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*Book Reviews*

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**Space, Place and Gender.** *By Doreen Massey*, University of Minnesota Press, 1994, \$19.95.

Doreen Massey, a Professor of Geography at the Open University in Britain, brings a distinctive voice to bear on issues related to women and the urban environment. She adds to a literature already enriched by such feminist writers as Dolores Hayden and Elizabeth Wilson. Massey contributes to the ongoing discussion related to space and place. Reacting against the romanticization of place as historical and nostalgic, she argues against the notion that place is bounded, single, and fixed in identity—reliant on the concept of space as static. From her perspective, place is not constructed by placing boundaries, but rather by exploring interconnections and links to what lies beyond. Seen from this perspective, place is open and porous, contested and multiple. She stresses the idea that the identity of place or community is informed by feminism, relational and complex. Feminism has a particular role in this discourse because of the association between women and the local community, with the association of women with home and children. Massey warns against simple dichotomies, which pit masculine and feminine views of the space and place in false opposition.

A major theme in the book relates to regionalism and the ways in which economic restructuring have created uneven development throughout England. Bringing a perspective based in political economy to bear on her analysis, Massey argues that a spatial division of labor is a result of efforts to stem economic decline; regional inequality and competition (region, gender based) are outcomes. A major result for women in the economy has been to replace skilled male manual workers with unskilled or semiskilled female laborers. The trend has been a result of decentralization of industry, both for the manufacturing and service sectors. In addition to geographic and regional consequences, Massey points to the consequences of newly gendered work. In a provocative and controversial analysis, Massey contends that women have been major beneficiaries of the new type of paid employment. This new trend has challenged male dominance in labor unions that were based on a rigid gendered division of labor, reflected in both the private and public spheres. Women are referred to by Massey as “green labor,” suggesting that the choice of them as the new workers is largely due to their lack of partici-

pation in the public sphere, which meant they lack previous experience in waged work as well as other types of political and economic activism. Women are more likely to be operators, not decision makers, to be part-time as opposed to full-time workers, and are prepared to accept low wages. Somewhat contradictory is Massey's contention that women are forced to work long hours with little attention to child care needs. While the latter is certainly true, the notion of long hours worked does not seem to relate to the part-time work most women are engaged in. Women stepped in to provide paid employment in some areas (mining, for one) in which their husbands had been made redundant. Massey points to the exploitation, but also the opportunity for the first time for independent income and shakeups in traditional gender relations. In contrast, in other areas experiencing "new economic growth" (c.g., Cambridge) women are found at the bottom of a newly gendered, but oddly traditional, system of roles and relations. In what is probably the most important contribution of the book, Massey shows how today and in the past, regional differences permitted some women in waged labor such as Lancashire radical trade unionists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and women factory workers in mining areas of the British Northeast in the 1960s and after, to gain independence and some autonomy. In contrast, their sisters in Hackney who are engaged in homework have more limited options. The essays on "A Woman's Place" clearly develop the key themes of the book. The connections between local, national, and international trends, the relationship between the family and economic roles, and the links between capitalism and patriarchy are well developed in these sections.

In other interpretations presented, Massey points to limitations in the current emphasis on the "politics of locality," highlighting the contested meanings of place, as well as the need to comprehend the larger global connections and social relations related to local uniqueness and identity. As have others, including Sassen, she argues for the importance of analyzing the ways in which cities and local life have been affected by patterns of internationalization of finance and services. She does, however, contest the idea that the new technologies and capital reorganization have totally transformed the nature of home and place. Urban life in general, she feels, has been liberating for women who have been able to challenge rigid patriarchy and control in this more complex environment.

And, finally, Massey points out connections between postmodernism rooted in feminist analysis, often ignored in key geography texts that posit their conclusions on a male-dominated perspective on space and society.

This is a rich and provocative collection of essays, which range widely over issues and controversies related to space, time, place, politics, and gender. The strength of the book is in the range of subject matter and exploration among the essays; this is also an occasional source of weakness.

The pieces included in the book are drawn from a twenty-year period. There is occasionally a dated feel to some of the earlier essays, and often repetition of subject matter and even specific topics, found in some of the different readings. Nonetheless, this is an important collection, written by a feminist scholar with original ideas and an impressive command of scholarship from feminist theory to urban and labor history.

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**Feminist Visions of Gender Similarities and Differences.** *By Meredith M. Kimball.* Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 1995, 227 pp., \$14.95 (paper).

Meredith Kimball offers us, in this book, a “double vision” of a feminist psychology. This vision brilliantly integrates and synthesizes empirical research in psychology, histories of psychology, and feminist theorizing outside of psychology. It refuses to “take sides” about gender differences and similarities and insists on “choosing both.”

The central argument in the book is that the psychology of women (historically first the psychology of sex differences) has been approached from two apparently incompatible perspectives: similarity theories (arguing that men and women are “equal” and therefore “the same” in abilities and characteristics) and differences theories (arguing that aspects of women’s experiences and abilities have been left out of conventional psychology because they are different from men’s). Although many others have noticed these two perspectives, Kimball makes two novel contributions: (1) she situates these perspectives in the history of mainstream psychology, and shows that they have been with us from the beginning in both academic and clinical psychology, and pervade the way we think about gender in psychology; (2) she argues not for one alternative or the other, but for the possibility and power of keeping both perspectives in view at the same time. This latter is difficult even to conceive, but Kimball argues with two compelling examples (gender and math, gender and moral reasoning) that it is not only possible, but that an adequate theoretical account of the findings in these areas is impossible *without* both perspectives. Finally, Kimball enacts the commitment of feminist scholars to keep academic scholarship explicitly tied to the real situations of women by turning to practical areas in which the similarities and differences traditions have influenced policy and prac-

tice (women in science, and care giving) and showing how a double vision would be helpful here, too.

The structure of the book sets up the various simple oppositions in order to overcome them. After a lucid introduction, setting out the basic parameters of her argument, Kimball moves to an examination of Leta Stetter Hollingworth as an exemplar of the “similarity” approach, and contrasts her with Karen Horney as an exemplar of the “differences” approach. She situates these early “feminist psychologists” in time and place, and explores the ways in which they were struggling with dominant male figures of their time. By beginning with these two figures, Kimball makes clear that both these perspectives were represented—and that they were discounted—in the discipline of psychology from the start. She persuades the reader not that these are tired, or sterile debates, but rather that they have been sidelined, moved offstage, hence never fully engaged. Moreover, she sets the stage for the notion that choosing between two perspectives treated as “opposing” will be fruitless.

In the next section of the book Kimball explores two areas of contemporary empirical research that exemplify the same debates—gender and math—which has been framed largely as a debate about whether the sexes are similar and equal—and gender and moral reasoning—which has been framed largely as a debate about whether men and women really have different approaches to morality. Kimball reviews enormous literatures in these two chapters, and in both cases shows how either perspective is incomplete. Thus, by careful analysis of empirical findings she shows (for example) that the differences perspective could help illuminate the conditions under which girls’ math performance is actually better than boys’. In both chapters she examines how differences within sex (especially differences reflecting other axes of power like race, class, sexuality) get overlooked when either similarities or differences between genders are the focus.

Kimball suggests in the first chapter that the practice of double vision means that “neither alternative is foreclosed, the tension between alternatives is engaged, and the partiality of any particular view is recognized” (p. 12). In the empirical chapters, Kimball shows how this might be true and begins to show as well how “By practicing double visions with respect to differences and similarities linked to all socially constructed categories, the complexities of human social and political worlds become more apparent. Thus . . . double visions of gender . . . also take into account similarities and differences among women.” Through her analysis of the inconsistencies in the findings about math ability and moral reasoning, Kimball demonstrates how invisible differences among women and among men are when either the similarities or the differences perspective is adopted alone; she

also shows how maintaining a “stereographic” perspective on gender differences also brings differences within gender into view.

In the last two chapters, Kimball moves into the domains of women’s participation in science, and the distribution of men and women in care giving. Here she demonstrates her claim that it is possible to choose to enact a differences or a similarity perspective for particular practical or political purposes. Her position is that “Strategies based on differences and similarities are both useful and limited” (p. 174). She suggests that feminists should avoid being forced into adopting a foolishly consistent posture about sameness and difference, and argues that “what is dangerous is not difference or sameness per se but the potential and actual use of either to reinforce anyone’s subordination or privilege . . . . The goal is a world where all women and men can be both equal and different, a world free of privilege and hierarchy” (p. 176).

In this book Kimball has articulated a poststructuralist feminist psychology that is informed by interdisciplinary scholarship in women’s studies that is both largely unread within psychology, and generally assumed to be fairly inaccessible. What is remarkable about Kimball’s account is that it reflects deep mastery of that difficult literature, but reworks it entirely within the language and scholarship in psychology. Because of this—and Kimball’s brisk, lucid, and jargon-free prose—the insights seem refreshing, exciting, and entirely accessible. This is a book in which difficult tasks—practicing double vision, making strategic but provisional choices, anticipating unintended negative consequences, among others—seem challenging and possible. It is a tonic for the weary toiler in the vineyards of social and disciplinary change.

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