Editorial

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This special issue of *Subjectivity* consists solely of papers presented at the launch conference for the journal. The 3-day conference took place at Cardiff University, Wales, UK in June 2008 and was attended by 245 delegates from 20 countries. There were plenary sessions with Huw Beynon, Thomas Csordas, Julian Henriques, Julia O'Connell Davidson, Hilary Rose, Lynne Segal, Susan Leigh Star, and a screening of the documentary film 'An American in Aberfan' by Chris Morris.

Like the journal, the conference offered scholars an opportunity to explore shifting conceptualizations of subjectivity in contemporary culture, politics, social science and theory. Speakers and audiences were invited together to explore subjectivity as a locus of social change and an element of everyday social interventions, to examine how subjectivities are produced, and to consider how emerging subjectivities remake, and are remade within, the flux of power and social relations.

The conference was organized around three themes. The first, 'Embodiment, Affect and Materiality', looked at how the emergence of 'body-theory' across the social sciences and humanities has transformed the terrain in which questions about power, ideology, discourse and subjectivity can be asked. This work has dismantled the idea of an easy separation between body and world, and bodies are seen as always gesturing towards practices, energies, objects and intensities beyond themselves. The consequent focus on process, connection, relationality and bodily affectivity traverses a diverse range of disciplines and is forcing a reconsideration of our understanding of subjectivity. Contributors to this theme addressed such substantive concerns as 'carnal knowing', the sentient body, cyber culture and machine-human symbiosis, new materialism, affective labour and care, and issues of disability and critiques of the 'able body'.

The second theme 'New Political Subjectivities/New Social Movements' engaged with the production of new subjectivities and social movements in a historical moment marked by neoliberalism, de/re-territorializing capitalism and emerging new sensibilities in relation to gender, sexuality, transnational mobility, and racial and religious differences. Here, contributors considered the role of media and new information and communication technologies – both in producing new femininities, masculinities and sexualities and in enabling resistance to them. They looked at how social movements are emerging to address global injustice related to the transformation of labour

and the new conditions for the production of science and technology, biotechnology and medical rationalities. With their interlocutors, they assessed the adequacy of our theoretical vocabularies for addressing contemporary social, political and cultural complexities related to processes of racialization and migration, and discussed possibilities for interdisciplinary work that might foster dialogues, activism and intervention.

Contributors to the third theme, 'Re-Distributing the Psychological', engaged with work in critical psychology and social theory relevant to subjectivity. In both of these disciplinary arenas, individualist concepts of the psychological have long been discarded. Critical psychologists have challenged the privileging of interiority, using analytics of discourse, activity and narrative to show how the psychological 'inner' is simultaneously 'outer'. Similarly, sociologists have attempted to understand what constitutes the psychological through exploring its position within the social and cultural lifeworld, and social theorists have attempted to explicate concepts of subjectivity and experience that transcend reductionist notions of the individual. Contributors to this theme considered the successes and shortcomings of these various moves with respect to critical studies of psychology and critical applications of the psychological. They explored ways of developing scholarship that might go beyond the reductively psychological while still accommodating and understanding singularity and experience, and considered the dilemmas that such attempts inevitably encounter.

The papers in this issue of *Subjectivity*, and some of the papers that will be published in the next (issue 27), represent something of the diversity of substantive concerns, analytic approaches and theoretical perspectives that were on display; we hope that they also succeed in conveying some sense of the energy and excitement that the conference generated.

The Editors