/western world has often practiced a 'scholarly colonialism' (Meekosha 2011) in prioritizing the relatively privileged bodies of their own regions, and have failed to engage with the ongoing economic and social marginalization and disadvantage enacted through neo-colonialism and through capitalist exploitation. But we need to make sure these debates do not come adrift by relying on simplistic binary oppositions between approaches, or implicit hierarchies of oppression (who is the most discriminated against). The key issue – to which I will return – is that exploring identities and their intersections must also problematise both subject agency and space/time, that is, the relative power individuals and groups have to position themselves, either in attempting to survive in, or make sense of their particular conceptual, social and material worlds.

Interrogating rurality

Like contemporary disability studies and feminism, rural studies is also currently reflecting on its various perspectives, centred both on what constitutes the concerns and boundaries of the rural, and on a similar divide to that outlined above, between studies that focus on social constructions of the 'rural' and those that investigate the lived experience of rurality. Authors such as Cloke (2006) have proposed exploring different scales simultaneously - across how academics conceptualise rurality; how the rural is contested as an image; how policy intersects with space, and how rural lives are lived differently and differentially. Science and Technology Studies is one mode of enquiry that already offers a way of integrating seamlessly across levels (Latour 2005); but is also interested in asking different kinds of questions. So, rather than querying what is particular to rurality (how might it be defined, where does it begin and end, how does it operate at different scales, what impact does it have when intersected with disability or gender) I will here *displace* rurality as a concept; aiming to shift from its common sense as a particular type of (generalizable) location whose characteristics can somehow be found -however partial and complex – in some kind of opposition to 'urbanity'. I will ask instead how is *land* (as resource, landscape and place) and *remoteness* enacted through the social and material practices of a specific embodied situation, particularly through disability intersected with gender? This deliberately takes the angle of view outlined in the introduction that the non-human components of rurality – its artifacts and spaces – can themselves operate as actants. How, then, does the material nature of a place, and its physical distance from others get entangled with particular lived experiences, societal

attitudes and stereotypes, and economic, social, cultural and material conditions?

Land

In the global north, land has become intimately connected with property and ownership, with possession and individual rights over expropriation, use and extraction. In the historical and continuing expansion of these claims, some people have been displaced and dispossessed (and themselves treated as possessions) whilst others have benefitted from the wealth thus created. Entanglements between definitions of, and rights connected to, property have shaped patterns of labour (classes and castes), who counts as civilized peoples (by race and tribe), more or less than human (disabled people, serfs, slaves), ownership (gender) and bonds between men, women and children (through marriage) (Whatsmore 2002: 80). Whatsmore also argues that we need to see this as just one particular form of knowledge “masquerading its fabrications as self-evident accomplishments” (2002: 81) that are simultaneously naturalized through bodies, material landscapes and artifacts; and also contested through the same means. In her chapter “Unsettling Australia” (2002), she explores indigenous lands rights campaigns to show how historical concepts of terra nullis or terra incognita that legitimized the annexation of ‘uninhabited land’ in Australia have been challenged.

In these contested processes over land, the putting into place of a dominant pattern of social and material conditions is enacted through multiple and accumulative means – force, rules and regulations, discourse and meaning-making, concrete realities - work that become congealed over time into (and can also be refused, resisted and re-defined through) ‘normal’ everyday social and material practices. The English 18th century re-structuring of the landscape, for example, was enabled through enclosure acts that dispossessed small farmers and enabled the consolidation of large agricultural estates. Many of this emerging class of landowners, focused their money on building large neo-classical country houses with landscaped grounds, constructed out of the combination of local agriculture and massive extractions of wealth globally from both people (slaves, peasants, labourers) and from extracting natural resources across the developing British empire. As Williams (1973) famously showed other’s labour and land was transformed into a style - the English picturesque – that came to justify and even celebrate a classes right to wealth through property, because of its ‘obvious’ taste and sensibility. Land as property and resource – and individuals differential access to, and control over it - thus becomes both normalized and invisible through land as landscape and place, in

ways that still have common sense resonances in English ideas about the rural idyll, who is assumed to live there and what they are like (Halfacree 2003).

Moreton-Robinson in "Bodies that matter: performing white possession on the beach" (2011) shows how indigenous dispossession and displacement continues to be enacted through everyday social and material practices – particular of while, able-bodied young males - in Australia. As she notes:

Beaches remain important places within indigenous coastal people's territories, although the silence about our ownership is deafening. (...) The beach marks the border between land and sea, between one nation and another, a place that stands a common ground on which collective national ownership, memory and identity are in public display.

(2011: 57)

She then draws together a number of historical and contemporary moments capturing how the beach as a place and as a border has been enacted and contested in the Australian situation. Here land becomes articulated as 'untouched' nature, as a 'free' resource for the new population that lives mainly along its edges. Moreton-Robinson charts some of the processes through which it has been taken from its original inhabitants; how that act of dispossession continues to be normalized, perpetuated and made invisible; and how it continues to be enforced as a mode of inclusion and exclusion through the current government treatment of asylum seekers arriving by sea. Simultaneously she examines how Australian beach culture is an everyday social and material practice enacting ordinary "raced and gendered norms of subjectivity" (2011: 58). She argues that beach life functions

...as a disciplinary technique that enables the white male subject to be imbued with a sense of belonging and ownership produced by a possessive logic that pre-supposes cultural familiarity and commonality applied to social action.

(2011: 59)

The thoughtless possession of the beach as a 'normal' and 'rightful' place for white people, together with particular assumptions about leisure and entitlement – expressed for example through the 'overcoming' of the waves through surfing by mainly young white men - is then just one of the multitude forms of work by which the

displacement of the land's original inhabitants is performed as forgotten and ignored. Moreton-Robinson thus links the landing, claiming and naming of Botany Bay by Cook in 1770, with the forced removal of indigenous peoples from coastal areas, the 19th century white male romantic sensibilities that attached specific meanings to nature, and the framing of privileged white social life around promenading and picnicking. She then explores the insertion of surf bathing, surf life-saving and surfing with boards into these everyday accomplishments; first as a contested performance around what should count as white masculinity (respectability and moral authority versus fitness and physicality) and then as an increasingly central part of Australian manhood, with further resonances of discipline, strength, bravery and mateship, connecting surf life-saving with military service and the 'Digger'. At the same time indigenous people were being removed to reserves and missions, framed as unhealthy 'throwbacks', assumed to be ready to die out:

The indigenous body was represented as being terminal. The common phrase used at the time to describe the containment and removal was a benevolent act of 'smoothing the dying pillow.'" (Moreton-Robinson 2011: 61)

She goes on to show how stereotypes of Australian white masculinity have come to be made and re-made through idealisations of the 'Digger' soldier, by both making invisible Aboriginal soldiers and "the actual traumatised and disfigured white male bodies returning home" (2011: 62), and how these continue to be inflected in surf and beach culture. This means that the beach remains a space where it is the aboriginal surfer who becomes the 'breaching' body, where female surfers still have a more precarious right than their white male counterparts, and where disabled bodies are assumed not to exist. But Moreton-Robinson also argues that the beach as indigenous land, a ground for ceremonial business, needs to be seen *otherwise*, as a space outside its possession – neither as property nor as a space for individual competitive consumption. She offers an important analysis of the artificial and historical construction of land as property and possession, and shows how its differential practices across race, gender and ability come to perpetuate both unthinking unnoticed white privilege and the continuing dispossession, marginalisation and silencing of indigenous people.

Remoteness

A second aspect of rurality is its tendency to thinly distributed populations, usually isolated from denser urban centres. At one level, remoteness – especially under the

economic logic of capitalism - inherently means less access to services. Privately funded transport becomes unprofitable, so non-existent, or irregular and expensive. Public and welfare provision such as care become 'logically' harder to offer effectively when sparsely distributed, so tends to congregate in more populated locations. As many authors have noted, this can have considerable disabling effects on people with impairments – particularly those living in poverty - in remote areas:

Poverty helps to produce impairment, for instance through hunger, malnutrition and stunted growth, and also disproportionately affects persons with impairments and illnesses. (...) Interviewees talked about how insufficient income created disabling barriers to their inclusion in society and space, for example with respect to being unable to pay for the transportation needed to get to places of healthcare, doctors' fees, and expensive medications often available only through private pharmacies (cf. hospital dispensaries). Interviewees also commented on how they were unable to cover both the costs of medication and of food and how this meant they either had to go without food or beg for it from others.

(Chouinard 2015: 5)

These 'doing' practices are, in turn, inflected through gender – for example, where women are assumed to take a lead role in everyday care, household maintenance and social reciprocity. These are the entanglements of time and effort spent in basic daily tasks, in attempting to provide a standard of living, health, wellbeing and economic security for oneself and those around one; in negotiating between personal, relational and societal attitudes, stereotypes and roles (who is where, doing what; who should not be there, or should be doing something different); in working within and around economic, social, cultural and material conditions. In Moser's research into people with disabilities mainly in the remote areas of Norway already mentioned, her subjects do not struggle with basic survival like Chouinard's Guyanese participants. But their everyday experiences and possibilities also intersect simultaneously with the effects of distance, sparsely distributed resources and 'normal' social and material practices – in this case of disability support services. She gives the example of Dag, a young man with a severe brain injury from a road accident, who lives in a nursing home local to his mother. She shows how his masculinity and youth intersect problematically with the framing of his care as an assumed grateful and dependent reliance on the services of others (and of something only required with aging):

(His mother) explained how she had been fighting to get Dag a place of his own outside the nursing home, or at least to get him a care, so that he could get out a little, get home to visit and live a life a bit more like someone his own age (...) His mates wouldn't visit; it didn't feel natural for them to visit a mate in a nursing home with health personnel walking in and out and old and even demented people in the corridors.

(Moser 2002: 547)

Remoteness here produces a reduction in possibilities for Dag, which becomes enacted in turn as everyday effects among his friends. Moser suggests that two different and contradictory realities are being played out here; where a set of institutional practices and materialities enact Dag both as disabled, and – as integral to that framing – as without gender or sex. Dag and his mother, on the other hand, insisted on recognising his age and masculinity, as a vital aspect of enacting encounters, artifacts and spaces. But Moser also compares Dag with another participant in her study, Hallvard, who had a similar impairment but is able to actualize a more appropriate situation through his father's negotiation based on class and resource privileges - "with the consequence that Hallvard was moved to a place where he was given better treatment and so also came out less disabled" that is, had much greater independence and autonomy (2002: 550-551). Here, privilege overcomes the 'normal' sparse opportunities in remote places.

Conclusion: from intersecting identities to everyday practices?

Moser's example gives an analysis of how intersectionality works in a particular case, that starts from an understanding that "the forces of institutions and social structures are realised in the unfolding of those (everyday) relationships" (West and Fenstermaker 1995b: 509). Compare this to Ervelles explorations of disability, gender and race in relation to slavery (2011), or Lindqvist's (flawed) study in terms of indigeneity in the far north of Australia in the 19th and 20th century (Lindqvist 2007, Posti 2014). In the latter case, the fiercely enforced marking of indigenous peoples and the assumed 'un-markedness' of both white settlers and the land itself, intersect with gender and disability in brutal and destructive ways. As with Ervelles's examination of slavery in the Caribbean, masculinity is both exploited as hard manual labour, and humiliated and undermined through ill treatment, severe enough to create disability. Femininity is simultaneously un-gendered (compared to white middle class gender 'norms') as hard manual labour, overtly sexualised as producing

objects for male pleasure through rape, and undermined through the forced removal of babies and children. In all these cases remote rural space is an *actant* in the repeated everyday performance of differential and inequitable patterns of access to, and experiences of, land and resources; but how it acts, and how it becomes utilised to produce, maintain and enforce particular patternings of white privilege as unmarked, obvious and normal varies across the multiplicities of accumulated histories and geographies of particular locations.

This leads to a final point. Studying rurality from an STS-inflected perspective is to first select and then investigate an aspect of its ordinary social and material practices. What happens in and through everyday attitudes, actions, encounters, objects and spaces to make and remake a particular type of rural 'normality'? As I have already suggested, this is less about starting from specific identities or their intersections and more about unraveling differential practices, so as to reveal how both identities and their variously nuanced intersections come to be enacted in some ways and not others. Crucial to this is not to separate out 'marked' and 'unmarked' identities. Better understanding rurality, disability and gender is precisely about exploring how, white, classed, abled and masculinist privilege (re) produces itself through its everyday attitudes, actions, encounters, objects and spaces where these *enact* aspects of non-white, disabled, female and queer identities and their intersections in particular negative, derogatory and discriminatory ways. Equally vitally, it is to understand how individuals and groups refuse, contest, adapt and re-work such 'normal' social and material practices in different situations and with varying degrees of agency and control. And – finally – it to recognize that we all endlessly perform our relationships to everyday social and material practices. The intersections of our own identities also operate in complex, messy and potentially troubling ways that need to be made explicit: both a white working class male agricultural worker being studied and the black, female, abled city-based researcher are differently embodied intersections between unmarked privilege and marked 'otherness'. This may be in patterns that interfere as Moser suggests, or that resonate together to multiplying 'disabling' effects, or that affect some aspects of each one perceptions and experience and not others: what is needed in each case is un-entanglement.

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