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Introduction: Mountain bike culture as a 'structure of feeling'

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Introduction

Mountain bike culture as a ‘structure of feeling’

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Abstract

Via an innovative reading of mountain biking, this Introduction Chapter outlines the importance of the collection. Following some important definitions, the reader is introduced to the notions of dominant, residual, and emergent structures of feeling, suggesting that these three modalities allow scholars and practitioners to move beyond static and essentialist readings of subculture. Subsequently, it highlights conflicts between mountain bikers and other users of outdoor space, and how these serve to highlight some of the most important issues of our catastrophic times. Finally, from their varying perspectives, each chapter in the collection is given a brief summary, with new insights offered on the significance of mountain bike culture in relation to identity, bodies, ecology and the cultural politics of lifestyle sports.

The emergence (and divergence) of mountain bike culture

Mountain bikes are built for off-road use, and are typically ridden on mountain trails, purpose-built tracks, fire roads, and other unpaved surfaces (Huddart & Stott, 2019). This type of terrain comprises a mixture of ‘natural’ features, such as tree roots, loose dirt, rocky surfaces and steep grades, and ‘artificial’ obstacles such as log piles, banked ‘berms’, rock gardens, gap jumps, and wall rides (Gibbs & Holloway, 2017). To cope with the demands of these trails, mountain bikes feature components such as (front and rear) suspension, large knobby tyres, durable wheels/spokes, disc brakes, dropper seat posts, and lower gear ratios. Recently, the capabilities of mountain bikes have also been extended via electronic motors and data tracking devices which, though controversial, can increase the accessibility of outdoor spaces, allowing riders to cycle greater distances, whilst providing opportunities for a larger range of people to enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of the activity (Cherrington & Black, 2023).

Since the 1970s, mountain biking has steadily risen in popularity. In the US, there are now approximately 9 million riders (Statista, 2023), and in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, it is estimated that 5% (UK) and 7.7% (NZ) of the population regularly cycle off-road (Sport England, 2023; Bayne et al, 2022). Furthermore, it is estimated that 47,670 mountain bikes are now being sold around the world each day, which, when combined with tourism, media coverage, and organised competitions, contributes an estimated USD 7 billion to the global economy every year (Buning & Lamont, 2019). Unsurprisingly, this has led to a discernible growth in attempts to stimulate mountain bike tourism through the development of mountain bike trails and parks in countries such as Canada, New Zealand, France, and Scotland (Buning & Lamont, 2020).

In accounting for this growth, many commentators have pointed to the unique appeal of mountain bike culture in 21st century societies. In contrast to road cycling, which is seen as ‘both a product and constituent of capitalist modernity and hence embodies many of the archetypical disciplining constraints of modern sport’ (Falcous, 2017, p. 242), mountain bikers often align with a particular set of subcultural values (see McCormack 2017; McEwan et al, 2018) that allow participants to express a disenchantment with behavioural discipline, bodily conformity, and (highly regulated) indoor activities. Thus, mountain biking is conceptualised as being relatively informal (See Chapter 9); emphasising grassroots over professional participation (See Chapters 8, 9 and 14); incorporating the consumption of new objects and technologies (See Chapters 3 and 7); promoting aesthetic and artistic elements over those relating to outcomes or utility (See Chapter 1); performed by individuals rather than teams (See Chapter 2); valuing risky behaviours (See Chapters 4 and 5), and; most often taking place in outdoor spaces (See Chapters 6, 8, and 10).

Such typologies are helpful in identifying a particular ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams, 1977) that is performed, experienced, and habitually understood by individual mountain bikers. Yet, as Wheaton (2004) points out, it is problematic to assume that a relationship of difference exists between subculture and mainstream culture and that all members of a subculture subscribe to a singular identity (See Chapters 11, 12, and 13). Indeed, though subcultural affiliations may be a helpful predicate for understanding people’s attachment to mountain biking, this focus can also obscure important differences in

motivation, positioning, and orientation within, and between different types of mountain biker. This caveat is important in developing an understanding of culture, according to Williams (1977, p. 121), since:

The complexity of a culture is to be found not only in its variable processes and their social definitions – traditions, institutions, and formations – but also in the dynamic interrelations, at every point in the process, of historically varied and variable elements.

A structure of feeling in activities such as mountain biking is ‘always more than a handling of fixed forms and units’ (Williams, 1977, p. 130). There is frequent tension between the received interpretation (i.e., the ideologies of rationalised ‘sport’) and practical experience (i.e., riding mountain bikes and participating in mountain bike culture), and this tension is the symptom of an experiential form which can often be difficult to verbally articulate. Riding a mountain bike and participating in mountain bike culture *can* induce a feeling of togetherness, mutual belonging, and collective habitus, but it can also distance individuals from those practices that do not reflect their own world view. While it is tempting to imagine an overarching subculture, contemporary mountain bike cultures might be more appropriately characterised as consisting of disparate small groups of participants, or ‘idiocultures’ (McCormack, 2017, p. 346), each with their own set of motivations, goals, and identities.

Rinehart’s (2000) adaptation of William’s (1977) categorisations of dominant, residual, and emergent cultures is prescient here, as it illustrates how more than one single structure of feeling can co-exist in the same social space, whilst at the same time allowing for overlap between attitudes, and different levels of the same sport. For example, as its popularity has increased, mountain biking has been transformed from an informal pastime to a highly specific organisation governed by unique rules, institutions, and formal codes of practice. It has its own recognised governing body (UCI), a dedicated world cup and world championship competition, and is now, somewhat controversially, included in the proceedings of the modern Olympiad (Savre et al, 2009). Despite its supposed counter-cultural leanings, such developments could be said to represent the dominant (or ‘mainstream’) aspects of mountain biking, as they

reflect a general move towards the codification, rationalisation, and commercialisation of physical activity in the 21st century sportscape.

Yet despite, or perhaps, *because* of this sportisation process (Elias, 1971), mountain biking has at the same time witnessed a diversification of styles that reflects developments in attitudes and available technologies (McEwan et al, 2018). Many of these styles, such as those associated with cross country, downhill, or enduro riding, contain ‘residual’ cultural affiliations which, to quote William’s (1977: 122), ‘have been effectively formed in the past’ (i.e., the enclosure of space, colonialism, idealised notions of a reified ‘Nature’), but are ‘still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present’ (ibid, p. 122). This has led mountain bikers to develop different orientations toward certain geopolitical considerations, including: the relevance of purpose-build trail centres (Gibbs & Holloway, 2018), adherence to land-access laws (Brown, 2015), the safety of other land-users (Chiu & Kriwoken, 2003), acknowledgement of Indigeneity and recreational colonialism (Hresko & Warren, 2022), and the protection/maintenance of the ‘natural’ environment (Cherrington, 2021). Residual mountain bike cultures are thus retroactively constituted through an amalgam of past and present practices, whereby the associations between mountain biking and other socio-cultural formations are constituted by tense, antagonistic, and ambivalent relationships with particular people, objects, and events (Black, 2021).

Here, Brown (2014) highlights the manifold ways in which respective mountain biking disciplines, from cross-country and bikepacking, to enduro and downhill, subscribe (or not) to the ideological significance of ‘the mountain’. In unpacking these residual understandings, she finds a wide continuum of associations that are more or less wedded to the rubric of isolation, self-sufficiency, and an appreciation of ‘nature’. For instance, whilst a professional enduro or downhill rider may have a more techno-centric interpretation of nature and the wilderness due to the assistance they receive from support staff, mechanics and chairlifts, a bike-packer is likely to have a more romantic and idealised orientation, which privileges reified notions of solitude, nature exposure, and adventure. Equally, the challenge of negotiating steep, ‘natural’ terrain at high altitudes will be different between e-mountain bikers and non-e-mountain bikers, since

the former provide the opportunity to ride further, and to gain motorised assistance on technical uphill (Ingram-Sills et al, 2023).

Mountain bike cultures thus involve both universal and particular dimensions, that is, they have a concrete universality (Zizek, 1999). This concrete universality is critical in locating mountain biking's *emergent* cultural potentialities, as it offers scholars the tools to examine the manifold ways in which identities, bodies, ecologies, and social struggles are made and re-made through a process of local and global differentiation. Within this collection, this has enabled contributors to render an account of specific mountain biking identities, without reducing the broader, mountain bike community to a neutral empty container enveloping all particularities (Mueller, 2023). One of the great appeals of mountain bike culture is that it affords opportunities to differentiate oneself from the collective, whilst at the same time composing an orientation towards dominant rituals and behaviours that offer opportunities for personal and social change, and it is against this conceptual backdrop that the contributions herein have been gathered.

Cultural politics and the (trans)individuation of mountain bikers

As an activity which is dominated by residual and emergent forms of culture, the practice of mountain biking brings riders into routine conflict with ideological expressions of identity, embodiment, and the environment, and this comprises a critical part of mountain biking's historical development. Here, Chiu and Kriwoken (2003) point to both the physical impact of mountain bike technology, including the compaction of soils under the weight of the wheels, the erosion of soils caused by heavy braking and skidding, the damage inflicted upon 'natural' habitats when riders detour from sanctioned trails, and the social implications relating to safety concerns and the disruption of other users' experiences. In the case of the latter, objections to mountain biking range from the noise made by the bicycle (or the ebike motor) to behavioural considerations such as riding in large groups, irresponsible or dangerous riding, and clothing choice (Brown, 2015). Resultantly, mountain bikers have been negatively positioned as the archetypal 'outdoor anti-citizen' signifying 'all that is feckless and reckless in a countryside that is primed for quiet enjoyment' (Potheary et al, 2013, p. 13).

In response to this, academics, practitioners, and activists have accused geologists, geographers, and the media of ignoring the cultural contexts in which these conflicts take place and have instead sought to (re) emphasise the significance of resource settings, power relations or property rights (Church & Ravenscroft, 2011). Here, an opposing body of research indicates that mountain bikers are frequently motivated by an appreciation of nature and the environment, and in many cases demonstrate the same care for habitats, landscapes, and environments as other users (see Chapters 8, 9 and 10). In work by Cherrington (2022), for instance, mountain bike trail building is shown to illicit important bonds with other objects and life forms, engendering new and emerging kinds of (onto)political subjectivity. Elsewhere, Cherrington and Black (2020a) have also illustrated how a corporeal and symbolic attachment to dirt allows mountain bike trail builders to rescue soil from the functional connotations that it has been imbued with in modern, agricultural societies, replacing these with an attitude of urgency and care. Thus, whilst erosion and habitat damage remain important considerations for landowners and regulatory bodies, many of the conflicts between mountain bikers and other communities are underpinned by misconceptions regarding participants' attitudes and beliefs (Campbell et al, 2021).

Instead of seeing these inter-group conflicts as a hindrance to the progress of mountain biking, it is my belief that important lessons can be gleaned by following these processes and the trouble they entail. Like other outdoor activities, mountain biking is necessarily a relational activity involving both *retention*, the process of (local, embodied, subjective) exchange in which the humans position themselves in relation to a collective consciousness, and *protention*, the process that allows participants in a specific culture to co-evolve by projecting their desires (for relationships with other humans, non-humans, and landscapes), onto a collective, but unknowable future (Cherrington, 2022). Appreciating the inter-actions between identities, objects, landscapes, and technologies without presupposing essentialist boundaries between activities such as mountain biking, rambling, horse-riding and kayaking therefore presents an important opportunity for contributors to this collection, as it is from within associations that we can position the complex and shifting terrain of a contemporary (lifestyle) sports.

When approached in this way, the tensions and conflicts relating to mountain bike culture serve to highlight some of the most important planetary issues of our catastrophic times, including: habitat disruption (Mitterwallner et al, 2021), climate change (POW, 2022), colonialism (Reid-Hresko and Warren 2022), the ecological, social, political and cultural impacts of tourism (Buning and Lamont, 2021), land enclosure (Cherrington, 2021), social inequalities (Huybers-Withers & Livingston, 2010), the commodification of sport (Rosen, 1993), the ethics of risk and responsibility (Pocecco et al, 2022), and the technologisation and datafication of outdoor spaces (Cherrington & Black, 2023; McKormack, 2018). In this sense, it is important that mountain bikers recognise, and take responsibility for, both the negative and positive aspects of their culture. Like all forms of outdoor leisure, mountain biking practices can be entropic (Stiegler, 2018), in the sense that they are harmful (i.e., to surfaces and animal/plant life), present-centred (i.e., chasing faster Strava times) and anti-social (ignoring needs of other land users). Yet, they also contain negentropic potential, inspiring public debate regarding moral virtue and public good, and these negentropic qualities facilitate more caring and responsible attachments to people, objects, and environments.

In these moments of social, ecological, and political turmoil within and between different user groups, Morlat et al (2020) highlight the importance of multiplying, rather than universalising these different (and differing) forms of knowledge, and it is this aspect of mountain bike culture which this collection seeks to emphasise. For as long as the contentions surrounding bikes, trails, bodies, and behaviours remain matters of concern, there exists the possibility that alternative socio-cultural, socio- techno-social and onto-political relationships and understandings may emerge which empower the mountain bike community, whilst encouraging more inclusive, and cooperative attitudes towards outdoor leisure (see Chapter 14). In sharing their (albeit opposing) views, different users of outdoor spaces can therefore:

...collectively and intergenerationally connect together: they co-individuate and transindividuate by transmitting knowledge and develop singular capabilities through which they participate in the transformation of knowledge itself by causing it to bifurcate in new directions. These improbable bifurcations (which cannot be generated through performing calculations) come to enrich reality in

a way that is not reducible to simple algorithms...producing diversification of behaviours and practices, and by transforming rules and institutions (Morlat et al, 2021: 98)

Presently, these positive, transindividuating exchanges are apparent in debates around e-mountain bike technology (see Chapter 2), which appears to offer unprecedented levels of freedom, whilst antagonising ideological notions of ‘nature’; challenging commonplace notions of what it means to move, and to leisure in the countryside (Mitterwallner et al, 2021). It is also manifest in concerns regarding ‘off-piste’ or unsanctioned mountain bike routes (see Chapters 6, 8 and 9) which are attractive to those riders who prefer wild, natural trails (Campbell et al, 2021). While these trails are no doubt contentious, it is from within these contentions, and subsequent attempts to find diplomatic solutions, that individuals and various interest groups can voice their respective concerns whilst, among other things, actively contesting the capitalist, neoliberal project of enclosure (Cherrington, 2021).

Over the past five decades, mountain bike advocacy groups and various political organisations have been instrumental in mediating these different concerns, whilst further legitimising mountain bikers’ participation in shared, outdoor spaces (Evju et al, 2020). For example, since the sport’s inception in the 1970s, the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) has worked tirelessly with national land managers in North America and Europe to grow the sport, whilst recognising key management issues such as those relating to the design and implementation of sustainable trails. One outcome of this process has been the development of a set of guidelines relating to the protection of wildlife and the sustainability of future trail design, which has been driven by contemporary concerns relating to climate change and the loss of biodiversity. At the local and regional level, these frameworks and guidelines have been scrutinised by community groups and interest forums such as ‘Peak District MTB’ (UK), ‘Cape Mountain Bikers’ (Australia) and ‘California Mountain Bike Coalition’ (USA), who have built strong relationships with public and private land managers, whilst managing any potential conflicts that may occur on a day-to-day basis.

Yet, in its zeal to obtain better access rights and grow grassroots participation, mountain bike advocacy has failed to provide sufficient justification for *why*

participants should be included in these spaces (Cherrington, 2022a). This is reflected in the relative absence of critical, sociologically informed literature on this topic, as well as the lack of common understanding that is frequently reported between mountain bike policymakers and practitioners (Campbell & Kirkwood, 2020). It is also evident in many of the improvised, uncoordinated, and knee-jerk responses to contemporary trends and invitations, such as electric-assist technology, mountain bike tourism, wild trails, and unsanctioned trail building, in which mountain bike agencies and land managers are having to play ‘catchup with what’s happening on the ground, resulting in gaps between policies, facilities and use of sites which can in turn contribute to conflict’ (Pickering & Leung, 2016, p. iv). Thus, it is my contention that contemporary mountain bike advocacy, such as that which is evidenced in community groups, (social) media, and national governance, is frequently marred by an ‘anti-theoretical edge’ (Zizek, 2008, p. 14) in which acting is prioritised over thinking. In the section that follows, I outline how this collection will address this deficit.

Structure of the book: The identities, bodies, ecologies, and politics of contemporary mountain bike cultures

In light of these criticisms, an important and ongoing challenge for the management and governance of mountain biking is how to assuage the concerns of different (local, regional, and national) user groups and landowners, whilst at the same time analysing, understanding, and (re) emphasising, the conflicting embodied, spatial and geo-political conditions that furnish our relationship with the outdoors (Zajc & Berzelak, 2016). These concerns are set against the increasingly complex and volatile geo-political landscape in which there are a growing number of opportunities for people to be involved in myriad forms of outdoor and adventure tourism, but less and less spaces in which to pursue them (Cherrington, 2021). Consequently, mountain bikers are now subject to greater scrutiny; forced to weigh their own self-interests (and object relations) against a range of other user groups. Under these circumstances, it is more important than ever that any measures taken against, or in favour of, mountain biking in particular areas be subject to in depth consultation with local stakeholders, and the long-term monitoring of attitudes and behaviours (Kleiner et al., 2022).

Presently, this monitoring process is dominated by a ‘logic’ model of evaluation (Jeanes & Lindsay, 2014: 20) which uses quantitative data and ‘scientific’ methods to establish the legitimacy of mountain bike activity at the expense of understanding the experiences that occur ‘on the ground’. For example, research has focussed on the physiological composition of riders and riding styles in disciplines such as downhill and enduro, (Kirkwood et al., 2019), the ecological consequences of mountain biking, in terms of landscape erosion and habitat destruction, (Mitterwallner et al, 2021), and the economic benefits of mountain biking, such as those accrued through tourism, and local and provincial government agencies (Buning & Lamont, 2021).

Evidence from these studies has been used by (neoliberal) land managers and governing bodies looking to create information management tools and regulatory measures for mountain bikers, including, among other things, the prohibiting of certain technologies, universal codes of practice, rider education programmes, and trail standardisation guidelines. However, whilst these studies have largely been conducted in good faith, and *can* influence decisions related to funding and consultation, the emphasis in this existing body of literature has been on ‘proving’ that certain objective conditions (i.e., decreases in environmental disruption, less anti-social behaviour) have been met, and in the process, important nuances of mountain bike culture have been lost through their monitoring and evaluation.

It is this lack of critical and interpretative thinking that is the inspiration for this collection. In opposing definitive causes and prescriptive solutions, the chapters in this book demonstrate that much of the existing discourse around mountain biking stems from conservative ideologies that situate mountain biking as a threat to romantic and anthropocentric notions of ‘nature’, whilst implicitly (and often violently) regulating and promoting idealised forms of movement and behaviour (Flemsaeter et al, 2015). Instead, the chapters in this collection draw upon theoretical insights and empirical evidence to expand our understanding of mountain biking, whilst critically probing those ideologies that undermine the legitimacy of our culture. Via a range of international case studies written by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, artists, and (Indigenous) community members with backgrounds in geography, sociology, media studies, public policy, sport coaching and psychology, the mountain bike is positioned as a pharmacological object (Stiegler, 2013) that, whilst vehemently contested, can

facilitate practices of care, attention, and activism within specific social, cultural and political systems.

To do this, the chapters have been thematised according to the most culturally prescient, but politically contentious, issues in contemporary mountain bike cultures. Presented according to the order in which they will appear in the collection, these themes are listed as follows: (1) Mountain Biking Identities; (2) Mountain Biking Bodies; (3) Mountain Biking Environments, and; (4) The Cultural Politics of Mountain Biking. In adopting this structure, the collection facilitates innovative readings of orthodox philosophical concepts such as identity, nature, sustainability, and inclusivity, whilst moving seamlessly, and interchangeably, between the different landscapes and contexts of mountain biking; the affective qualities of bikes and (experience) landscapes (i.e., dirt, mountains, bikes, components); and the conceptual, philosophical, and political contours of these analyses. Within each chapter of work, authors have attempted to stretch the reader's understanding of each issue whilst critically unpacking, and imaginatively applying, their respective foci.

In Part One, which has been titled, 'Mountain Biking Identities', chapters map the identities of mountain bikers across a range of contexts, roles, and technologies, and include the voices of coaches, e-mountain bikers, and traditional push bike riders. Though the contributions are diverse in their orientation, they have the same point of departure; they all acknowledge that 'behavioural and motivational homogeneity within these types of populations should not be assumed' (Roberts et al, 2018: 2) and that the various modes of participation in mountain biking appear to belong to several points along the subcultural continuum. In Chapter One, Thomas Leeder and Lee Beaumont address these concerns in relation to the emerging (sub) discipline of mountain bike coaching, asking how coaches individualise practice and instil rider confidence, whilst managing certain subcultural expectations surrounding informality, performativity, and creativity. In Chapter Two, Kieren McEwan, Neil Weston, and Paul Gorczynski seek to establish whether competitiveness, as a stable personality trait, varies according to values that particular riders hold. The final chapter in this section, written by Lesley Ingram-Sills, illuminates contentions surrounding the e-mountain bike. Having done this, she then asks what contributions the e-mountain bike could make in the promotion of greener forms of leisure and mobility.

In Part Two, 'Mountain Biking Bodies', chapters are oriented around what has been variously described as the affective (Hagen and Boyes, 2016), phenomenological (Christensen et al, 2015), or somatic (Brown, 2017) qualities of mountain bike culture. Together, authors seek to expose how riders' sense of pleasure, risk, pain, and place are felt, experienced, and acted upon through peoples' 'micro-level affective experiences of their mountain biking bodies' (Hagen & Boyes, 2016, p. 89). In so doing, each chapter examines how certain identities, symbolic meanings, and social expectations, are lived out, and at times counteracted, by mountain bikers in the moment-to-moment and immediate interactions between the bike, the body, and the lived environment. In Chapter Four, Mike Lloyd draws on action captured from helmet-mounted cameras to analyse the everyday interactions that underpin crashes and conflicts. Benjamin Moreland also explores the sensory experience of crashing in Chapter Five, illustrating how various social and cultural influences might mediate experiences and expressions of pain. In Chapter Six, David Gibbs and Lewis Holloway examine how such corporeal practices might furnish an emerging demand for 'experience landscapes', whereby riders encounter specific trails varies according to their fitness, confidence, equipment, and experience. Concomitantly, they identify a heterogeneity of experience and practice in relation to the notion of a 'trail centre', highlighting some important implications for the future of trail building and trail centre management.

In Part Three, 'Mountain Biking Environments', attention turns to the relationships between social, political, and economic factors and ecological conditions and changes, representing what could otherwise be conceived of as a political ecology of mountain biking. Contributions in this section unpack and problematise mountain biking's often contentious engagements with 'nature' as a construct, a concept, and a material and spatial location. In Chapter Seven, for example, Jacob Bustad and Oliver Rick examine how the assemblage of digital media, urban sport and contemporary leisure practices come to bear on contemporary urban downhill MTB racing, specifically the Cerro Abajo races in Valparaiso, Chile. Moving away from a focus on the urban but maintaining a focus on human-material inter-actions in Chapter Eight, Tom Campbell turns to trail building to highlight how a more holistic conceptualisation of sustainability may be emerging within mountain bike culture that goes beyond concerns regarding localised erosion and damage to flora and fauna. Similar issues are also

covered in Chapter Nine where, through an analysis of online videos and ethnographic data, Liam Healy shows how DIY trail builders repair, and care for, post-capitalist spaces. Following this, Clare Nattress contemplates how we might live-with, and adapt to, air pollution in Chapter Ten, combining reflections from a multi-day mountain bike trip and a creative art project to imagine a more hopeful, and socially just, planetary future.

In Part Four, 'The Cultural Politics of Mountain Biking', contributions explore what Park (2020, unpaginated) has described as mountain biking's 'accessibility problem'. Whilst the culture of mountain biking attracts a multicultural body of participants, from increasingly diverse geographic settings, it remains the preserve of affluent western white men (Bordelon & Ferreira, 2019). Chapters in this section therefore ask: What are minority participants' experiences of belonging and exclusion in mountain biking? How are dominant sporting identities, practices, spaces, and forms of embodiment positioned reproduced, and challenged? And in what ways might mountain bike culture include participants from a range of different backgrounds, including the least privileged? In Chapter Eleven, Louise Bordelon extends existing work on gender via an investigation of how women are initiated into, progress through, and challenge certain aspects of mountain bike culture in Stellenbosch, South Africa. In a related context, Chapter Twelve, written by Benjamin Moreland, Alice Lemkes, Jenni Myers, and Jack Reed, and Chapter Thirteen, by John Reid-Hresko and Jeff Warren help to illuminate how gendered and colonial ideologies are mapped onto outdoor leisure spaces via trail naming and mountain bike multimedia, respectively. In closing the collection in Chapter Fourteen, Tavis Smith, Patrick Lucas, and Tom Eustache offer personal insights from The Indigenous Youth Mountain Bike Program (IYMBP), a non-profit society with the aim of bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members together to build mountain bike trails and foster reconciliation in B. C, Canada.

Collectively, these chapters serve to illustrate that the 'uncanniness' (Morton, 2016) of the mountain bike, and how it renders an experience that is both constitutive of, and distanced from, the surfaces, materials, and cultures with which it interacts. Furthermore, they show how mountain bikes allow us to materially connect with various, localised, landscapes, whilst at the same time feeling like a global citizen

(Latour, 2017). In a world that is increasingly characterised by political apathy and social indifference it is difficult to overstate the importance of such attachments, and in this respect, I feel that this book has made a novel contribution. Tuning to the nuances of human/non-human assemblages in mountain bike cultures helps cyclists to meaningfully connect to a range of planetary considerations, via a range of objects and media, which range in scale from the local (i.e. building and naming trails, painful crashes, poor air quality) to the global (i.e. climate change, colonialism, inequality, digitalisation and commercialisation), and to do this in a way that ‘matters’, both personally and politically. In this way, despite its contemptible position within the mainstream, it is my hope that the fragile and uncertain relationships between bikes, people, social practices, and cultures represented in this book can, at the very least, help riders, trail builders, policy makers and everyone in between, to experiment with more equitable socio-technical, socio-political, and socio-natural arrangements, opening novel possibilities for future forms of sociality, leisure, and activism.

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